

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

14 July 2021

Time 6.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Scrutiny

Venue Council Chamber

Membership

Chair Cllr Rita Potter (Lab)
Vice-chair Cllr Adam Collinge (Con)

Labour

Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Kaiser Azeem
Cllr Christopher Burden
Cllr Val Evans
Cllr Jaspreet Jaspal
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr Gillian Wildman

Conservative

Cllr Wendy Dalton
Cllr Stephanie Haynes

Co-opted Members

Cyril Randles Church of England – Lichfield Board of Education Representative

Wolverhampton Youth Council

Quorum for this meeting is four Voting Members.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Scrutiny Team:

Contact Earl Piggott-Smith
Tel/Email Tel: 01902 551251 or earl.piggott-smith@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Address Scrutiny Team, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

Copies of other agendas and reports are available from:

Website <http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/>
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Tel 01902 555046

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Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Welcome and Introductions
[The Chair to welcome everyone to the meeting.] |
| 2 | Meeting procedures to be followed
[The Chair will explain how the meeting will proceed, how questions are to be asked and any matters of meeting etiquette.] |

MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Apologies |
| 4 | Declarations of interest |
| 5 | Minutes of the previous meeting (10 March 2021) (Pages 3 - 12)
[To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record] |

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

[To give pre-decision scrutiny to the report]

- | | |
|---|--|
| 6 | Education Excellence Strategy (pre-decision scrutiny) (Pages 13 - 92)
[Brenda Wile, Deputy Director of Education, and Phil Leivers, Head of Service Educational Excellence, to present report] |
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This item is being considered as pre-decision scrutiny and will therefore not be available to call-in once a decision is made by the Executive.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 7 | Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2020 - 2021 (Pages 93 - 112)
[Jenny Rogers, Principal Social Worker, to present report] |
| 8 | Children and Young People's Social Work Self-Evaluation 2021- 2022 (Pages 113 - 160)
[Alison Hinds, Deputy Director, Children's Social Care, to present report] |
| 9 | Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel 2021- 2022- Draft Work Programme (Pages 161 - 170)
[Earl Piggott-Smith, Scrutiny Officer, to present report] |

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Agenda Item No: 5

Minutes - 10 March 2021

Attendance

Members of the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Beverley Momenabadi
Cllr Rita Potter (Chair)
Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Udey Singh
Cllr Rashpal Kaur
Cllr Sohail Khan (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar

Co-opted Members

Tom Careless
Janis Nanthchouang

Chair Wolverhampton Youth Council
Vice-Chair Wolverhampton Youth Council

In Attendance

Cllr Phil Page

Chair Health Scrutiny Panel

Witnesses

Mags Courts Manager

Children's Commissioning Manager,
Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning
Group

Employees

Earl Piggott-Smith
Julia Cleary
Andrew Wolverson
Courtney Abbott

Emma Bennett
Kush Patel
Denise Williams
Martin Stevens

Scrutiny Officer
Systems and Scrutiny Manager
Head of Children's Strategy and Partnerships
Quality and Improvement Advanced
Practitioner for Children and Adults,
Director of Children's and Adult Services
Children's Innovation Lead
Partnership Manager Children's Services
Scrutiny Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | <p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Cllr Rita Potter, Chair, welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting and advised it was being live streamed to the press and public. Cllr Potter advised that she was not expecting any exempt or restricted items on the agenda. A recording of the meeting would be available for viewing on the Council's website at a future date.</p> |
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2 **Meeting procedures to be followed**

Cllr Potter explained the protocol to be followed during the meeting for asking questions and reminded everyone that microphones should be muted and cameras off unless they have been invited to speak.

Earl Piggott-Smith, Scrutiny Officer, confirmed all attendees present at the meeting.

3 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from the following members of the panel:

Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cyril Randles

4 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

5 **Minutes of the previous meeting (5.1.21)**

The minutes to be corrected to include the following members of Wolverhampton Youth Council as attending:

Anna Tabner, Raveen Kaur and Keisha Riley

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2021 be approved, subject to the above correction, as a correct record.

6 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

7 **Minutes of the previous meeting (13.1.21)**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2021 be approved as a correct record.

8 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

9 **Spotlight Review - Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of children and young people (report to follow)**

Andrew Wolverson, Head of Children's Strategy and Partnerships, introduced the presentation detailing the range of work being done to improve the health and mental wellbeing of children young people and their families. The Head of Children's Strategy outlined the specific aims of the presentation and the link to the overarching outcomes in the Council's 'Relighting Our City' strategy.

The Head of Children's Strategy commented on the importance of supporting the parents and adults within families as much as supporting the children and young people themselves. The Head of Children's Strategy listed the speakers who would be contributing to the presentation during the meeting. The importance of creating job opportunities for young people by supporting local businesses and stimulating our vibrant high streets and communities was highlighted.

Kush Patel, Children's Innovation Lead, briefed the panel on the highlights of the Youth Engagement Strategy (#YES) programme and the work undertaken during

2020. The Children's Innovation Lead commented on the next phase of the #YES programme and advised that future youth provision services to be commissioned would be based on three key themes, for example, delivering training on coproduction to key stakeholders.

The Children's Innovation Lead commented on the work done to get young people involved in the implementation, delivery and monitoring of services aimed at supporting them during the pandemic. There are 18 members of the Youth Engagement Board and the level of participation has increased among young people wanting to get more involved through the establishment of locality boards. Each of the locality groups have started working on their respective work plans. The Children's Innovation Lead commented on the current virtual offer and advised the panel that there had been 23,000 visits to the website and over 33,000 young people engaging with 100 activities online.

The Children's Innovation Lead advised the panel that the rollout of health and wellbeing sessions continues, the offer includes face to face sessions in schools and online sessions. The service will continue to develop opportunities to further support young people.

Denise Williams, Partnership Manager Children's Services, commented on the parenting support offer and briefed the panel on work during 2020 and the plans for developing the service in the future. The Partnership Manager advised the panel that the provision of parenting support is available across the City, but it is variable, and the current offer is not considered to be co-ordinated. In response to this issue work is being done through the Strengthening Families Together Board to deliver services from the different service providers in a more consistent way.

A task and finish group has been set you to review provision across the City and members of the group will be consulting with families to help the shape service delivery in the future. The group will be developing materials to ensure a more consistent approach that supports the current offer.

The Partnership Manager commented on the work being done to promote parenting across the city. A parenting coordinator role was created in February 2020 to support this work and is part of the Strengthening Families Service. The parenting coordinator will also provide support, advice, and guidance to Strengthening Families workers, Parent Champions, and the voluntary sector.

The Partnership Manager commented on the impact on changes to the parenting support offer in response to Covid. The service developed a virtual offer for families who were experiencing difficulties in parenting or who contacted the MASH team for support. In addition, a four-week online e learning programme for parents was developed to provide more targeted approach as an alternative to parents having to spend hours online.

If a parent needs support after completing the course they can contact the service and ask to be referred to the Family Learning Champion. The service will also accept referrals made by other professionals and also self-referrals. The service has received very good feedback from parents and there has been a very low dropout rate.

Mags Courts, Children's Commissioning Manager, Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group, briefed the panel on the work done to offer children and young people needing specialist emotional and mental wellbeing support during the pandemic. The number of referrals to the Single Point of Access service remained fairly static during the first lockdown. This process determines where the case should be referred to.

The number of referrals has increased since September 2020. There has been reduction in capacity of the service to meet this demand due to social distancing rules and also a reluctance from schools on occasions to allow other health professionals to access the building.

The Children's Commissioning Manager advised the panel that Base 25 were originally commissioned to do 120 referrals and achieve a 90 contacts month. However, during some months Base 25 were getting 350 referrals. The number of referrals has declined since this peak of activity, but this has started to increase recently. The capacity of the service has been reduced due to staff being ill during the pandemic and the situation was further complicated by the reluctance of people who were following Government health advice to shield to meet in person.

The Children's Commissioning Manager advised that remote meetings using Zoom has been used as an alternative. However, there were concerns from some parents who did not want the young person being online or the financial ability to access services digitally.

The Children's Commissioning Manager detailed the range of work being done to increase young people's access to mental health support services in the future. There has been an increase in number of referrals relating to eating disorders during the pandemic and also an increase in the number of young people who have been referred to the service late.

In some of these situations an admission into hospital has been only option. However, the service is working hard with young people and their families to avoid hospital admission.

The Children's Commissioning Manager advised the panel that in response to increase in the number of eating disorder referrals a new service has been introduced to provide rapid early intervention in response to a first reported episode. The service is also aimed at helping young people who have a short history of eating disorders and there are plans to expand the offer across Wolverhampton. The service is also working hard to ensure that no young person with a recognised learning disability or autism is admitted to a mental health unit. There has been a reduction in the number of people who have been admitted during the year which has been a success.

The Children's Commissioning Manager briefed the panel on the development of the Link Programme which has been developed to ensure that the Wolverhampton offer is clear.

The programme will aim to develop a network of support for teachers who are managing families with complex problems, including children and young people with emotional mental health and wellbeing issues.

The Children's Commissioning Manager detailed other planned service changes to meet the needs of children and young people.

The panel welcomed Cllr Phil Page, Chair Health Scrutiny Panel, to the meeting and invited him to comment on the presentation. Cllr Page expressed concern about the limited coverage of the pilot mental health support scheme being delivered in sixteen schools and the high level of need. The Government funded scheme is due to end in 2021.

Cllr Page queried the work done to raise awareness of the scheme to young people and their families and the difficulties experienced by people who either did not have the devices or internet access to make use online support resources. Cllr Page also suggested the need for Base 25 to offer more outreach services to support young people.

The Children's Commissioning Manager responded that in addition to the pilot scheme there are a number of other initiatives supporting young people, for example HeadStart and work being done to build mental health capacity within schools. This is part of an overall plan to offer targeted support to all young people across the City.

The Head of Children's Strategy commented on the issue of the children without access to digital devices and how Councillors were using their Ward funds to buy laptops and equipment to support schools and also to provide access to online support services. There was acceptance of the importance to young people wanting face to face support rather than online.

The Head of Children's Strategy advised the panel the HeadStart programme is a test and learn scheme which has been applied to other schools.

The panel were advised that Base 25 do offer face to face meetings if a young person does not have access to a computer or has difficulty accessing the online services. In this situation, meetings with young people have taken place in parks or other safe spaces and also some sessions have taken place using Zoom. The feedback from some young people suggests this method has helped to reduce levels of anxiety.

The Head of Children's Strategy advised the panel that there are plans for a new contract with Base 25. The contract will start in April 2021. The new contract will include extending the current service to offer support to parents and families of the young person referred to the service.

A communication plan is being developed which will include videos for professionals and for parents to promote awareness of the scheme. The information will also be promoted through the social media channels and in publicity sent to local schools to explain how the new service will operate. A new website is also being developed to make it much easier for people to find information about the range of support services available.

The Children's Commissioning Manager commented on the mental health support teams in schools and acknowledged the limits of the service and outlined the plans to improve the service.

The panel asked for more details about the new FREED model developed to support young people with eating disorders. The Children's Commissioning Manager agreed to send the panel members more detailed information about the scheme. The scheme will offer specialised evidence-based treatment and support tailored to meet the needs of young people.

The Children's Commissioning Manager commented on concerns from parents when their child with an eating disorder becomes 18 and moves automatically into the adult service and the difficulties some experience. The Children's Commissioning Manager reassured the panel of the work being done to develop and transform early intervention services which are suitable for young adults with a mental health psychosis.

The panel discussed ideas to counter negative press reports about the behaviour of young people in spreading Covid 19. The Head of Children's Strategy agreed to discuss the idea with colleague in the communications team in promoting #YES campaign and the positive work of young people. A young people's communications group has been established.

The Head of Children's Strategy agreed to raise the issue at the next meeting of the group. Emma Bennett, Director of Children's and Adult Services, welcomed the comments and ideas in the response to the presentation and agreed to discuss them further with colleagues in the communications team.

The Director of Children's and Adult Services responded to the comments about digital poverty and advised the panel during the pandemic over 1000, laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, Wi Fi vouchers, chairs, routers were distributed to support the education of children and young people. The Director added that it was important to note issues around digital inclusion and devices has not gone away despite the return of pupils to school.

The Director praised Councillors who have used their allocated Ward Fund to pay for school equipment to support remote teaching. The Council has used funding from the national DfE scheme to buy devices and kit to connect to the internet for children and young people. In addition, an online lending scheme has been introduced which is supported by partners in the voluntary sector who supply devices to children and young people and individuals. The Council has also launched an ICT recycling scheme whereby individuals, businesses, members of the public can donate new or broken equipment which can be repaired by a company. The equipment can then be given free to children and young people in the City.

The panel queried what more could be done to involve young people in developing the Youth Engagement Strategy (#YES) and the level of involvement in developing the branding of the scheme. The Director of Children's and Adult Services detailed the work done to engage and actively involve young people in developing and commissioning of services. In addition, young people have a budget to commission services. The co-production of material is a key part of the work being done and young people are encouraged to challenge decisions made.

The panel welcomed the presentation and thanked the presenters.

Resolved:

1. The panel agreed to note the presentation.
2. The Children's Commissioning Manager to share details of the FREED model aimed at supporting young people with eating disorders.

10

Children's Workforce Health Check 2020

Courtney Abbott, Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner, introduced the report and presentation on the findings of the Children's Social Work Workforce Health Check for 2020. The panel were invited to comment on proposed actions to improve the health of the social work workforce.

The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner advised the panel that the presentation is similar in content to the previous Social Work report. There is no requirement to do an annual survey, but it was agreed last year to include the views of the general workforce as it was considered to be important. The survey uses similar questions to that used with social workers. In total 119 survey responses were received.

The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner gave details of main findings from the survey.

The panel were invited to comment on the findings. The panel discussed concerns highlighted in the survey about workload issues and how social work workforce was managing. The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner commented on the expectation that with training and the use of Eclipse and other tools will reduce admin workloads.

The panel queried the reasons for the low response to the survey. The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner responded that a possible reason for the low response rate could be linked to survey fatigue, as there were a number of other surveys being done at the time.

The start of the survey also coincided with start of the second lockdown. The findings from the survey will be discussed the workforce and during the visits questions about how to get better engagement to encourage more people to complete the survey form.

The panel queried the work being done to respond to the issues of where people have commented on the workload management issues. The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner commented on the importance of the current monthly supervision meetings with an employee's line manager to raise any concerns about case workload issues. The panel queried if workload issues would create a situation where a worker was unable to take annual leave.

The Andrew Wolverson, Head of Children's Strategy and Partnerships responded that the Council's position is that managers should be as flexible as possible, to allow people to take leave as booked, whilst acknowledging that social work is not 9-5 job and there may be occasions when leave granting booked leave may not be possible.

Andrew Wolverson, Head of Children's Strategy and Partnerships was confident that everybody was able to take their leave entitlement during the year, while accepting that in certain situations it was not possible to take leave as booked. The service will continue to work with managers to ensure the wellbeing of employees.

The Director of Children's and Adults Services supported the comments and detailed the extra support such as counselling which has been offered in the past where there has been a particularly complex or upsetting incident involving the death of a child. In this situation the Council has commissioned or offered to commission or procured specific counselling support services.

The Director of Children's and Adults Services commented on the range of welfare support available as part of the overall employee wellbeing offer.

The panel welcomed the report and thanked the presenter.

Resolved:

1. The panel agreed to note the findings of the Children's Services Social Workforce Health Check for 2020.
2. The panel agreed to endorse the proposed actions to improve the health of the social care workforce.
3. The panel comments on the findings to be considered in future reports.

11 **2020 Children's Social Work Health Check**

Courtney Abbott, Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner, introduced the report and gave a presentation on the findings of the Children's Social Work Health Check for 2020. The panel were invited to comment on proposed actions to improve the health of the social work workforce.

The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner advised the panel that the Social Work Health Check is done annually as part of the self-assessment work. There is a focus on getting a better understanding of both the quality of social work practice and the conditions in which social work is being delivered. The information from the survey informs the Council's workforce development planning and supports the continuous improvement of social and children's social work. The survey took place between the 2 November 2020 and 14 December 2020. The start of the survey occurred at the same time as the second lockdown which may have affected responses. In total 115 responses were received.

The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner commented on the main headline findings from the survey.

The panel queried the figure of 45 per cent of social workers reported stress levels and work done to identify the causes and the impact this was having on the quality of service. The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner responded that while stress levels have increased the level of stress related sickness has reduced. This year the figure was 5.2 per cent compare to 6.7 per cent reported last year and 11 per cent in 2018.

All social workers are aware of sources of help if they are experiencing work related stress and they can also discuss any concerns at their monthly supervision sessions.

The panel queried the finding in the main report which stated that in 2020 full time workers worked 9.6 hours over their contracted hours, which is higher than the figure when compared to previous years. The issue of extra admin work was given as a cause behind the increase. The panel discussed the impact of the introduction of Eclipse case recording system in reducing workloads. The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner advised the panel that the Eclipse system introduced in September 2020 is expected to reduce time practitioners spend on completing paperwork as they get more used to using the new system.

The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner gave an overview of the work done to prepare and also involve frontline workers in the development of the system before going live. A practice lead supports provides ongoing support and guidance to practitioners. In addition, there is an Eclipse user group, who are champions working across Children's Services, who get feedback from teams weekly. The feedback has been used to implement changes to the system.

Emma Bennett, Director of Children's and Adults Services, reassured the panel that she was confident that frontline worker would feel able to report any concerns to either their line manager or someone else that could offer support if needed. There is a commitment from members of the senior management team to be visible to frontline workers and provide different opportunities to raise any issues of concern.

The panel wanted reassurance that social workers felt able to report any concerns about equality and diversity issues.

The Director of Children's and Adults Services responded that the Council has introduced an online safe space portal for people to report any such concerns in confidence.

The service is available to all Council employees. An issue can also be raised with the Line Manager first or another manager if they do not feel comfortable to do so. In addition, there are race equalities champion within social work services where a person can go to for advice and support around specific issues.

Resolved:

1. The panel agreed to note the findings of the Children's Social Work Health Check for 2020.
2. The panel agreed to endorse the proposed actions to improve the health of the social care workforce.
3. The panel comments on the findings to be considered in future reports.

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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel 14 July 2021
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Report title	Education Excellence Strategy (EES) 2021-2024	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre Education, Skills and Work	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's and Adult Services	
Originating service	Education Excellence	
Accountable employee	Phil Leivers	Head of Service
	Tel	01902 552538
	Email	Phil/Leivers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Team	27 July 2020
	Strategic Executive Board	8 July 2021
	Cabinet Member Briefing (CYPF)	12 July 2021

Recommendation for decision:

The Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

1. Make recommendations on the draft Education Excellence Strategy (EES) 2021-2024 prior to receiving Cabinet approval.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report accompanies the Education Excellence Strategy 2021 - 2024. It summarises the current position of school and setting improvement, based upon available data, given that there was no formal reporting of statutory testing in summer 2020, nor will there be in 2021 as a result of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. The report makes formal recommendations to revise the previous version of the School Improvement Strategy 2018 – 2021, and with this to change the name to the 'Education Excellence Strategy' which now encompasses early years settings to ensure greater parity and equality.
- 1.2 The new Education Excellence Strategy makes provision for the Council to carry out its functions to monitor the performance of schools in the city and ensures that, where improvements are necessary, these are carried out effectively and expeditiously.
- 1.3 The development of the Strategy has been underpinned by the response to Covid-19 and the "Catch Up" programme for schools.

2. Background

- 2.1 The first School Improvement and Governance Strategy was first presented to the Council in 2014, at which time school performance in the city was below national averages in terms of academic outcomes as well as the proportion of schools judged to be good or outstanding by The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). That Strategy was subsequently reviewed annually with minor amendments being made and approved by the Executive. The current strategy (2018 – 2021) shows that, through its methodology and delivery, improvement has continued, although, for two out of three years, (2019/2020 and 2020/2021) there is no formal reporting of any national data sets.
- 2.2 Data for the City of Wolverhampton local authority shows that the current strategy has had a positive impact on pupil outcomes over time, with a 7% increase in schools judged good (G2) or better between 2018 and 2020, and from 2014 – 2020 a sustained improvement enabling Wolverhampton to align with national data sets from 70% in 2014 at G2 or above, compared with the national of 79% at G2 or above.

In addition, the % of schools judged to be inadequate in Wolverhampton has also fallen to 1 percentage point below national (3% compared to 4%).

Wolverhampton data:

Latest inspection at:	% of Providers				
	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate	% Good & Outstanding
31 Aug 2020	17	70	11	3	87
31 Aug 2019	16	68	13	3	84
31 Aug 2018	14	66	12	8	80
31 Aug 2017	13	66	14	7	79
31 Aug 2016	14	63	16	7	77
31 Aug 2015	13	62	17	7	75
31 Aug 2014	11	59	20	9	70
Source: Ofsted inspection data/Ofsted Data View					
1. Percentages in the chart are rounded and may not add to 100.					
2. Data for each point in time has been revised and is now based on the new methodology, to include predecessor schools.					

National data:

England					
Latest inspection at:	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate	
As at 31 Aug 2020	19	67	10	4	
As at 31 Aug 2019 (21,951)	20	66	10	4	
As at 31 Aug 2018 (21,763)	21	65	11	4	
As at 31 Aug 2017 (21,707)	21	66	10	4	
As at 31 Aug 2016 (21,664)	20	66	11	3	
As at 31 Aug 2015 (21,758)	20	62	15	3	
As at 31 Aug 2014 (21,750)	19	60	17	4	
As at 31 Aug 2012 (21,970)	20	48	28	3	
As at 31 Aug 2012 (21,970)	20	48	28	3	
As at 31 Aug 2011 (21,933)	20	50	29	2	
Source: Ofsted inspection data/Ofsted Data View					
1. Percentages in the chart are rounded and may not add to 100.					
2. Data for each point in time has been revised and is now based on the new methodology, to include predecessor schools.					

3. Key revisions to the Education Excellence Strategy

- 3.1 The Council's vision for education continues to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring all young people, from those accessing early years education to young adults completing Key Stage 5 provision, have outstanding opportunities at every stage of their education. The journey of improvement for schools and settings in the city continues to require a balance of challenge, support and intervention that reflects the changing role and responsibility of local authorities in today's education system, and acknowledges the change in curriculum expectations beyond published data, as shown in the Education Inspection Framework (EIF).
- 3.2 The revised Education Excellence Strategy has been written in partnership with school and setting leaders, and denotes a new chapter in their relationship with the local authority. Data shows significant improvement in

outcomes over time, and our approach should acknowledge a shift towards greater collaboration and a shared responsibility. In addition, the strategy also shows how implementation of the Education Excellence Strategy involves regional and local partners and stakeholders including the Regional Schools Commissioner, Diocesan Authorities, Multi-Academy Trust Boards, Teaching school Hubs and Ofsted.

- 3.3 The revised strategy continues to develop governance, which is essential to continued school improvement and makes explicit the role of the governing body, the role of the local authority and clear expectations. The strategy will:
- assist the local authority to fulfil its statutory requirements in respect of governance
 - support the development and maintenance of high-quality school governance
 - support individual governors to develop and maintain the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their statutory duties and drive school improvement, and
 - contribute towards a good or better judgement of the Local Authority's support for governors in all quality audits.

Challenge, support and evaluation of governance is woven through the strategy in order to develop all aspects of leadership and management in maintained schools.

In addition, the local authority supports early years settings through 'annual conversation' activity which provides opportunity for nursery owners and managers to explore standards, expectations and agree how key activity and support from the local authority early years team can ensure the youngest children are provided with firm foundations for learning.

- 3.4 Training and development of the school workforce is central to the continuing improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and in developing leadership and management in schools and settings. Continued professional development is at the heart of the strategy, and a comprehensive offer ensures training and support across subjects, phases and career stages from Early Career Teachers (ECTs) to headteachers.
- 3.5 The new strategy also includes specific reference to induction for those who are new to headship through layers of input ranging from 'welcome to the city' and introductions to more comprehensive input covering aspects such as Human Resources (HR), health and safety and finance. This input specifically focuses on developing business knowledge and will compliment more traditional training routes through National Professional

Qualifications (NPQs) for example. A Headteacher Induction Consultation group has shaped input and the offer will provide support for leaders who, in their new roles, are negotiating unfamiliar business pathways, so are in need of support.

- 3.6 The revised strategy also makes reference to the importance of collaboration between schools, including targeted peer to peer reviews, which are pivotal to strengthening school improvement in the city; this aspect of school improvement, facilitated by experienced LA school improvement advisors, enables leaders to focus on specific areas of school practice that have been identified for improvement either at a school or cluster level, or as a city-wide priority.
- 3.7 Local Authority maintained schools continue to be categorised according to the risk of not achieving a 'Good' judgement at their next Ofsted inspection, with a focus on allocating support. The range of criteria to determine the categorisation has been updated to encompass a wider reference beyond outcome data, to reflect changes in inspection and the importance of a high-quality curriculum offer for example. In addition, the criteria make explicit how early years settings will be categorised and supported, so showing greater parity and equality with schools. As part of the Education Excellence Strategy, an additional category has been included to provide extra days of support to ensure those newly 'good' schools and settings have additional time to embed and consolidate the good practice recognised. In this revised strategy, academies will continue to have a day of support, with the input being negotiated by the school and allocated School improvement Advisor, so time and impact can be used to full effect.
- 3.8 School Improvement Boards (SIBs) have been replaced with Team Around the Setting (TAS) meetings (Annex 4 to the Strategy) to make explicit increased collaboration and partnership between the local authority and settings. Such an approach enables key information to be shared (from wider council teams where and when appropriate e.g. HR, finance), including reference to the Compliance Dashboard (Annex 5 to the Strategy), so providing a context to help identify wider challenges which can impact upon school improvement and the pace of change. The sharing of relevant information will help procure support and build upon the professional foundations laid during 'Autumn / Annual Conversation' activity (Annex 3 to the Strategy, and previously known as 'Challenge and Support') which provides opportunity to review the previous academic year, highlight key activity and the impact of that activity to improve outcomes, as well as mapping support for the coming year with clear expectations.

- 3.9 The allocation of support from Education Excellence remains closely aligned to each school / settings' categorisation, with schools / settings in most need of support receiving the highest allocation of days. Allocated days for nursery settings and schools is comparable, so ensuring equality and parity. The detail of allocations can be found in Annex 1 and Annex 2 to the Strategy.
- 3.10 The new strategy is scheduled for an annual review, however, this strategy is designed to be implemented over a three-year period and would therefore not require formal review until September 2024.

4. Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 The option to proceed without the new Education Excellence Strategy could lead to a reduction in standards of performance and Ofsted judgements in schools which may:
- Limit the Council's opportunity to work in collaboration and influence partners and stakeholders in the city and in the region
 - Restrict the flexibility and effectiveness of the council's school improvement offer to all LA maintained schools in the city
 - Reduce opportunities for school workforce development through CPD that is linked specifically to identified city-wide school improvement priorities
 - Lose the potential benefits and strengthening of the system gained through facilitated school to school peer reviews and other targeted projects and school improvement interventions
 - Limit the LA's ability to identify soon enough schools that are under-performing and not providing a good level of education
 - Slow down the rate of LA schools judged to be Good or Outstanding
 - Increase the risk of reputational damage to the council, and the city as a whole, if schools are judged to be requiring improvement or inadequate
 - Impact negatively on the Council's strong relationships that have been re-established over the last few years with current school leaders.

5. Reasons for decision

- 5.1 The decision to adopt the new Education Excellence Strategy reinforces the Council's vision for education. It would demonstrate the Council's commitment to continue to invest in education, specifically in school improvement as part of the regeneration and re-lighting of the city.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The cost of implementation and monitoring of the Council's actions to challenge and support schools to improve school / setting performance and increase the number of positive Ofsted inspections has been included in the approved revenue budget for the school improvement service. Ongoing monitoring and review of budgets is taking place in line with the council's policies.
- 6.2 The cost of educational failure is however significant for individual children, for schools, for the community and for the city in economic terms. It is therefore evident that the role of the LA in supporting raising standards in schools will result in economic benefits for the Council and for the city.

[TS/05072021/L]

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 Under Sections 13 & 13A of the Education Act 1996 the Council has a duty to contribute to the development of the community by securing efficient primary and secondary education and promoting high standards in the city. In addition, there is a commitment to ensure the youngest children in the city receive quality provision, and the new Education Excellence Strategy elevates the importance of early years education further.
- 7.2 Recent improvements in attainment and in the performance of schools / settings in Wolverhampton show that the Council's duties are being currently discharged to a high standard and this now needs to be maintained.

- 7.3 Changes in accountability for schools are noted in the Education Excellence Strategy document.

SZ/06072021/P

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 Some pupils, some schools and settings face greater challenges in achieving educational success; there are therefore profound equalities implications to the Council and to schools in ensuring that every child and young person achieves their full potential and every school / setting secures good educational outcomes.
- 8.2 Analysis of performance data, as part of the School Improvement Advisors' allocation of time for schools, enables a thorough review of outcomes for pupils across the range of vulnerable groups including

gender, disadvantage, ethnicity and prior attainment. This also informs the bespoke and targeted offer of support and development to schools.

9. All other implications

- 9.1 Information in Section 2 of this report demonstrates that the quality of education offered to children in the city is improving through the implementation of an improvement strategy (in this case Education Excellence). Furthermore, evidence indicates that education contributes to the social and economic factors which are the strongest determinants, accounting for approximately 40%, of health outcomes. The strategy aims to further improve academic outcomes for all children and young people at both pre key stage and each key stage of their experience of education, through a high quality curriculum offer, so preparing them to be ready for success at the next phase of their education, training or future employment.

10. Schedule of background papers

- 10.1 Education Excellence Strategy 2018 – 2021.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Education Excellence Strategy 2021 – 2024
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – Presentation slides
- 11.3 Appendix 3 – Consultation Schedule – January 2021

Education Excellence Strategy (EES) 2021 – 2024

Foreword

This Education Excellence Strategy builds on the success of the School Improvement Strategy 2016-2021. That strategy secured improved effectiveness of schools and outcomes for children and young people, and this strategy now intends to continue that drive for educational excellence.

There are a number of significant differences. This strategy now includes Early Years settings as well as schools. Whilst recognising there are differences in the support, the principles and approach to improvement are consistent, the strategy also recognises the importance of the ongoing work to support inclusion across schools and settings. The approach of a 'Team Around the School / Setting' is made more explicit to secure the necessary support a school or setting may require.

In addition, this new strategy, is underpinned by a commitment to promote and advance equality of access and opportunity across all settings, to eliminate discrimination, foster good relations across all protected characteristics in all its activities and functions, to ensure no child or young person is left behind, so enabling the best possible outcomes for all.

The strategy also identifies explicitly the support a new headteacher can receive, so demonstrating our commitment to the professional development of leaders within the City.

The revisions have arisen following discussions with school and setting leaders and consultation with corporate services. Their contributions have been invaluable.

The next three years will no doubt bring about changes to the education system, however whatever these may be, the schools and settings will continue to strive for education excellence so that children and young people are successful. This strategy is the City of Wolverhampton Council's offer to securing continued improvement in partnership with schools and settings.

Phil Leivers (Head of Education Excellence Service)

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Pride Values of City of Wolverhampton

The core values of PRIDE underpin the City of Wolverhampton's partnership with schools, with a keen focus to:

- Put the customer first – children and young people are at the heart of all our decision making and actions
- Raise the profile of the city – continue to raise Ofsted good and outstanding provision and educational achievement
- Inspire trust and confidence – through open and strong leadership
- Demonstrate a can-do and tenacious attitude – problem solving and commitment to plan, do and review so promoting success
- Empower people to innovate

1 Introduction

1.1 The City of Wolverhampton Council's vision is to create an education system in Wolverhampton that promotes the very highest standards for all children and young people, closes the attainment gap and allows every pupil in Wolverhampton to reach their full potential. The council celebrates education provider's autonomy and supports leaders and practitioners in leading City-wide collaboration and education improvement.

1.2 Educational standards across the City have improved. The success of the previous Strategy is demonstrated through a 7% increase in schools judged 'good' or better between 2018 (80%) and 2020 (87%). In August 2020, the national data set for providers being judged good or better was 86%, so demonstrating the City of Wolverhampton is now in line with national standards.

- In addition, for the period 2018 – 2020, the number of providers judged as 'requires improvement' has fallen from 12% to 11%, as well as the number of providers judged as 'inadequate' decreasing from 8% to 3%.
- This upward trend will be built upon to ensure that the children and young people of Wolverhampton have the skills and confidence needed to reach their aspirational potential and who can then support the longer-term development and prosperity of the City.

1.3 We believe that all families in Wolverhampton want their children to succeed in education. We believe they want an education system that values and celebrates high standards, and where no child is left behind as they learn and achieve through a broad and balanced curriculum.

1.4 We will ensure that our education system prepares all children and young people to become confident and responsible adult citizens. We will equip them with the skills they need for their own future economic prosperity, and that of the City.

1.5 In partnership with our schools / education settings, we will build a system where the highest quality education is delivered in all Wolverhampton settings, all of which will work together in a self-improving, self-sustaining peer-to-peer support system. Together we will act as the champion of children and families, particularly our most vulnerable.

1.6 The City of Wolverhampton Council will:

- Maintain and build upon the effective working relationships with schools / education settings to facilitate the development of strong, local peer-to-peer support networks through a systems leadership and partnership working approach, that involves all relevant stakeholders in the education improvement work across the City
- Implement a robust and effective challenge and support programme to all schools / education settings across the City, through a staged and differentiated approach based upon each setting's individual position, to hold them fully to account for education improvement
- Ensure safeguarding is accorded with the highest priority in all Wolverhampton education settings.

2. Statutory context

2.1 The local authority's current statutory responsibilities for educational excellence are set out in section 13a of the Education Act 1996. That duty states that a local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards. Local authorities must discharge this duty within the context of increasing autonomy and changing accountability for schools / education settings, alongside an expectation that improvement should be led by schools / education settings themselves.

2.2 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 defined the strategic role of the local authority in the school / education settings improvement process:

- As 'champion' of the needs of children and young people and their families
- In the planning, commissioning and quality assurance of educational services
- In challenging schools / education settings and, where appropriate, to commission support and, if necessary, to intervene in the management and governance of the school / education setting and
- Where a local authority has concerns about academy performance it must raise them directly with the Department for Education.

2.3 The 2006 Act requires local authorities to respond to parental concerns about the quality of local schools and grants new powers to intervene earlier, in maintained schools, where performance is poor. Part 4 of the Act sets out measures for tackling school underperformance by:

- Enabling early action to tackle school underperformance so that it does not become entrenched and lead to formal school failure
- Ensuring that effective support and challenge is provided immediately when unacceptable standards are identified, so that improvements can be made quickly, and
- Securing decisive action if a school in 'special measures' fails to make sufficient progress, so that the education and life chances of pupils are safeguarded.

2.4 The Act gives revised powers the local authority to intervene in maintained schools causing concern, which builds on existing statutory powers to ensure that every child is provided with the education and opportunities they deserve. The City of Wolverhampton Council will apply these powers of intervention when deemed to be appropriate. Further statutory guidance can be found at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/922910/schools_causing_concern1.pdf (September 2020)

2.5 The Education and Adoptions Act 2016 amends the 2006 Act by:

- Stating that every school judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted will be turned into a sponsored academy
- Giving new powers to the Secretary of State for Education to intervene in schools considered to be underperforming
- Allowing the Secretary of State to issue directions, with time limits, to school governing bodies and local authorities, to speed up academy conversions

- Placing a new duty on schools and local authorities in specified cases to take all
- reasonable steps to progress the conversion
- Requiring schools and local authorities in specified cases to work with an identified sponsor toward the 'making of academy arrangements' with that sponsor
- Removing the requirements for a general consultation to be held where a school 'eligible for intervention' is being converted to a sponsored academy.

3. Shared Principles

The City of Wolverhampton Education Excellence Strategy is underpinned by the following key principles:

3.1 That every child or young person in Wolverhampton will reach their full potential and have a happy and positive school / learning experience.

3.2 That every school / education setting in the City will make effective provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities so that they can make good progress in their learning and can move easily on to the next stage of their education and aspire for employment and independent adult life.

3.3 That the outcomes of every child or young person in Wolverhampton are a collective responsibility. While responsibility for improvement rests with individual schools / education settings as self-managing institutions, the City of Wolverhampton Council has a statutory duty (as outlined in **section 2**) to challenge and, where it deems it necessary, to undertake timely interventions in schools / education settings to raise standards.

3.4 That transparency, mutual trust and partnership are vital to a self-improving system: Clear and robust criteria for categorising each school, based on their level of effectiveness in providing a good level of education is shared with school / education settings' leaders (See **Annex 1**). Once categorised, schools / education settings will receive differentiated levels of challenge and intervention from the local authority (see **Annex 2, 3 and 4**) to ensure rapid and sustainable improvement. Where a local authority has concerns about an academy's performance, it will raise them initially with the school and the trust and then, if necessary, directly with the Secretary of State via the Regional Schools Commissioner and if necessary, Ofsted.

3.5 That strong leadership, management and governance are essential:

Headteachers/setting leaders and governors are ultimately responsible for the performance of the schools / education settings' they lead. Governing bodies, therefore, need to effectively challenge and hold school / education settings' leadership teams appropriately to account to ensure good outcomes for all pupils. The effectiveness of school / education settings' governance will therefore be quality assured with a robust system for evaluating the effectiveness of all governing bodies all set within the context of the Council's Governance Strategy (see **section 4.8**)

3.6 That an effective self-improving school / education setting led system of support is vital:

Peer-to-peer improvement networks that are built on autonomy and effective professional relationships, are vital to ensure effective support is available to all schools / education settings. Through these networks, schools / education settings will take ownership and responsibility for their own and support each other's performance and improvement.

3.7 That newly created Teaching Hubs, and identified partners, will further support schools working in partnership to improve the quality of education provision within the City.

3.8 The City of Wolverhampton Council will work in partnership with Schools' Forum to ensure resources are effectively deployed to improve school standards and the outcomes for all children including the most vulnerable, using best value principles.

4. City of Wolverhampton Council's judgement of school effectiveness

4.1 School Improvement Advisors (SIAs):

Where School Improvement Advisors are deployed, or members of the Early Years team, they will seek to:

- Focus on the overall quality of education provided by the school / education setting, in particular the curriculum offer including the quality of teaching and learning to ensure high-quality provision for all, so enabling positive outcomes
- Respect the school's and setting's autonomy to plan its own development and commission its own support
- Give professional challenge to school leaders and governors, setting managers and owners in the spirit of continuous improvement.

4.2 Categorisation of LA maintained schools:

Each Wolverhampton School / EYFS setting will be placed in one of **five** local authority categories based on published criteria, (see **Annex 1**). No school or setting, however compelling its quantitative or qualitative data may move to a Category A until it has been judged to be at least good through its most recent Ofsted Inspection.

Categories relate to the level of support provided to each setting, and is shown in the number of days allocated to the school / setting

Priority is given to those schools and settings who need the most support given the circumstances in which they operate. Many factors will affect categorisation ranging from schools judged to be newly good, settings with a first headship post or wider challenges e.g. financial; staffing etc. (see **Annex 2**).

If and where applicable, -consideration will be made in relation to the local authority using its formal powers of intervention when determining a school's category.

In the autumn term, schools and settings will be informed of their local authority category and the reasons for it.

This categorisation will be reviewed termly and if the risk factors for the school / setting increase or decrease the school's category may be changed. School leaders will be involved in discussions to inform the best level of support and subsequent category.

- School Improvement Advisors (SIAs) will be allocated to work with schools based on need, as identified through the categorisation process
- Additional members of Education Excellence will be allocated to key activity where appropriate e.g. reviews/ health check activity
- All schools will be provided with a differentiated core programme of challenge and support (see **Annex 2, 3 and 4**).

Please note, all schools who offer provision for two-year-olds, will receive termly visits from members of the Early Years team.

4.3 Categorisation of EYFS – PVIs and Child Minders:

Categorisation for EYFS settings follow a similar methodology to schools to enable greater parity and equality across all education settings.

For those settings who have funded places, there is a keen expectation for high standards from the outset to ensure children get off to a great start and subsequently are ready for transfer into school.

In the autumn term, EYFS settings will be informed of their local authority category and the reasons for it.

This categorisation will be reviewed regularly and if the risk factors for the setting increase or decrease the setting's category may be changed; child minders, nursery managers and / or nursery owners will be involved in discussions to inform the best level of support and subsequent category. (see **Annex 1**)

- The Senior Advisor for Early Years, Quality and Access Officers and the Early Years and Childcare Development Officer will be allocated to work with settings based on need, as identified through the categorisation process.

Please note, all settings will be able to access pre-registration guidance and support from the Early Years team.

4.4 Challenge and Accountability – Maintained Schools:

- Once categorised, schools and settings will receive a differentiated level of challenge and support from the local authority through School Improvement Advisors (SIAs) and advisory teachers (see **Annex 2**)
- School Improvement Advisors (SIAs) will provide bespoke and differentiated levels of professional challenge and support to schools, to evaluate performance, identify priorities for improvement and support planning for effective change
- School Improvement Advisors (SIAs), and members of Education Excellence will act for and on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council and are the main conduit for its communication on school improvement
- Specific allocations of SIA and advisory teacher time will be determined according to the school's category (see **Annex 2**) and individual school's circumstances

- All maintained schools in Categories B and C will also be challenged and supported through regular Team Around the School meetings (TAS) (see **Annex 4**) which will enable relevant information to be shared, and for wider input / support from across teams within the City of Wolverhampton
- TAS meetings will be chaired by a member of Education Excellence and attended by wider local authority personnel as needed, with a minimum expectation of attendance from the headteacher and chair of governors, although wider participation from school leadership teams and governors will be encouraged where appropriate
- The headteacher and chair of governors will present evidence of impact since the last TAS meeting against the school's priorities for improvement as agreed, as well as local authority officers sharing the impact of their activity where relevant. This information will then be used to inform next steps and identified support.

4.5 Team Around the Setting Dashboard:

- All of our maintained settings will have access to the schools' statutory compliance dashboard, which uses analytics solutions technology to triangulate data in order to prioritise support. The dashboard is primarily for the use of headteachers, business managers and governors as a compliance management tool, and is regularly updated. Users will see information relating to their own settings only, through secure login access, whilst local authority partners will see all settings' information pertinent to for their area, such as Audit Services. The dashboard is underpinned by our schools' statutory compliance board, which seeks to provide wrap around support based on the triangulated intelligence from the dashboard. The dashboard can also be made available to academies. (see **Annex 5**)

4.6 Challenge and Accountability – Early Years settings, PVI's and Child Minders:

- Once categorised, settings will receive a differentiated level of challenge and support from the local authority through the Senior Advisor for Early Years, Quality and Access Officers and the Early Years Childcare and Development Officer (see **Annex 2**).
- The Senior Advisor for Early Years, Quality and Access Officers and the Early Years Childcare and Development Officer will provide bespoke and differentiated levels of professional challenge to EYFS settings, to evaluate provision, performance, identify priorities for improvement and support the planning for effective change.

The Senior Advisor for Early Years and wider EYFS team will act for and on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council and are the main conduit for its communication on education improvement:

- Specific allocations from Quality and Access, and the Early Years Childcare and Development Officer officers will be determined according to the setting's category (see **Annex 2**) and individual setting's circumstances
- All settings will also have an annual conversation which will aim to capture the impact of support and activity, as well as identifying priorities for improvement (see **Annex 3**)
- All settings will also be challenged and supported through regular Team Around Setting meetings (TAS) (see **Annex 4**), which will be proportionate to the category of the setting. Such an approach will enable relevant information to be shared and for wider input from across teams within the City of Wolverhampton

- TAS meetings will be chaired by the Senior Adviser for Early Years and attended by wider local authority personnel as needed e.g. SNEYS, SALT teams etc. with an expectation of attendance from the setting manager and owner. Where viable meetings can be held virtually to facilitate collaboration, including a member of the local authority being at the setting to support
- The meeting should enable the manager and owner of the setting, in partnership with the local authority, to share activity and update the impact of action taken, as well as agreeing further support and key priorities
- In the case of child minders, the local authority will be sympathetic to the capacity and availability of registered staff.

4.7 Challenge and Accountability – Academies:

- The local authority seeks to work in close partnership with academy CEOs and their respective schools to ensure quality provision for all children and young people within the city. Academy chains are able to procure additional support from Education Excellence by negotiation, subject to availability and capacity
- All academies will be entitled to a day's support, the focus of which will be determined by the academy itself
- Where the City of Wolverhampton Council has concerns about the performance of an academy, for example through analysis of available data, website information, the curriculum offer and the latest Ofsted report, it will in the first instance write to the individual establishment to raise the issue and provide an external perspective to the headteacher / principal, chair of governors and, where appropriate, the single or multi-academy trust board
- If invited, this may include a visit from a School Improvement Advisor in order to be discuss the school's plans for potential solutions within an agreed timescale.

Please note, academies who offer provision for two-year-olds, will receive termly visits from members of the Early Years team.

4.8 Further powers of intervention:

- If the City of Wolverhampton Council is not satisfied that the concerns raised are being effectively addressed, it will share its concerns with the Regional Schools' Commissioner and Ofsted
- Where the City of Wolverhampton Council, through its safeguarding service, has concerns about an academy's safeguarding arrangements or procedures (arising as a result of investigations about individual children or otherwise), these concerns will be reported to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Ofsted.

5. Development of Governance

Purpose:

"Governance has never been more critical to the education of our nation's young people. The governance duty is, above all, to drive relentless ambition for the young people served by our schools' system, whatever the circumstances. The leadership and check-and-balance you provide is essential in monitoring and reviewing risks and plans, as well as in supporting your school leaders to implement plans that support staff and pupils and ensure that all children receive the education they deserve, whatever the circumstance."

Baroness Elizabeth Berridge

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

(taken from the Governors Handbook October 2020)

This strategy outlines the Council's commitment and approach to securing the effective governance of maintained schools in the City and supporting individuals to be effective in carrying out their governor role. In addition, it also sets out the Council's role in supporting this within the context of its statutory responsibilities, national and local strategies, initiatives and developments.

Vision:

The local authority has a duty to promote educational excellence as set out in section 13a of the Education Act 1996. That duty states that a local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards. Effective governance drives school improvement and enables young people to raise their aspirations, fulfil their potential and develop the right skills to play a positive part in the life of the City.

The local authority will strengthen and develop effective school governance through:

- Communicating effectively with stakeholders and governing bodies the Council's objectives and duties to deliver educational excellence
- Strengthening governing bodies by operating a skills-led recruitment model for all governors and working with and developing national leaders of governance; and
- Maintaining an "intelligence-led" approach to ensuring that the Council and governing bodies are effectively discharging their statutory duties, driving school improvement and improving outcomes for children and young people
- Offering a comprehensive support to schools to enable effective governance.

Context:

Role of the governing body

Governing bodies are required to fulfil their statutory responsibilities for the conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement by:

- Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined
- Ensuring that the headteacher performs his/her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school, and
- Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources (*as defined by The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013*).

Role of the local authority

The local authority has a number of statutory duties in relation to the governance of maintained schools:

- Recruitment of local authority governors
- Maintaining up-to-date records of all governors in maintained schools
- Ensuring all maintained school governing bodies have governor code of conduct policies, which make explicit high standards for the role, conduct and professionalism of their governors including the expectation that governors undertake training and development

- Ensuring that information and training is available to governors to enable them to undertake their role effectively and to fill any skills gaps needed to contribute to the effective governance of the school
- Using the local authority's statutory powers of intervention under the Education and Inspections Act (2006) by strengthening governing bodies and supporting the implementation of Interim Executive Boards (IEB's) where this has been approved by the Regional Schools Commissioner
- Agreeing and making instruments of government for all maintained schools
- Ensuring school governance arrangements are published on school websites and populate governance fields on 'Get Information About Schools' (GIAS).

The local authority expects its school governors to:

- Champion improved outcomes for all children and young people in Wolverhampton
- Consider national and local priorities, and challenge decisions that could be detrimental to improved educational outcomes
- Focus on challenging schools to close gaps in attainment and progression and exceed national averages, particularly for vulnerable groups of children and young people
- Have in place appropriate monitoring arrangements to identify signs of failure in relation to governors' oversight of finance, safety or performance standards (*Department for Education Schools Causing Concern Statutory Guidance – January 2018 - Non-Statutory Guidance Relating to Governance in Maintained Schools*)

Current challenges for governing bodies:

- Recruitment and retention of skilled, effective governors and chairs to ensure appropriate support and challenge
- Reducing school budgets that require high levels of financial management by the governing body
- The challenging context of new curriculum requirements (as set out in the Education Inspection Framework 2019), assessment/testing and qualification frameworks
- Maintaining the well-being of all stakeholders within the school community and in light of Covid restrictions and challenges (where relevant)

Objectives of the Strategy

This strategy will:

- Assist the local authority to fulfil its statutory requirements in respect of governance
- Support the development and maintenance of high-quality school governance
- Support individual governors to develop and maintain the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their statutory duties and drive school improvement, and
- Contribute towards a good or better judgement of the Local Authority's support for governors in all quality audits.

Strands of Activity

1. Recruitment, development and retention of skilled, effective governors

a) Governor Recruitment

- Work with the local business community and wider community to promote the benefits of becoming a governor and reflecting the diversity of our community as role models for our young people
- Provision/operation of a skills-based governor nomination process, which will include the promotion of the governors' skills audit
- Provision of a suite of recruitment materials for schools/governing bodies
- Provision of parent and staff governor election procedures.

b) Provision of a consistent approach to Governor Induction

- Provision of induction training and information
- Guidance on effective school-based induction processes
- Maintain an up-to-date record of all governors within maintained schools.

c) Provision of advice and guidance to support effective school governance

- Provision of high-quality guides, toolkits and materials
- Provision of governor training and development activities in line with the needs identified in governors' skills audit
- Signposting to national governance leadership development programmes.
- Provision of succession planning support for "aspiring" chairs / vice-chairs.

2. Improving / maintaining effective governance

a) Supporting effective, systematic governing body external governance audits

- Promotion of and access to whole governing body self-evaluation materials / toolkit / professional support
- Provision of rigorous external governance audits, in line with DfE guidance, on a regular basis, providing a 'RAG' rated action plan
- Publication and sharing of best practice via website and newsletters.

b) Supporting the review of the governing body constitution

- Provision of support to governing bodies in ensuring the constitution of the body is reviewed regularly
- Making and changing of 'Instrument of Government' when reviewed.

c) Providing targeted support for governing bodies to address specific issues identified through the local authority's school improvement work

- Provision of bespoke programmes of support to governing bodies of schools identified as causing concern
- Use of local authority's statutory intervention powers, including the issuing of warning notices, the appointment of additional governors and the establishment of Interim Executive Boards (IEBs) where necessary.

d) Developing local authority knowledge and understanding of governing bodies to ensure the provision of appropriate and effective support

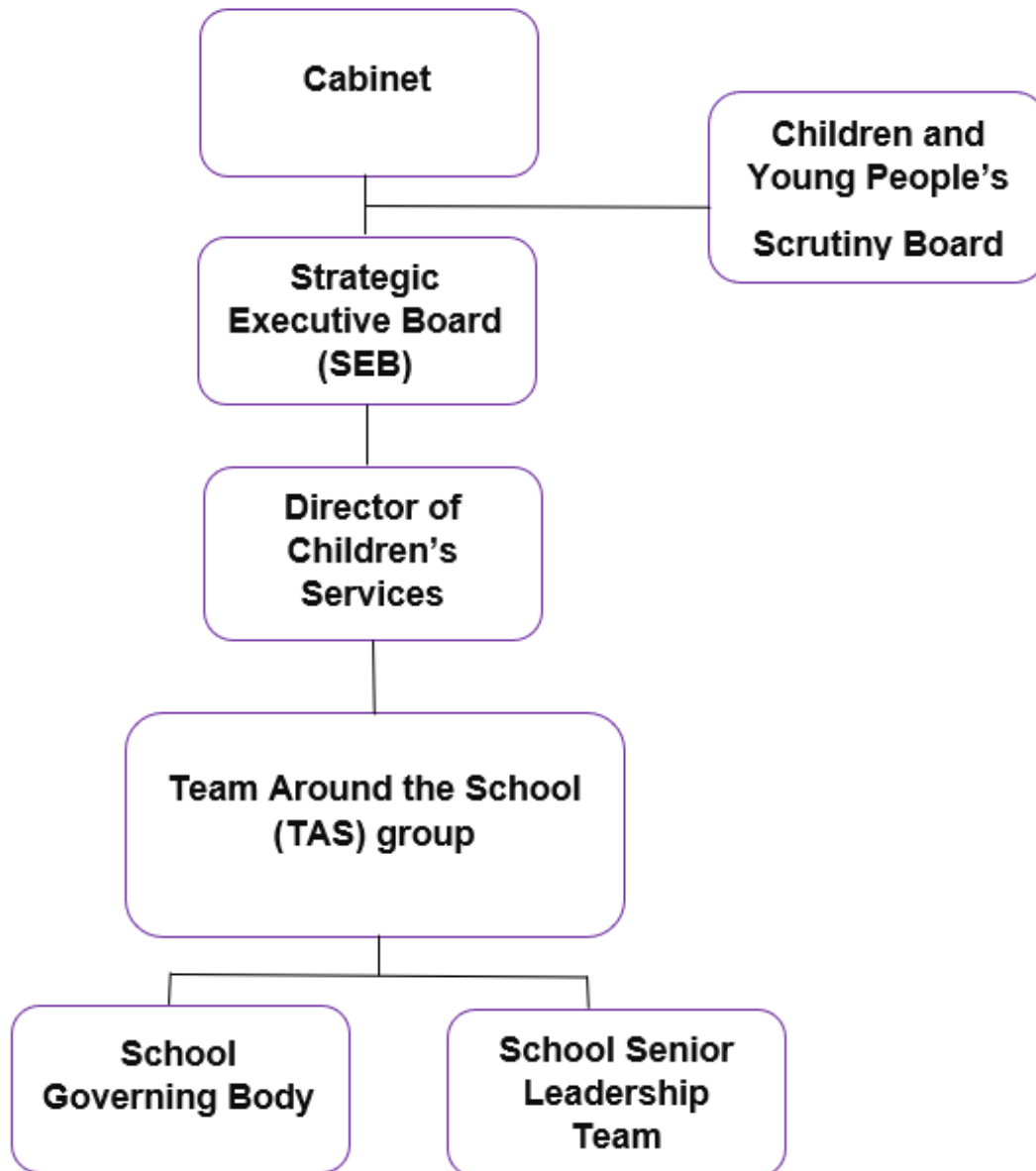
- Development of effective information sharing systems
- Input into the school / education setting improvement framework processes

- Keeping up to date with national governance developments through the National Governance Association (NGA), DfE and other organisations.

DRAFT

Accountability Summary

Following the publication of validated data sets each autumn, a report will be provided in January which will capture attainment and achievement headlines, including overviews regarding Ofsted judgements.



Annex 1

Support Categories for Wolverhampton Schools

Annex 1 - categorisation

New Category	Proposed Support Status	Ofsted reference	LA reference	Leadership and Management	Governance	EYFS Business ref	NEW Allocated days of support	NEW key activity
Academies and Free schools (AFS)							1 day per year* <i>*Those schools with provision for two-year-olds, will receive termly core visits for EYFS</i>	Day of support to be determined by the academy and allocated SIA
Out of hours / Wrap Around Care (school registration)							Minimum of 1 day per year	
Out of hours / Wrap Around Care (non-school registration)							Termly support visit	
SCHOOLS A – providing a good or better education	LOW SUPPORT	Judged good or outstanding by Ofsted at the last inspection; securely good	Judged securely good or outstanding by the LA through School Improvement Advisor work with the school, and is therefore likely to be judged so at the school's next Ofsted inspection.	Leadership and management at all levels, particularly senior leaders, middle managers and governors consistently demonstrate, through evidence and analysis of data, effective processes and structures which have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and behaviour.	School Governors are RAG-rated as green by the LA.		5 days per year	
PVI / Child Minders	LOW SUPPORT	Judged outstanding, good or 'met' at the last	Work with the early years team demonstrates that the setting's curriculum intentions are met and are	Effectiveness of leadership and management is proven and strong. All key documentation is in place and safeguarding practices are robust.	NA	Well established business, sustainability and	4 days per year from the wider	Support visits and yearly review focusing on

A – providing a good or better education		Ofsted inspection. Securely good in all areas including all welfare requirements	sufficiently challenging for all children. A high-quality setting which is welcoming, safe and stimulating where all children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. All necessary steps are taken to keep children safe. There is a clear understanding and embedded vision regarding the EYFS curriculum intent, implementation and impact.	Owner fully involved and supportive of the setting, including driving change with the manager. High quality training and CPD opportunities are in place and accesses allow for reflective practice. Partnership working is effective. Equality of opportunity is evident. SEND provision and policies meet individual needs and highly effective working relationships with outside agencies and parents secures positive outcomes.		sufficiency plans are in place; clear understanding of funding; LA terms and conditions adhered to; Occupancy levels are above 80%.	Early Years team	teaching and/or learning and welfare requirements.
SCHOOLS AS – providing a good or better education AS = A+support	LOW SUPPORT	Recently judged as good following a previous judgement of Requires Improvement.	Judged as newly good; some vulnerability due to a recently awarded ‘good’, however, no sustained history of G2, hence additional support (AS) in the first year.	Leadership and management is improving, but needs additional support and guidance to consolidate this to ensure G2 at next inspection and / or HT is new to the school with previous headship experience. Offer of a school review to provide a baseline.	Developing and improving, but potential vulnerability. Governance is rated at least amber by the LA.		7 days per year in first year following G2 (including a review)	Extra 1 day – to be negotiated together: School and CWC / LA
Childminders AS – providing a good or better education AS = A+support	LOW SUPPORT	Recently judged as good following previous judgement of Requires Improvement.	Judged as newly good; some vulnerability due to a recently awarded ‘good’, however, no sustained history of G2, hence additional support (AS) in the first year.	All leaders have a clear and ambitious vision to provide high quality care and education for all. Some guidance might be required on staffing and teaching and learning expectations. Extra support is needed to ensure a judgement of good at the next inspection; or there is a new manager in post who has previous managerial experience.	NA	Some funding support needed; sufficiency and sustainability plans in place; possible concerns over occupancy.	6 days per year in the first year of becoming good	
SCHOOLS B1 – level of education provided requires improvement	MEDIUM SUPPORT	Schools that have previously been judged good or outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection but there may be evidence of some	School is judged to be requiring improvement at its last inspection, and LA evidence suggests, through School Improvement Advisor activity with the school, the school is likely to be judged to be good at its next inspection.	Leadership and management at all levels particularly senior leaders, middle managers and governors is secure and improving which is leading to improvements in pupils’ outcomes and / or there is a new HT to post with no previous headship experience.	School Governance is RAG-rated at least amber by the LA with a clear action plan for improvement.		9.5 days per year	

		vulnerability at the next inspection as shown through the school's work with the LA / School Improvement Advisor or school performance data OR						
PVI / Child Minders B1 – level of education provided requires improvement Page 36	MEDIUM SUPPORT	Settings have been judged as outstanding, good or 'met' at their last inspection, but current evidence shows vulnerability.	New nursery setting or childminder provision less than 12 months old. Key roles in place such as SENCo and room leads but support needed in embedding roles and responsibilities. Welfare requirements are being met consistently but safeguarding audit might highlight some areas for improvement.	Leaders are committed to improving practitioners' knowledge to enhance and improve provision. Leaders engage effectively with children, their parents and others in their community, including schools and other local services. Leaders engage with their staff and are aware of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way they manage staff, including their workload.		Some funding support needed; sufficiency and sustainability plans in place; possible concerns over occupancy. Some concerns over term and conditions being consistently met and / or concerns re staff turnover.	Up to 10 days of support	Initial whole setting review focusing on teaching and learning and welfare requirements. Annual conversation, 2 core visits and 1.5 days of focused support.
SCHOOLS B2 – level of education provided requires improvement	MEDIUM SUPPORT	School is judged as requiring improvement by Ofsted and demonstrates limited capacity to improve; this judgement continues to be evidenced through the work of the School Improvement Advisor and/or school	Schools that have previously been judged good or outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection but are considered to be very vulnerable at the next inspection by the LA as shown through the school's work with the School Improvement Advisor and engagement with Education Excellence.	Aspects of the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, and personal development require improvement; school leaders do not yet consistently demonstrate effective processes and structures, and therefore have limited capacity to improve at the pace required. Eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of limited improvement in standards of attainment that are below average Gaps in progress and outcomes that are well below average for disadvantage and vulnerable groups (including SEND). High rates of pupil absence, persistent absence, fixed-term and permanent exclusions. Safeguarding concerns Teaching is not consistently good Weak governance High levels of parental concerns and complaints including those made to Ofsted. Inadequate progress arising from HMI monitoring visits 	School Governance is RAG-rated amber or red by the LA and there is limited evidence of capacity to improve.		14.5 days per year	Extra 1 day – to be negotiated together: School and CWC / LA

		performance data OR		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rapid or significant reductions in pupil numbers</i> • <i>Significant changes in staffing</i> • <i>Financial deficit or financial mismanagement</i> • <i>Reluctance to acknowledge concerns and address weaknesses</i> • <i>Reported incidents to suggest there is a breakdown of leadership or governance.</i> • <i>Notes of Progress and Impact visits which report poor progress and continued weak performance with little impact.</i> 				
PVI / Child Minders B2 – level of education provided requires improvement Page 37	MEDIUM SUPPORT	Setting or childminder has been is judged as Requiring Improvement or not met by Ofsted. The setting or childminder is struggling to demonstrate the capacity to make the necessary changes. This is evidenced through the work of the early years team as well as information from outside services	<p>Settings who have previously been judged as outstanding or good at the previous inspection but are now considered by the LA to be very vulnerable at the next inspection through work with the early years team and engagement with the LA.</p> <p>Welfare requirements are being met but the safeguarding audit has highlighted areas for improvement.</p> <p>Correct documentation is not consistently in place.</p> <p>Quality of education is not good and does not meet the needs of all children</p>	<p>Provision to support children’s personal development is not good.</p> <p>Any breaches of the statutory requirements for safeguarding and welfare and/or learning and development do not have a significant impact on children’s safety, well-being and personal development.</p> <p>Provision for all children is not consistently good</p> <p>Quality of education is not good and does not meet the needs of all children. Leaders and managers have a clear vision for their setting but are unable to demonstrate how to bring about change and drive the improvements needed.</p>		Funding support needed; sufficiency and sustainability plans in place; possible concerns over occupancy; some concerns over terms and conditions being consistently met and / or concerns raised re staff turnover. Supervisions not driving change Lack of impact from CPD Concerns around the premises Policies not up to date Ofsted not informed of changes	10 days	Annual conversation, review activity, 2 core visits, termly TAS meetings. 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development. 3.5 days of additional bespoke support or training opportunities
SCHOOLS C – level of education provided has serious weaknesses or is in special measures	INTENSIVE / HIGH SUPPORT	School is judged as having serious weakness or requiring special measures by Ofsted OR	Overall the LA, through the work of the School Improvement Advisor with the school, judges the quality of education to be inadequate. There are key aspects that require significant improvement, and evidence suggests	Leaders and managers are not taking sufficiently effective steps towards securing a good quality of education. Pupils’ behaviour and attitudes and personal development are weak. Leadership and management is ineffective, especially that of senior leaders, middle managers and governors, resulting in weak capacity to make the necessary improvements with the urgency required. <i>e.g</i>	School Governance is RAG-rated red by the LA and there is little evidence of capacity to improve. There are unfilled		19 days per year	

			<p>there is insufficient capacity to improve outcomes OR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of very limited or no improvement in standards of attainment that are below average • Wide gaps in progress and outcomes that are well below average for disadvantage and vulnerable groups (including SEND). • High rates of pupil absence, persistent absence, fixed-term and permanent exclusions • Safeguarding concerns • Teaching is not consistently good • Weak governance • High levels of parental concerns and complaints including those made to Ofsted. Inadequate progress arising from HMI monitoring visits • Rapid or significant reductions in pupil numbers • Significant changes in staffing • Financial deficit or financial mismanagement • Reluctance to acknowledge concerns and address weaknesses • Reported incidents to suggest there is a breakdown of leadership or governance. • Notes of Progress and Impact visits which report poor progress and continued weak performance with very little or no impact. 	<p>vacancies on the governing board and a lack of skills are contributing to ineffective governance</p>			
<p>Page 38</p> <p>1 / Child Minders 1 - level of education provided has serious weaknesses or is in special measures</p>	<p>INTENSIVE / HIGH SUPPORT</p>	<p>Safeguarding is ineffective. Breaches of EYFS requirements have a significant impact on the safety and well-being and/or the learning and development of children. The setting has received two previous 'requires improvement' judgements and it is still not good.</p>	<p>A poorly designed and implemented curriculum does not meet children's needs. The needs of babies and young children are not met. Children are not well prepared for school or the next stage of their learning, particularly those who are in receipt of additional funding. Children have a narrow experience that does not promote their understanding of people and communities beyond their own or help them to recognise and accept each other's differences.</p>	<p>Leaders require support, guidance and intervention to be able to improve the quality of education and care. Actions taken to tackle areas of identified weakness have been insufficient or ineffective. Practitioners have a poor understanding of the areas of learning they teach and the way in which young children learn. Strategies for engaging parents are weak and parents do not know what their child is learning or how they can help them improve. Mandatory training is not undertaken. Breaches of the statutory requirements have a significant impact on children's learning and development.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>Premises unsecured and unsuitable, including the learning environment and equipment available; terms and conditions not returned; occupancy levels below 50%; sufficiency and sustainability plans not in place; records and documentations not in place.</p>	<p>12.5 days per years</p>	<p>Offer: Annual conversation, 2 Reviews, 2 core visits. Half-termly TAS meetings, 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development; 3.5 days of additional bespoke support or training opportunities.</p>

Annex 2

Categories, time allocation and activity

CATEGORY: Academies and Free Schools (ACF) and non-funded nurseries (NFEYFS)

Category AFS and NFEYFS	Allocation	NOTES
School	1 day per year	AFS to work with allocated SIAs to agree input. Additional support can be procured
PVI	1 day per year	Support with registration and area sufficiency. Opportunity to attend identified EYFS training
Child Minder	1 day per year	Support with registration and area sufficiency. Opportunity to attend identified EYFS training

CATEGORY: A (low support) = 5 days / 4 days for EYFS settings

Category A – low support	Allocation	Preparation tasks	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	5 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)		Autumn Conversation meeting (Nov) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report)	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5		Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5		1.0 day focused support – to be agreed between HT and SIA
PVI	Up to 4 days	Annual Conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Review (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5)						1.0 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
Child Minder	Up to 4 days	Annual Conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Collaborative review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5)						1.0 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

CATEGORY: AS (low support) = 7 days (5+2) / 6 days for EYFS settings

Category AS – low support	Allocation	Preparation tasks	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	7 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)		Autumn Conversation meeting (Nov) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report)	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 *Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up		Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5		*Whole school review – 1.0 day + 1.0 day prep and write up – timing of review to be agreed between HT and SIA PLUS 1.0 days additional input to be agreed with HT and SIA
PVI	Up to 6 days	Annual Conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Review (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						1.0 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
Child Minder	Up to 6 days	Annual Conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Collaborative review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						1.0 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

CATEGORY: B1 (medium support) = 9.5 days / 8 days for EYFS settings

Category B1 – medium support	Allocation	Preparation tasks	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	9.5 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)	Autumn Conversation meeting (Oct) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report)	TAS meeting (Dec) (0.5)	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up		Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up		Review foci to be agreed with HT and SIA

PVI	Up to 8 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS meeting (0.5 x3 = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)	1.5 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
Child Minder	Up to 8 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Collaborative review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS meeting (0.5 x3 = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)	1.5 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

CATEGORY: B2 (medium support) = 14.5 days / 10 days for EYFS settings

Category B2 – Medium support	Allocation	Preparation tasks	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	14.5 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)	Autumn Conversation meeting (Oct) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report)	TAS meeting (Nov) (0.5) Review 1.0 + 1.0 write up	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) *Status check 2.0 + 1.0 prep and 1.0 write up		Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up		3 reviews per year, to include x1 *Status check per year - 2 day review – timing to be agreed; other review foci to be agreed with HT and SIA PLUS + 1.0 days input to be agreed with HT and SIA
PVI	Up to 10 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS meeting (0.5 x3 = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						3.5 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

Child Minder	Up to 10 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Collaborative review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS meeting (0.5 x3 = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)	3.5 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
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CATEGORY: C (high support) = 19 days / 14 days for EYFS settings

Category C – high support	Allocation	Preparation tasks	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	19 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)	Autumn Conversation meeting (Sept) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report) TAS meeting (0.5)	TAS meeting (0.5)(Nov) *Status check Review 2.0 +1.0 prep and 1.0 write up*	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5)	TAS meeting (0.5) *Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) *Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up	TAS meeting (0.5) *Status check Review 2.0 +1.0 prep and 1.0 write up	4 reviews pr year to include *Status check X2 per year (can replace 2 reviews in the term)
Child Minder	Up to 12.5 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) 2 Review activity (0.5+0.5 x2) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Half-termly TAS meeting (0.5 x6 = 3.0) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						3.5 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
Child Minder	Up to 12.5 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) 2 Collaborative review activities (0.5+0.5 x2) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS meeting (0.5 x6 = 3.0) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						3.5 day focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

Annex 3

Autumn conversation / annual conversation for early years settings

Membership of the group from the City of Wolverhampton education Excellence Team:

- Head of Education Excellence (Chair)
- School Improvement Senior Advisor (Chair)
- School Improvement Advisors
- Senior Adviser for Early Years
- Advisory Teachers

School team:

- Headteacher
- Senior Leaders
- Chair of governors (or appropriate substitute)

Early Years

- Setting owner
- Setting manager
- Identified staff

Purpose of the Autumn / Annual Conversation

To establish and implement an appropriate balance of support and challenge to improve outcomes and raise standards for all children and young people.

To review the impact of activity on outcomes, from both the school / education setting and the local authority for the previous academic year.

To explore the school's / setting's priorities for the new academic year and to agree and allocate support in line with the school's / education setting category, so ensuring the best use of finite resources.

Terms of reference

- All schools, regardless of categorisation within ABC bandings, will be required to participate in the autumn / annual conversation. Schools / education settings will be sent invitations in advance to optimise attendance during the period allocated for this activity
- The autumn/ annual conversation will be chaired by either the Head of Education Excellence, School Improvement Senior Adviser, Senior Adviser for Early Years or a nominated representative who is not directly linked to the school / setting
- There will be an expectation of attendance from the headteacher and chair of governors, / setting owner and / or manager although other leaders / staff are encouraged to attend as appropriate
- The meetings will follow an agreed agenda, based upon information about the school / settings' provision and outcomes
- Improvement activity will be identified and mapped into the academic year, promoting strong partnership activity between education settings and the local authority.

Annex 4

Team Around the School / Setting

Membership

Membership of the group from the City of Wolverhampton education Excellence Team:

- Head of Education Excellence (Chair)
- School Improvement Senior Advisor (Chair)
- School Improvement Advisor
- Senior Adviser for Early Years where appropriate
- SNEYS team for early years, where appropriate
- Speech and language teams for early years, where appropriate
- Input from wider teams including: finance, health and safety, human resources, facilities, safeguarding as and where appropriate

School team:

- Headteacher
- Senior Leaders
- Chair of governors (or appropriate substitute)

Early Years setting:

- Setting owner
- Setting manager
- Identified staff

Terms of reference

- All schools / education settings categorised as B or C schools (medium and high support) will be required to engage in team around the school / setting (TAS) meeting to facilitate sustained improvement and improve outcomes for children and young people
- Members attending meetings will be based upon individual circumstances and also reference information which is held on the school's dashboard (for schools)
- TAS meetings will be chaired by a senior local authority officer
- B1 and B2 category schools / education settings will receive termly TAS meetings
- C category schools / education settings will receive half-termly TAS meetings
- Agreement sharing protocols will be explored to ensure that only pertinent and relevant information will be shared as appropriate to procure support and / or determine activity
- There is an expectation of attendance by the headteacher, chair of governors and identified leaders / personnel as appropriate, or in the case of early years settings, owners and managers
- Meetings will follow a set agenda, which will be shared in advance of the meeting and all meetings will be minuted
- The content of the meeting will be led by the headteacher and chair of governors, or in the case of early years settings, owners and managers who will share evidence of the impact of action taken as well as identifying current challenges and additional support needed from the local authority
- Schools and settings, and the local authority will work collaboratively to facilitate swift improvement including the allocation of support from wider teams if and where appropriate
- At the end of the meeting a risk assessment for school will be completed, identifying the level of vulnerability against a good judgement from Ofsted (high, medium or low) and for early years settings progress against meeting existing agreed priorities
- Key factors identified through discussion will form the basis for improvement priorities, which will be reviewed at the next TAS meeting.

Annex 5

TAS Dashboard example

Budget	Deficit/surplus meeting	Deficit/surplus %	Audit up to date?	Named DPO in place?	Business/site Manager training?
Surplus £10,000	Not applicable	1.2%	No 12/2014	Yes	Yes
H&S audit up to date?	H&S report outcome	H&S action plan progress	Health and Safety Provider	Legionella/asbestos practice in place?	Confirmation of SCR & Vetting checks
26/07/2020	Good	Good	Council – full package	Yes	Yes
Fire Safety Check return UTD?	Fire Risk Assessment Action Plan UTD?	MASH referrals academic year to date	Permanent exclusions	Continuity plans in place?	Confirmation of CP & safeguarding training?
Yes	No	3	0	No	Yes
Date of last OfSTED	Inspection type	Rating	Parent View?	Website compliant?	Suspensions, hearings, dismissals?
18/9/2019	Full	Good	8	Fully	0

Annex 6

Headteacher Induction

The City of Wolverhampton recognises the transition from deputy headship to Headship is significant. A Headteacher's role is a complex one, including many additional layers of responsibility beyond pupil outcomes.

The City of Wolverhampton is committed to enabling those new to local authority headship to have a programme of support and professional development through dedicated mentoring and a series of inputs to improve understanding of different aspects of leadership, including: health and safety, finance and facilities management for example.

The city's revised offer will be made available to all new headteachers commencing the academic year 2021/22, and compliments wider induction activity including support for new governors. The School Improvement Senior Adviser leads this programme in partnership with wider council departments.

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Education Excellence Strategy(EES) 2021 – 2024

24 June 2021

Presenter Linda Brown,
School Improvement Senior Advisor
Stacey Henderson
Senior Early Years Advisor

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Our mission:
Working as one to
serve our city

**CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON**

RELIGHTING OUR CITY

RESET, RECOVER AND RELIGHT



wolverhampton.gov.uk

5 Key priorities



Creating more opportunities for young people

- Investment of £2.5m to create opportunities for young people
- Drive 'opportunity through learning', supporting schools to drive up standards
- We will continue to support our most vulnerable young people

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**TACKLING THE ISSUES
THAT MATTER**

YOU TOLD US THAT

**YOU WANT TO HAVE YOUR
OPINIONS HEARD**

**MORE AND BETTER
OPPORTUNITIES**

**GOOD EDUCATION TO
FULFIL POTENTIAL**

**US TO SUPPORT SOCIAL,
EMOTIONAL HEALTH
AND WELLBEING**

Generate more jobs and learning opportunities

**TACKLING THE ISSUES
THAT MATTER**

YOU TOLD US THAT

**INVESTING IN JOBS AND
SKILLS** SHOULD BE THE **NO.1
PRIORITY** FOR THE COUNCIL

WE NEED TO **PREPARE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE**

WE SHOULD **MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF
THE GREEN ECONOMY**

WE NEED MORE **GOOD QUALITY**

**ADVICE AND SUPPORT
FOR THOSE OUT OF WORK**

- We're supporting local people into work, training or an apprenticeship
- We'll future proof our economy, building skills for the future
- Work with partners to create new jobs and opportunities

Education Excellence Strategy 2021 – 2024

**CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL**

Our mission:
Working as one to
serve our city



Current strategy

Headlines:

- LA has a duty to monitor the effectiveness of schools
- 2018 – 2021, so was in need of revision
- Aspects: categorisation; challenge and support; core visits; school improvement boards; review activity; bespoke input
- Positive impact on standards
- Challenge of changes in Inspection focus and methodology

Current strategy

Impact:

- Positive re Ofsted judgements
- 7% increase in schools judged good (G2) or better between 2018 and 2020, and
- from 2014 – 2020 a sustained improvement enabling Wolverhampton to align with national data sets from 70% in 2014 at G2 or above, compared with the national of 79% at G2 or above.
- % of schools judged to be inadequate in Wolverhampton has also fallen to 1 percentage point below national (3% compared to 4%).

Collaboration and Consultation

Proposal and successes:

- January 2021 - Consult school leaders on current school improvement strategy; its strengths and weaknesses -
Microsoft form ✓
- Set up a task and finish group to formulate new SI strategy, including representation from early years and school leaders –
Microsoft form ✓
- Keep good practice ✓
- Create a model that also supports and includes early years settings ✓
- Continue to use a model of graded support ✓
- Explore how we can share information across teams to support schools more effectively ✓
- Formulate new strategy in readiness for summer 2021 launch ✓

Collaboration Summary



Key activity:



2x Issue of Microsoft forms to gather information – 16 responses



Consultation group - 6 HT / leaders from across a range of schools



Range of meetings with Phil Leivers, Linda Brown, Stacey Henderson and members of Education Excellence Team



Listening to leaders and wider council partners

Consultation group

Page 57

Carol McNally
Holy Trinity
(Primary)

Aiden Edmunds
Westacre Infant
School (Infant)

Kate Charles
Stowlawn Primary
(Primary)

Laura Thackaberry
Penn Fields School
(Special)

Lorraine Dawney
Green Park
(Special)

Natalie Showell
Low Hill Nursery
(Nursery)

PVI / Child Minder
Consultation by
phone / teams

Education Excellence Strategy

Key changes:

- New relationship with leaders in schools and education settings
- Change in title – **Education Excellence Strategy**
- Focus on partnership and collaboration – collective responsibility
- Parity with early years settings and PVI's
- Activity to be underpinned by council's core values
- ***Very positive feedback thus far***

Council values

PRIDE:

P – Put people first

R – Raise the city's profile and reputation

I – Inspire trust and confidence

D – Demonstrate a can-do and tenacious attitude to be a change agent

E – Empower people to innovate

Improvement Activity

The offer:

- Academies
- Early Years settings / child minders/out of school provision
- Local authority schools -maintained
- Additional / bespoke support if requested

Improvement Activity - EYFS

Key changes:

- All early years settings now included in the Education Excellence Strategy
- Greater parity – promotion of high expectations to enable our youngest children to receive high-quality provision
- Raise the status and profile of early years settings across the city

Category update

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ALPHA SYSTEM REMAINS



ADDITIONAL A CATEGORY -
AS



ALIGNMENT WITH
SUPPORT STATUS OF HIGH
(C), MEDIUM (B1, B2) AND
LOW (A, AS)



SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION
SETTINGS (EYFS) INCLUDED
FOR PARITY



RECOGNITION OF SCHOOL
STATUS AND CHANGES IN
LEADERSHIP



FOCUS ON SUPPORT AND
ALLOCATION OF
RESOURCES



Categorisation process

Criteria / information reference:

- Focus on robust evidence / factual information
- Most recent Ofsted inspection judgment
- LA intelligence / dashboard*
- Quality of leadership and management
- Governance
- Termly conversation – agree support

Categorisation matrix

New Category	Proposed Support Status	Ofsted reference	LA reference	Leadership and Management	Governance	EYFS Business ref	NEW Allocated days of support	NEW key activity
Academies and Free schools AES Page 64							1 day per year* *Those schools with provision for two-year-olds, will receive termly core visits for EYFS	Day of support to be determined by the academy and allocated SIA
Out of hours / Wrap Around Care (school registration)							Minimum of 1 day per year	
Out of hours / Wrap Around Care (non-school registration)							Termly support visit	

Categorisation matrix

SCHOOLS A – providing a good or better education	LOW SUPPORT	Judged good or outstanding by Ofsted at the last inspection; securely good	Judged securely good or outstanding by the LA through School Improvement Advisor work with the <u>school</u> , and is therefore likely to be judged so at the school's next Ofsted inspection.	Leadership and management at all levels, particularly senior leaders, middle managers and governors consistently demonstrate, through evidence and analysis of data, effective processes and structures which have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and behaviour.	School Governors are RAG-rated as green by the LA.		5 days per year	
PVI / Child Minders	LOW SUPPORT	Judged outstanding, good or met at	Work with the early years team demonstrates that the setting's curriculum intentions are met and are	Effectiveness of leadership and management is proven and strong. All key documentation is in place and safeguarding practices are robust;	NA	Well established business, sustainability and	4 days per year from the wider	Support visits and yearly review focusing on
CS – providing a good or better education		the last Ofsted inspection Securely good in all areas including all welfare requirements	sufficiently challenging for all children. A high-quality setting which is welcoming, safe and stimulating where all children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. All necessary steps are taken to keep children safe. There is a clear understanding and embedded vision regarding the EYFS curriculum intent, implementation and impact.	Owner fully involved and supportive of the setting, including driving change with the manager. High quality training and CPD opportunities are in place and accesses allow for reflective practice. Partnership working is effective. Equality of opportunity is evident. SEND provision and policies meet individual needs and highly effective working relationships with outside agencies and parents secures positive outcomes.		sufficiency plans are in place; clear understanding of funding; LA terms and conditions adhered to; Occupancy levels are above 80%.	Early Years team	teaching and/or learning and welfare requirements.

Allocations for schools

Summary:

- Academy basic allocation – 1 day
- Allocation modifications to facilitate 5 categories for LA schools
- $A = 5$; $AS = 7$; $B1 = 9.5$; $B2 = 14.5$; $C = 19$ days
- Allocations and activity based upon need and key priorities
- Allocations include pre-activity – school input – post activity

Allocations for EYFS settings

Summary:

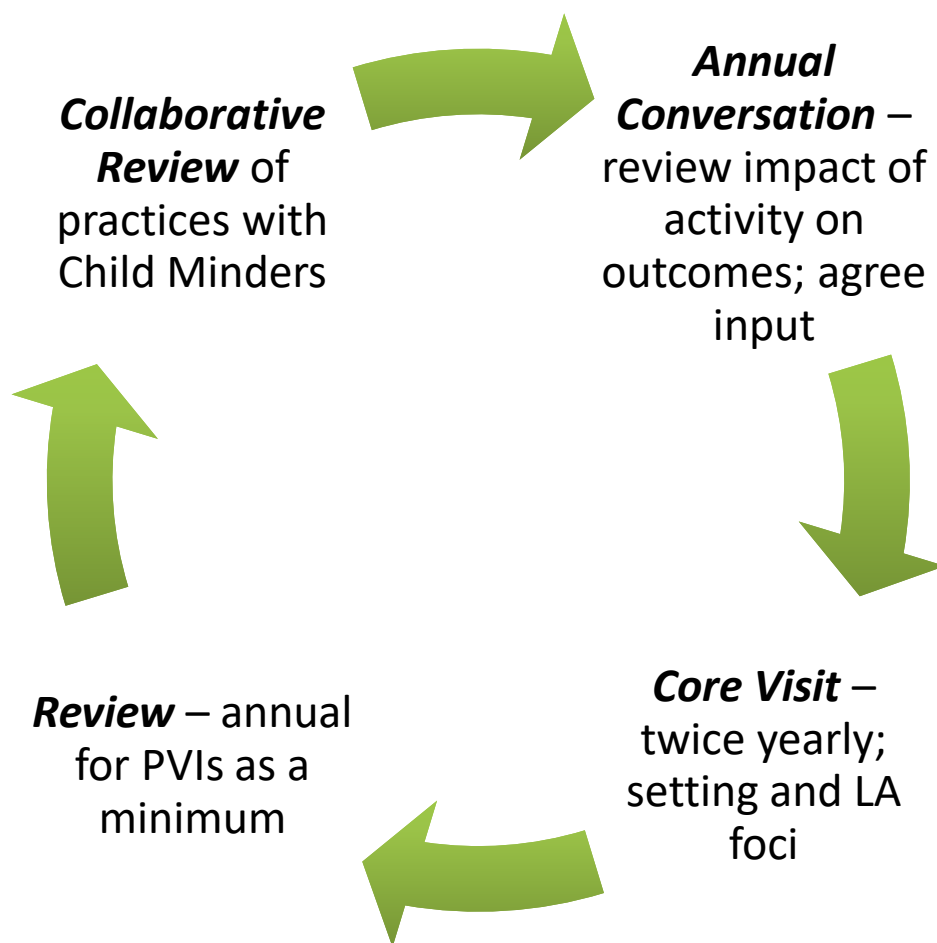
- Allocation modifications to facilitate 5 categories for EYFS settings
- A = 4; AS = 6; B1 = 8; B2 = 10; C= 12.5 days input
- Allocations and activity based upon need and key priorities
- Basic entitlement – annual conversation, review, 2 core visits
- Additional support based upon category and need

Activity headlines for schools

- **(C&S) - Autumn Conversation** – review impact of activity on outcomes; agree input
- **Core Visit** – spring (school) and summer (LA)
- **Review** – options: EYFS, Key Stage; Equalities; Curriculum; subjects, aspects; PPG, whole school SEND
- **Status Check** – readiness for Inspection (B2 / C schools)
- **(SIB) - Team Around the School**
- **Focused Support** – input to develop key aspects to improve outcomes
- **Bespoke support** – input to develop HT / SLT knowledge and skills

Activity headlines for EYFS settings

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- ***Status Check*** – readiness for Inspection (C settings where applicable)
- ***Team Around the Setting***
- ***Focused Support*** – to develop leadership and management capability
- ***Additional support*** – *as needed e.g Business support*

Key activity 1

Previous title	New title	Value ref (PRIDE)	Input	EYFS context	Duration in setting	Personnel involved	Location of activity
Challenge and Support	Autumn Conversation for schools Annual conversation for education settings	I D E	Autumn C schools – September B schools – October A schools - November (will replace autumn core visit) Review impact of activity on outcomes for pupils (school activity and LA / EE activity) agree input together – collaborative	For education settings – an annual conversation with no set date; to be agreed on an individual basis.	90 mins	HoS / SSIA + allocated SIA Others by invitation of school and SIA (agreed in advance) EYFS LA Officers	School Education setting
Core Visit	Core Visit	P I D E	Termly All schools A – C 1 LA agenda (summer) 1 school focus (spring)	2 visits during the course of the year.	3 hours (mix of meetings and school activity) – <i>show what you say</i>	Allocated SIA and school leaders EYFS LA Officers	School Education setting

Key activity 2

Review	Review (TBC) Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EYFS, • Key Stage reviews, Equalities, curriculum subjects and aspects, • Early Reading PPG • Whole school SEND review 	P R I D E	C - 4 in total to include 2 status / health checks B2 - 3 reviews to include 1 status / health check per year B1 - 2 reviews AS – 1 review <i>Schools may wish to explore a cyclical model over time to gain a comprehensive understanding of the setting</i>	All settings to have a yearly review as a minimum (up to 1 day) C education settings to receive 2 reviews	1 day 2 days	Allocated SIA + identified members of Education Excellence Team EYFS LA Officers	School
Focused support	Focused support	P R I D E	School's choice for identified input: review / project work / SI activity	Education setting's choice based upon individual needs	Out of allocation	Allocated SIA + identified members of Education Excellence Team EYFS LA Officers	
Pre-Ofsted health check	Status / health Check	P R I D E	B2 and C schools B2 - once per year C – twice per year Those expecting inspection within the school year (offer to all LA schools / setting)	Settings in the Ofsted window to be offered health check – focus on statutory welfare requirements and curriculum offer (up to 0.5)	2 days	Allocated SIA + identified members of Education Excellence Team EYFS LA officers	School

Key activity 3

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School Improvement Board meetings	Team Around the School meeting (TAS)	R I D E	Termly for B1 and B2 schools 5 Half termly for C schools (exclude Aut 1) <u>Opps</u> to celebrate successes where relevant Holding the school to account – <u>inc</u> GB Agenda – personal to the school, but appropriate reference to criteria cited Action plans formulated	Termly for B1 and B2 education settings 5 Half termly for C (exclude Aut 1) <u>Opps</u> to celebrate <u>successes</u> Holding education settings to account Agenda – personal to the setting Action plans formulated	2 hours (Typically during the second half of the term)	<u>HoS</u> / SSIA + allocated SIA Others by invitation of school and SIA (agreed in advance)	School
Bespoke Support	Bespoke support	I D E	At school's request Academy option – additional input can be purchased	At an education setting's request <u>through the use of allocated days</u>	1 day	TBC	School

Category A – low support

CATEGORY: A (low support) = 5 days / 4 days for EYFS settings

Category A – low support	Allocation		Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	5 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)		Autumn Conversation meeting (Nov) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report)	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5		Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5		<u>1.0 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between HT and SIA
PVI	Up to 4 days	Annual Conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Review (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5)						<u>1.0 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
Child Minder	Up to 4 days	Annual Conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Collaborative review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5)						<u>1.0 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

Category AS – low support

CATEGORY: AS (low support) = 7 days (5+2) / 6 days for EYFS settings

Category AS – low support	Allocation		Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	7 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)		Autumn Conversation meeting (Nov) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report)	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 *Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up		Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5		*Whole school review – 1.0 day + <u>1.0 day</u> prep and write up – timing of review to be agreed between HT and SIA PLUS 1.0 days additional input to be agreed with HT and SIA
PVI	Up to 6 days	Annual Conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Review (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						<u>1.0 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
Child Minder	Up to 6 days	Annual Conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Collaborative review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						<u>1.0 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

Category B1 – medium support

CATEGORY: B1 (medium support) = 9.5 days / 8 days for EYFS settings

Category B1 – medium support	Allocation		Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	9.5 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)	Autumn Conversation meeting (Oct) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report)	TAS meeting (Dec) (0.5)	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up		Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up		Review foci to be agreed with HT and SIA
PVI	Up to 8 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS meeting (0.5 x3 = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						<u>1.5 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
Child Minder	Up to 8 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Collaborative review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS meeting (0.5 x3 = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						<u>1.5 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

Category B2 – medium support

CATEGORY: B2 (medium support) = 14.5 days / 10 days for EYFS settings

Category B2 – medium support	Allocation		Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	14.5 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)	Autumn Conversation <u>meeting</u> (Oct) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report)	TAS meeting (Nov) (0.5) Review 1.0 + 1.0 write up	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) *Status check 2.0 + 1.0 prep and 1.0 write up		Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up		3 reviews per year, to include x1 *Status check per year - <u>2 day</u> review – timing to be agreed; other review foci to be agreed with HT and SIA PLUS + 1.0 days input to be agreed with HT and SIA
PVI	Up to 10 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS <u>meeting</u> (0.5 x3 = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						<u>3.5 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
Child Minder	Up to 10 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) Collaborative review activity (0.5+0.5) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS <u>meeting</u> (0.5 x3 = 1.5) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						<u>3.5 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

Higher levels of support

Examples:

- *Evidence of limited improvement in standards of attainment that are below average*
- *Gaps in progress and outcomes that are well below average for disadvantage and vulnerable groups (including SEND).*
- *High rates of pupil absence, persistent absence, fixed-term and permanent exclusions*
- *Safeguarding concerns*
- *Teaching / provision is not consistently good*
- *Weak governance / business concerns*
- *High levels of parental concerns and complaints including those made to Ofsted.*
- *Inadequate progress arising from HMI monitoring visits*
- *Rapid or significant reductions in pupil numbers*
- *Significant changes in staffing*
- *Financial deficit or financial mismanagement*
- *Reluctance to acknowledge concerns and address weaknesses*
- *Reported incidents to suggest there is a breakdown of leadership or governance.*
- *Notes of Progress and Impact visits which report poor progress and continued weak performance with little impact.*

Category C – high support

CATEGORY: C (high support) = 19 days / 14 days for EYFS settings

Category C – high support	Allocation		Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	NOTE
School	19 days	SIA – Autumn Conversation prep (1.0)	Autumn Conversation <u>meeting</u> (Sept) (0.5 visit + 0.5 report) TAS meeting (0.5)	TAS meeting (0.5)(Nov) *Status check Review 2.0 +1.0 prep and 1.0 write up*	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5)	TAS meeting (0.5) *Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up	Core Visit 0.5 + visit report 0.5 TAS meeting (0.5) *Review 1.0 + 1.0 prep and write up	TAS meeting (0.5) *Status check Review 2.0 +1.0 prep and 1.0 write up	4 reviews pr year to include *Status check X2 per year (can replace 2 reviews in the term)
PVI	Up to 12.5 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) 2 Review activity (0.5+0.5 x2) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Half-termly TAS <u>meeting</u> (0.5 x6 = 3.0) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						<u>3.5 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer
Child Minder	Up to 12.5 days	Annual conversation prep	Offer: Annual conversation (0.5) 2 Collaborative review activities (0.5+0.5 x2) 2 core visits (0.75 per visit = 1.5) Termly TAS <u>meeting</u> (0.5 x6 = 3.0) 2 additional days for leadership and management support and development (including prep)						<u>3.5 day</u> focused support – to be agreed between owner and manager and EYFS officer

Team Around the School

Summary:

- Replaces previous SIB (school improvement board) meetings
- Focus on information sharing, support, challenge and collaboration
- Exploration of the wider context of schools
- Attendance of personnel; parties – by invitation as required
- Information Sharing Agreement protocols
- Dashboard information and development

Sample dashboard for schools

Budget	Deficit/surplus meeting	Deficit/surplus %	Audit up to date?	Named DPO in place?	Business/site Manager training?
Surplus £10,000	Not applicable	1.2%	No 12/2014	Yes	Yes
H&S audit up to date?	H&S report outcome	H&S action plan progress	Health and Safety Provider	Legionella/asbestos practice in place?	Confirmation of SCR & Vetting checks
26/07/2020	Good	Good	Council – full package	Yes	Yes
Fire Safety Check return UTD?	Fire Risk Assessment Action Plan UTD?	MASH referrals academic year to date	Permanent exclusions	Continuity plans in place?	Confirmation of CP & safeguarding training?
Yes	No	3	0	No	Yes
Date of last OfSTED	Inspection type	Rating	Parent View?	Website compliant?	Suspensions, hearings, dismissals?
18/9/2019	Full	Good	8	Fully	0

Team Around the Setting (EYFS)

Summary:

- Replaces current TAS model of settings being rag rated red, amber, green
- TAS model only for B and C settings
- Focus on information sharing, support, challenge and collaboration
- Exploration of the wider context of a setting
- Attendance of personnel; parties – by invitation as required (SNEY SLT)
- Information Sharing Agreement protocols

Improved collaboration

- Learn from remote activity across City of Wolverhampton teams
- Sharing of intelligence to support schools and settings
- Reduce replication
- Build upon current successes
- Consistency
- Facilitate high quality provision and support for school and setting leaders

Headteacher Induction rationale



Re-define headteacher induction

Welcome information – transparency and familiarity

Offer to LA and Academies

Focus: 'Developing a Head for Business'

Reality of headship

Complimentary to NPQH

View to offer to DHTs in due course

Headteacher Induction – anticipated input

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- Welcome to Wolverhampton
- Local context of the city and communities
- Safeguarding
- HR / Personnel
- Finance
- Procurement
- Working within the law
- Facilities
- Governance
- Work with unions

Headteacher Induction

- Input / offer during 2021/22
- Phase 1 - Open to new HTs and those within first 2 years
- Phase 2 – open to Deputy Heads applying for Headship
- Network opportunities
- Pairing with mentors
- Feedback and review

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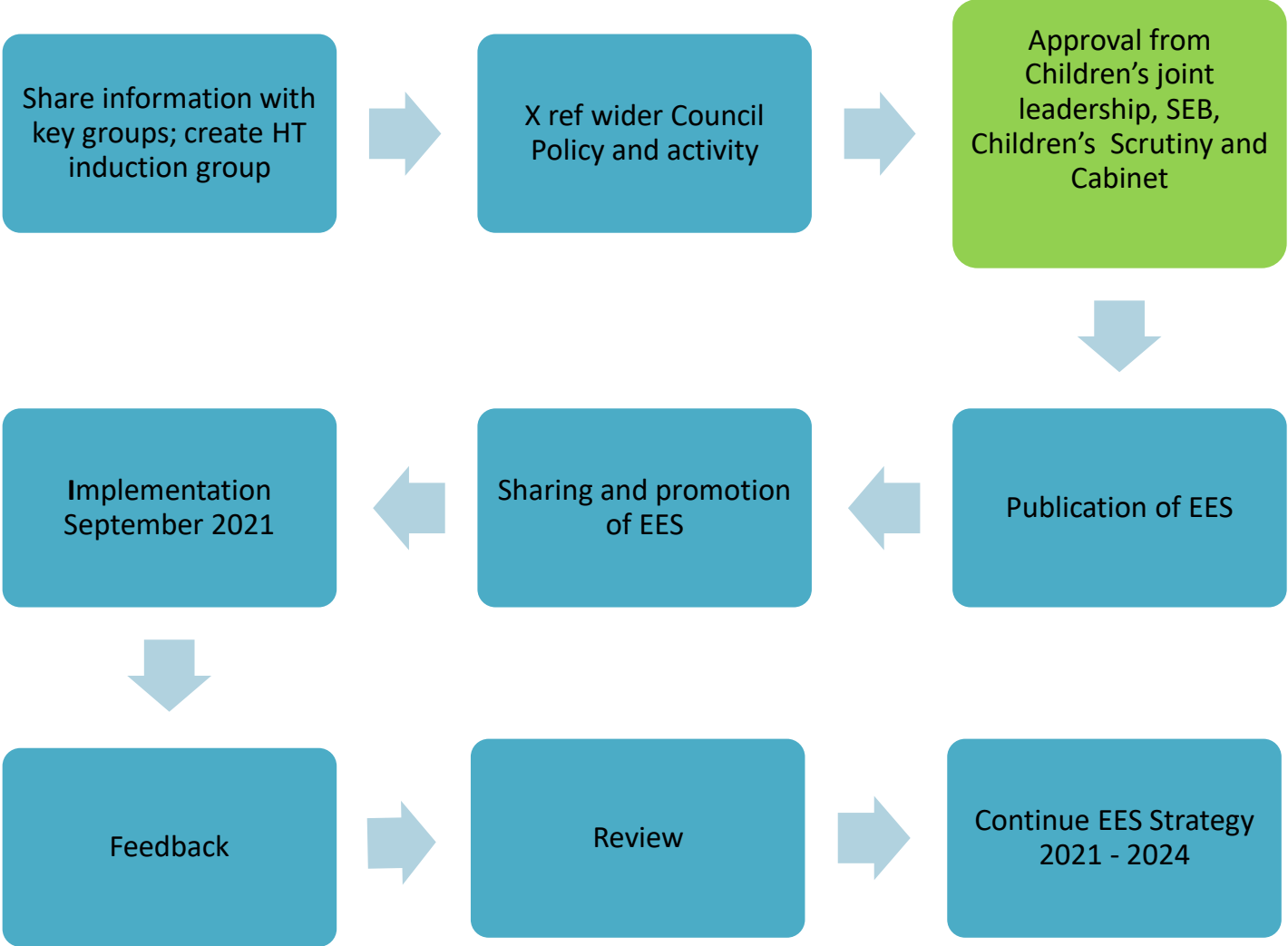


Headteacher Induction timeline



- Meetings with key council departmental leads 25/5/21 and 16/7/21
- Share HT induction commitment at SIA day 9/6/21
- Microsoft form to gather views (closes 25/6/21)
- HT consultation group – July meeting
- Summer mapping
- Implement October 2021

Next steps



Questions



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Appendix 3 – Consultation schedule:

The current School Improvement Strategy (2018 – 2021) was written and presented to schools prior to its adoption in 2018 with only minimal consultation and discussion outside of the School Improvement Service.

In order to enhance partnership working it was agreed that a new 'Education Excellence' Strategy would be co-produced with stakeholders building on the improved relationships that the Local Authority has developed with schools, Early Years settings and leaders over the last 18 months (particularly through the support, advice and guidance shared through the Covid-19 pandemic) so enabling the views of partners and the specific needs of children and young people to be met whilst promoting parity and consistency.

A detailed schedule of consultation meetings and events have taken place to ensure this collaborative approach has encompassed all views. All schools and settings were invited to participate in the development of this important strategic document.

To summarise:

- Informal consultation took place with school leaders on current school improvement strategy, its strengths and weaknesses
- A task and finish group was established to formulate the new 'Education Excellence' strategy, including representation from early years and school leaders, including terms of reference as appropriate
- Aspects of the current strategy which have proved successful in securing improvement have been retained and assimilated into the new model
- The new strategy extends to include early years settings, so creating consistency in approach for all
- It was agreed to continue to use a model of graded support to enable the most vulnerable settings to be supported as well as promote autonomy and sustained self-improvement for high performing settings
- As part of the collaborative approach through task and finish activity, a model of 'team around the school / setting (EYFS providers)' was explored and deemed to be of benefit to all, thereby ensuring school improvement advisors (SIAs) and the Senior Early Years Advisor / EYFS Team have all relevant information when necessary to support improvement activity and to understand the wider context which may impact upon a school / setting
- In the event of inclusion of a 'team around the school / setting' protocols for the sharing of key information as schools / settings may have SLAs with providers beyond the city council have been agreed
- A draft revised Education Excellence Strategy has been produced for the period 2021-24 for consideration including cross-party political approval
- Following approval, there will be a distribution of the approved policy in readiness for September 2021 implementation

Draft timetable:

Priority Milestones and summary plan	Lead personnel	Target date
Trial the use of 'Team Around the School / setting ' (TAS) approach for B2 / C schools in readiness for support and challenge activity to explore viability	Senior SIA	Nov / Dec 2020
Gauge interest in leaders in school being part of the process (as a starting point)	Senior SIA	SIA day 20 th
Identify aspects / content from the current SI strategy for potential inclusion / consideration for the new strategy	Head of Education Excellence Senior SIA and Education Excellence team	Jan 2021
Identify key personnel and invite to initial meeting – establish a Task and Finish Group and map activity	Senior SIA	Jan 2021
Formalise proposal, including consultation document and share through a Briefing Note (BN) with leaders	Head of Education Excellence Senior SIA and Education Excellence Team	Spring 2021
Write and brand agreed Education Excellence Strategy document for 2021-2024	Senior SIA and Communications team	Summer 1 2021
Consultation with elected Members including Cabinet portfolio holder and CYPF Scrutiny	Head of Education Excellence	Summer 2 2021
Formally publish and promote	Head of Education Excellence	Summer 1 / 2 2021
Hold information briefings on new approach, including sharing information at engagement session with attendance from wider teams as well as SIAs	Education Excellence Team	Summer 2 2021

Review

Following the implementation of the Education Excellence Strategy 2021 - 24, there will be a comprehensive review undertaken in the academic Summer Term 2022.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 28 July 2021
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Report title	Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2020-2021	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Beverley Momenabadi Children and Young People	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett, Children's and Adult Services	
Originating service	Adults and Children's Service	
Accountable employee	Jennifer Rogers	Principal Social Worker
	Tel	01902 555704
	Email	Jennifer.rogers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Team	17 June 2021
	Strategic Executive Board	1 July 2021
	Scrutiny Board	14 July 2021

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the work of the Principal Social Worker and the continued impact it has on social work practice across Children's and Adult's Services
2. Endorse the main priorities for the Principal Social Worker identified for 2021-2022.

Recommendation for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The work carried out in respect of: Care Act easements; audit activity, which has highlighted continued strong performance and practice during Covid; and the continued commitment to supporting social work students and routes into social work which is ensuring the Council is able to meet demand and supply needs now and for the future.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a progress report on the work of the Principal Social Worker in promoting and improving the quality of social work practice and outline the key priorities for 2021-2022.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Designated Principal Social Workers (PSW) were first proposed by Professor Eileen Munro in her review of child protection in 2011, which identified the importance of better communication and understanding between social workers and senior management. Munro stated that Principal Social Workers should:
- A. Create a clear line of communication between frontline staff and senior management
 - B. Champion best practice
 - C. Encourage a “reflective approach” to social work
 - D. Help to reduce bureaucracy and the amount of time spent on process-driven activities
 - E. Support social workers to use their core skills and interventions which make a real difference to people.
- 2.2 Following this, the College of Social Work championed the extension of the role to include adult social work. As with the children’s Principal Social Worker (PSW), the role of the PSW for adults also takes a professional lead across the organisation.
- 2.3 The role of PSW is a statutory requirement in adults and is referenced in the 2016 revised Care Act guidance. The guidance states that the PSW should be visible across the organisation, from elected members and senior management, through to frontline social workers, people with care and support needs and carers. It states that Local Authorities should make arrangements to have a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead in place to lead and oversee excellent social work practice and the development of excellent social workers. This also includes overseeing quality assurance and improvement of social work practice as well as advising the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and/or wider council in complex or controversial cases and on law relating to social work practice.
- 2.4 Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) states that children and families PSWs have a key role in developing the practice and practice methodology that underpins direct work.
- 2.5 There has been a PSW for both Adults and Children’s Services since March 2016. Due to the previous post holder’s successful appointment to a Head of Service role during 2020-2021 the PSW post was temporarily split this year into separate adults and children’s PSWs. However, from February 2021 a permanent appointment was made to the joint PSW role.

- 2.6 The decision to appoint one PSW for Adults and Children's Services was informed by a commitment to promote and embed a whole family / think family approach in Wolverhampton. Over the last six months Adult's and Children's Services have been working more closely together to reinvigorate this commitment and the PSW role is crucial to this. The PSW works across the two services to promote a "think whole family approach" that will enable better joined up working, inspire greater aspirations for children, families and adult's with care and support needs, as well as ensuring the concept of wellbeing features in all of the work undertaken by social care.
- 2.7 The PSW role links to several of the Relighting Our City priority areas including supporting people who need us most, creating more opportunities for young people and also generating more jobs and learning opportunities in relation to the social work profession particularly, with the internal social work degree apprenticeships being an example of this. Strengths based approaches in social work also encourage a focus on community resources and building on the assets available locally to support families and people who need us, so there is also a role for the PSW in stimulating vibrant high streets and local communities.
- 2.8 The PSW reports directly to a Head of Service with a dotted line to the Deputy Directors of Adults and Children's Services. The work of the PSW is overseen and prioritised by the People's Social Work Development Board. A degree of independence is required of the role in order to provide challenge within the organisation.
- 2.9 The regional and national networks of PSWs also provide information to the Chief Social Workers for adults and children's and regular consultations are held in respect of issues such as social worker health checks, knowledge and skill statements, accreditation, legislation, practice and learning developments.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The PSW in Wolverhampton has key responsibility for policies and procedures and the Quality Assurance and Improvement team. The function of this unit is to implement and further develop the quality assurance frameworks for Adult and Children's Services, to support inspections and peer review work and support sector led improvement programmes. The PSW also has responsibility for the recruitment and retention of social workers.
- 3.2 This year because of Covid the PSW has played a key role in ensuring statutory duties have continued to be met whilst also supporting social worker's wellbeing and ensuring their safety whilst they carried out their critical frontline role. There has also been a focus on the role of the PSW and social work generally in tackling inequality and practising in an anti-discriminatory and anti-racist way as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd in May 2020.

3.3 Highlights of the work undertaken by the PSWs since March 2020 is outlined below.

3.4 Covid

3.5 Wellbeing has been a priority throughout the year because of Covid and has been promoted at social worker and workforce briefings led by the PSWs during 2020-2021. This has included at your desk yoga sessions and discussion about “the five ways to wellbeing”. There was also a wellbeing café during World Social Work Day in March 2021 facilitated by the PSW’s team. Monthly newsletters have continued to be sent out by the PSW’s team across both Adults and Children’s Services, but now have a dedicated wellbeing section. There has also been continued promotion of the council’s Wellbeing Hub with access to a large selection of resources to support wellbeing, mental health and other issues such as bereavement and financial worries. The PSW has provided content and reviews the domestic abuse section for the council’s Wellbeing Hub and was a part of the “Operational Wellbeing group” in the council. There has been an extensive training offer for individuals and managers to support wellbeing during Covid and there will be a focus on wellbeing and recovery / resilience in 2021-2022. The Peer Challenge process in October 2020 highlighted and commended how the emotional well-being of staff had been prioritised during Covid.

3.6 During the pandemic the PSW took a lead on Care Act easements as a result of the Coronavirus Bill which became law on 25th March 2020 (Coronavirus Act 2020). The measures it contained enabled adult social care to prioritise resources, if necessary, should they be unable to meet their statutory duties in full if demand spiked and staffing resources shrank significantly during the pandemic. The government gave adult PSWs a critical role in determining whether councils should suspend Care Act duties and enact these measures (easements). Locally the PSW devised local guidance that set out the possible scenarios which adult social care in Wolverhampton could face during the period of the pandemic, what operating models would look like at each stage and what should have been explored before easements were considered and implemented. The City of Wolverhampton Council’s approach was that Care Act easements should only be implemented as a last resort and only when all other options and alternatives, including utilising any other available resource, had been explored.

3.7 The PSW carried out a short local consultation and produced an easy read version of the local Care Act easement guidance to engage local people about the approach the council proposed to take on Care Act easements. Local organisations and groups as well as carers and people with care and support needs and also employees participated. The vast majority agreed with the local approach to Care Act easements. Some comments included: “I consider this to have been thorough and well thought-through”; “The fact that Wolverhampton are consulting on this issue is exemplary. You put some of your near neighbours to shame.”

3.8 In total eight local authorities across the country made the decision to implement easements during the pandemic, five of which were local authorities in the West Midlands

region. However, the City of Wolverhampton Council have not had to enact Care Act easements at any time during the pandemic.

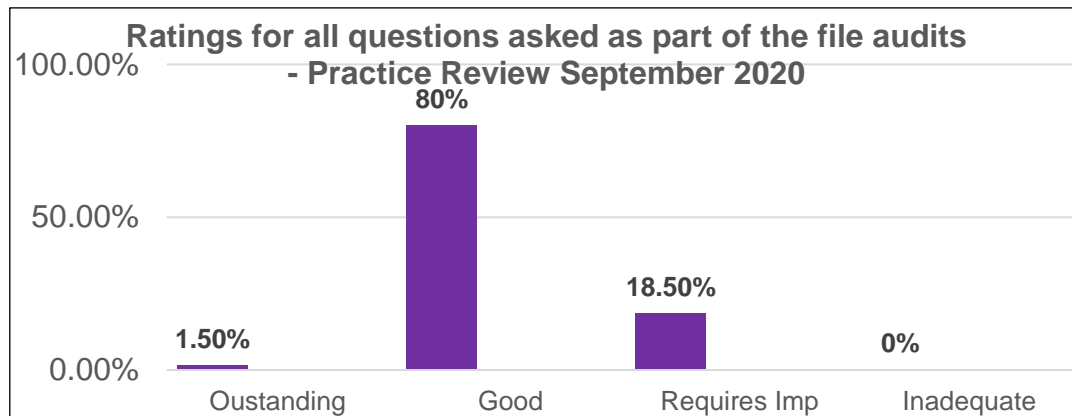
- 3.9 The PSW has supported the implementation of the Children's Services operational model during Covid in response to the change in legislation "The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations" and responded to government consultations. This has been a prominent role during Covid-19 ensuring that senior managers are kept abreast of the changes to ensure that service delivery is in line with guidance and legislation.
- 3.10 The PSW also supported social work teams to consider legal and human rights challenges during this unprecedented time, leading on a session at a social work briefing in July 2020 with particular consideration of people in care homes and their rights to respect for family and private life and also the right to life in the context of restrictions and infection risks. Additional training has also been offered to support teams to consider human rights and inequality issues. The external Peer Challenge that took place in October 2020 (see section 3.18) concluded that there was a "visible commitment across teams and the system to social justice, protection of human rights."
- 3.11 The PSWs have led on key guidance and policies to support and safeguard the health and wellbeing of social workers across adults and children's during Covid. This has included procedures on visits and use of PPE.

3.12 Quality of Practice - Adults

- 3.13 A key priority for adult PSWs in the government's Winter Plan for Adult Social Care was to ensure that throughout the pandemic social work teams were applying legislative and strengths-based frameworks. The Winter Plan also called on PSWs to review their current quality assurance and governance oversight arrangements to ensure that winter and COVID-19 pressures did not reduce the ability to deliver high-quality social work practice. To support high quality practice in light of the challenges posed by Covid, the PSW co-ordinated eight reflective sessions during Summer 2020 which focussed on key areas of practice that teams said they felt had been affected.
- 3.14 The PSW has continued to lead on quality assurance activity in adults during 2020-2021 with audits evidencing that high quality social work practice and adherence to statutory duties has continued during Covid. There has only been a very slight overall drop in performance compared with last year, which was mainly due to practitioners adjusting to a different of working at the outset of the pandemic and reduced resources in the community which has made strengths-based working more of a challenge:

Audit period	Total% files rated good or above
2019-2020	83%
2020-2021	78%

- 3.15 In total 80 audits have been carried out this year, which means that by the end of March 2021 almost 2% of people who received a service from adult social care in Wolverhampton will have had some form of qualitative audit in the year.
- 3.16 Local audit activity throughout 2020-2021 has also demonstrated consistently good practice, including areas such as effective management oversight, demonstrating dignity and respect, Making Safeguarding Personal and use of advocacy as well as evidence of involving the person in decision making despite the impact of social distancing and a reduction in face to face visits.
- 3.17 There has also been some improvement in specific areas of practice by the end of the year including increased consideration of carer conversations, which was a key area for development last year. There was also wider use of strengths-based approaches and by end of January 2021 over 90% of files were deemed good or outstanding in this area, which is more than last year.
- 3.18 There was also an external audit carried out by PSWs from across the region, as part of a Practice Review, which is an element of the Peer Challenge Process which took place in October 2020. A Peer Challenge involves a small team of regional leads, PSWs and councillors spending time at another the council as peers to provide challenge and share learning. It is delivered from the position of a critical friend supporting sector led improvement. Onsite Peer Challenges are part of a wider offer of support and development work by the West Midlands ADASS Branch. They are improvement focused and the scope is agreed with the council and tailored to reflect their local needs and specific requirements.
- 3.19 The Practice Review component of the Peer Challenge consisted of two external PSWs and the host PSW meeting with the Director of Adult Services, frontline workers and managers to gather feedback and also an audit of 21 files. The Practice Review team considered strengths-based practice and also the impact of Covid.
- 3.20 All of the files examined by PSWs in the Practice Review were considered to be consistently good. There were no cases causing concern that needed to be returned for review. There was good evidence that strengths-based conversations were taking place and that they were outcome focused. The records evidenced the creativity of practitioners in meeting needs even during Covid.



- 3.21 The Practice Review Team considered that there was a clear practice model for strengths-based practice in place for Adult Social Care with the use of the Three Conversations ©. This approach is a new way of working that replaces the default ‘contact, divert, triage, reablement, assessment for services’ process with a dynamic strength-based approach to listening to people, aimed at supporting independent lives, and reducing the need for dependence on formal services. It supports frontline employees to have three distinct and specific conversations. These conversations focus on helping people live what they feel is a good life, by utilising their own resource, resources within their local community and receiving formal support when required.
- 3.22 Three Conversations© was rolled out in the City of Wolverhampton Council in May 2018 with the creation of three innovations sites in Adult Social Care. Three evaluations have been carried out which have considered data, feedback from people and carers and also “stories of difference”. There is strong evidence that there has been an increase in productivity, with a reduction in the average number of working days taken to complete assessments when compared to old world, saving on average 28 days per assessment. Evaluations also found an increase in worker morale.
- 3.23 Over 100 stories of difference were collected demonstrating improved outcomes compared to old ways of working. A common theme is that by being able to work with people straight away social workers were more likely to be able to put in effective preventative support and build effective relationships.
- 3.24 The Practice Review team found that the Three Conversations© approach was understood and supported at every level and they were told by managers and practitioners that the way of working is “much better”. Practitioners told the reviewers that they had more autonomy, more responsibility and were engaged in decision making in ‘huddles’ and the Practice Review Team considered that this was very positive.
- 3.25 Some of the other more general key strengths identified by the Practice Review team included:
- A. Good support provided to practitioners and managers throughout the pandemic

B. Director and Principal Social Worker worked closely together on the public consultation and were well prepared for if the situation changed

C. Added value of the Principal Social Worker in driving practice improvement

- 3.26 The Peer Challenge process itself consisted of a series of 12 focus groups lead by Directors and leads from other local councils. Data was also considered. They concluded that the work on strengths-based practice is “something to be really proud of” and felt it held up across adult social care operations during Covid, with the principles and values expanding across the whole of the pathway including hospital social work.
- 3.27 A key area for opportunity though was to continue to engage with staff and agree a balance for home and office working on an on-going basis, which will be a focus for 2021-2022 corporately as well as from an individual service perspective.
- 3.28 A quality assurance report and accompanying improvement plan is presented to the Adult Leadership team quarterly ensuring senior managers have oversight of the quality of frontline practice and are able to use this information to inform improvement actions. This will incorporate actions from all quality assurance activity, including any findings from the Peer Challenge process.

3.29 Quality of Practice – Children’s

- 3.30 Restorative Practice (RP) has been the overarching practice framework for Children’s Services since November 2016. It is a strengths-based approach that is fundamentally about building, maintaining and repairing relationships. It supports a strong relational way to delivering services, working with children and families, identifying strengths but also being able to effectively challenge where necessary. Whilst this approach is not new to most qualified social workers, it is powerful to have a unified way of working and language around intervention and support that is shared amongst colleagues.
- 3.31 In June 2020 a Senior Restorative Practice (SRP) Lead was appointed to support the PSW in embedding RP across the service. The SRP lead is responsible for increasing the breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the range of Restorative Approaches across Children’s Services. The role includes developing best practice and helping to embed the approach internally and with partners. The SRP lead is now supporting in the delivery of family meetings training and is also working to incorporate RP into other key training and work carried out across Children’s Services, including key areas such as direct work and neglect. Multi-agency RP training is to be delivered across Children’s Services and partner agencies and six participants from Police, Health, Education and Voluntary Sector have been identified to act as champions for this. In total 17 RP trainers that have been enlisted to support with embedding the approach.
- 3.32 The Principal Social Worker has also been responsible for implementing the National Accreditation Process (NAAS), which involves assessing social workers against a set of standards set out in the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Practice Supervisors and Practice Leaders (now known as the post qualifying standards). This is part of the

Children and Social Work Act 2017 which gives the education secretary powers to set and assess practitioners against improvement standards. The NAAS assessment includes three elements:

- A. Employee endorsement – the employer’s assessment of the social worker or practice supervisor’s skills
- B. A digital assessment based on the child and family practitioner knowledge and skills statement produced by the Chief Social Worker
- C. A simulated practice observation using role play scenarios with actors. This will include a written assessment component

- 3.33 The Council set a target of enabling between 20-30% of Children and Families social workers to undertake the assessment in the first year (2019-2020), which equated to between 31 and 47 social workers. By March 2020 41 social workers had completed the assessment, which meant that the target was successfully met. However, this year assessment centres have been paused due to Covid but will reopen again in June 2021.
- 3.34 The Quality Assurance Framework for Children’s has been revised and quarterly meetings with key stakeholders have been set up to inform future planning. A key element of quality assurance in Children’s Services is practice weeks, which an innovative and restorative approach to audit. The Director of Children’s Services along with all Heads of Service, the PSW and Service Managers spend four days undertaking audits alongside practitioners, observing practice and sitting in teams. The advantages of this approach include being able to see practice rather than just read about it, being able to see and feel how teams are functioning and being able to offer social workers immediate feedback on their practice. Practice weeks have been well received and employees report enjoying the immediate feedback and opportunity to talk about their work with senior managers.
- 3.35 From the start of the pandemic Children’s Services have been working flexibly and this has also applied to practice weeks, which have had to be delivered virtually this year. Observations, in particular, have been a challenge during Covid owing to limited opportunities to observe in a safe way and minimise risk to families and staff.
- 3.36 A few of the key areas of strength, as identified through audit in practice weeks during 2020-2021 include:
- A. Practitioners know the children and families they work with well.
 - B. Direct work through the establishment of relationships is linked to sustained changes.
 - C. Family meetings are regularly taking place increasing family resilience and helping to build relationships with families.

D. Social workers are considering the diverse needs of children and young people they are working with

- 3.37 There has been a steady improvement in the quality of practice being delivered by social workers and this years standard audits are showing an increase in the number of files rated good (G) or outstanding (O) compared to last year and a reduction in those rated requires improvement (RI) or inadequate (I):

Audit Period	Total rated Good or higher	Total rated Requires Improvement or lower
2019-2020	57%	43%
2020- 2021	72%	28%

- 3.38 The PSW has continued to provided leadership, mentoring and coaching to six full time equivalent Advanced Practitioners appointed in Children's Services. Advanced practitioners play a key role in embedding good practice across the service and provide practical support to newly qualified social workers, this could for instance be by attending complex meetings with them, modelling good practice and helping them write good assessment and plans. The Advanced Practitioners also contribute to quality assurance and have completed dip sampling which informs future training needs.

- 3.39 Advanced practitioners have also delivered training to all social workers on key themes linked to the 2020-2021 Practice Improvement Plan such as:

- A. Genograms workshops have been delivered to the majority of teams. Feedback has been positive and the aim is to implement this approach in reflective practice sessions
- B. Family meeting workshops every quarter with over 40 social workers having received this training this year and more planned for next year

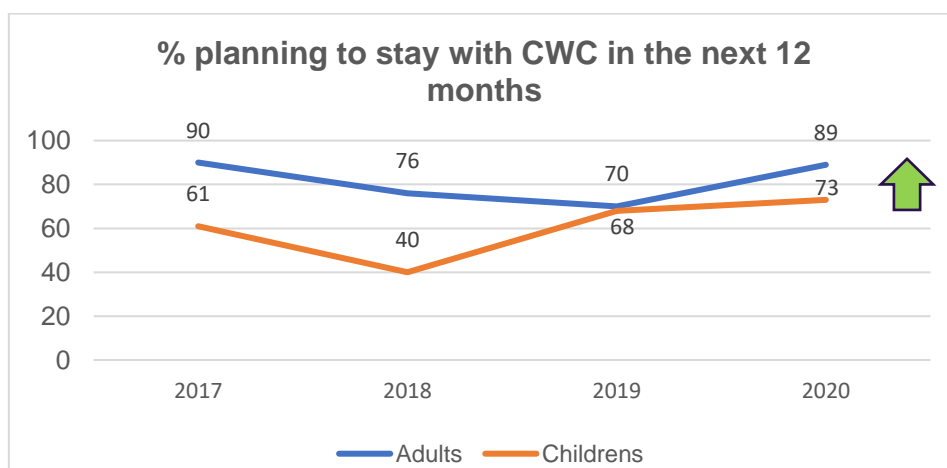
- 3.40 Children's Services have an updated improvement plan for 2021-2022, Making a Difference: Aiming for Excellence in Social Work Practice, which will be utilised as a tool to support Children's Service's continuing improvement journey from good to outstanding. The plan will be reviewed regularly by colleagues across the service at a range of leadership tiers.

3.41 Workforce

- 3.42 There is evidence in the UK of a shortage of experienced social workers (Research in Practice, 2015) with Social Work featuring on the national occupation shortage list since 2014. A Department for Education (DfE) study of Children and Family social workers in

2019 identified that within two-three years of qualifying social workers become dissatisfied and report feelings of increased stress.

- 3.43 Social work is challenged by high turnover and vacancy rates and a heavy reliance on agency staff. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted, 2016) state that "good" local authorities have a "workforce that is sufficient, stable, suitably qualified and competent to deliver high-quality services to children and their families".
- 3.44 The Principal Social Worker continues to lead on the development and delivery of a Recruitment and Retention plan with colleagues from Human Resources, Organisational Development and the Communications Team. The plan delivers a rolling recruitment campaign for social workers, the development of promotional material including videos for both Adult's and Children's Services and retention activity focused on good communication between senior leaders and frontline employees, delivering a good workforce development offer including a clear career development pathway.
- 3.45 This year In Children's Services the PSW has hosted a recruitment session this year for agency social workers and those interested in joining the City of Wolverhampton Council. The pathway for continued professional development has also been launched, offering a clear development pathway for both children and adult social workers.
- 3.46 The City of Wolverhampton Council is bucking the national trend in the recruitment and retention of children's social workers. The majority of vacancies in Children's Services have been created by secondments and recent analysis evidenced that there were just 4.5 true vacant positions to be filled. In Adult's Services the current turnover rate of social workers is low at 3.9% compared to 12.8% nationally ("The State of the Adults Social Care Sector and Workforce in England, Skills for Care October 2020). A stable workforce allows the Council to embed good practice and provide children, families and adults with consistent workers.
- 3.47 The annual Social Work Health Check survey asks social workers for their views on working conditions and this year showed that more social workers than in previous years are planning to stay with City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC):



- 3.48 A key function of the PSW role is to support the training of new social workers. There are many routes into social work and it is important that the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) takes a mixed economy approach to supporting the training of social workers in order to not only meet its own sufficiency needs but also contribute to the needs of the region. Programmes and initiatives that contribute to this include the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership (WMSWTP), Step up to Social Work, Frontline and Degree Apprenticeships in Social Work.
- 3.49 The WMSWTP is in its third year of delivery and is the largest in the country consisting of 27 partners including Local Authorities, Children's Trusts, Universities and Higher Education Colleges. Social Work Teaching Partnerships are a government funded initiative designed to enhance partnership arrangements between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and employers; attract more able students; embed the knowledge and skills (post qualifying standards) into academic curricula and continuing professional development (CPD) for existing workers; and overall raise the quality of social work practice. This year CWC have benefitted from participating in the WMSWTP for instance by being able to access a number of training/CPD sessions including Train to Teach opportunities, Court Skills and opportunities aimed at newly qualified social workers, such as considerations for working from home and Communities of Practice. The PSW attended "Practitioners Panel Student Welcome Week" at the University of Birmingham raising the profile of social work in Wolverhampton. Relationships with the universities will continue to be developed this coming year.
- 3.50 During 2020-2021 CWC have supported 25 social work placements across Adults and Children's Services, which is more than usual and 15 new Practice Educators were recruited. Given the significant challenges Universities and social work teams faced due to Covid, this shows the local commitment and drive for supporting the next generation of social workers. Four final year students have gone on to secure permanent newly qualified posts with CWC.
- 3.51 Step up to Social Work and Frontline are post graduate fast track social work programmes for people interested in the profession who have a 2.2 Honours Degree or above. Step up to Social Work is co-ordinated regionally and is delivered in partnership with the University of Birmingham. It is a 14-month condensed course. CWC has been providing placements for four Step Up students, who are on track to become qualified in May/June 2021 and will be employed as Newly Qualified Social workers from date of registration. Another cohort of Step Up students is currently being recruited and CWC have provisionally requested another four students.
- 3.52 Frontline is a fast-track training scheme for social workers in child protection, which aims to attract outstanding graduates who may not previously have considered a career in social work. Participants complete most of their theoretical training whilst in social work placements, this allows them to transfer their learning into practice immediately. Participants are supported by a dedicated consultant social worker and a tutor who

delivers theoretical training within the workplace. The PSW has worked collaboratively with Frontline to establish two Frontline units each having four participants, one consultant social worker and one deputy consultant social worker. There have been four cohorts, starting in 2017 and in total 20 have been through the programme or are currently on it. In 2020 three students moved into newly qualified social work positions with CWC. There are currently two students on the programme who started in September 2020 and who will move into newly qualified roles from August 2021.

- 3.53 The new level six Degree Apprenticeship in Social Work was agreed in December 2018. It provides an exciting opportunity for existing social care employees to undertake a social work degree whilst remaining in full time employment. CWC currently have eight apprentices across adults and children's services and will be recruiting a further four in 2021-2022.
- 3.54 The City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) undertakes a full Social Work Health Check every year to assess the "health" of its social work workforce. The National Social Work Task Force recommended a framework to assist employers and practitioners to assess the "health" of their organisation on a range of issues affecting the workload of social workers and to support the implementation of a set of national Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework. It is recognised that good practice carried out by a "healthy" and motivated workforce can lead to improved outcomes for people and families as well as reduced demand and costs. The social work Health Check carried out in October 2020 identified a number of key themes:
- A. Social work is a notoriously demanding profession, and, by its very nature, the role carries a certain level of stress and this came through in both the Adult's and Children's survey. However, although stress levels rose slightly compared with last year most likely because of the challenges that Covid-19 has posed, they remain below the levels recorded in previous years.
 - B. Social workers generally felt well supported by their line manager and felt that communication between senior managers and frontline staff is good.
 - C. There has been an improvement in the frequency of supervision and the vast majority receive regular, high quality supervision
 - D. The number of people who felt proud to work the CWC had increased on previous years
- 3.55 Action plans have been developed for both Children's and Adult Services to address any issues identified.
- 3.56 Professional Standards and Practice development**
- 3.57 This year the new Social Work regulator Social Work England required all social workers to record some evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by November

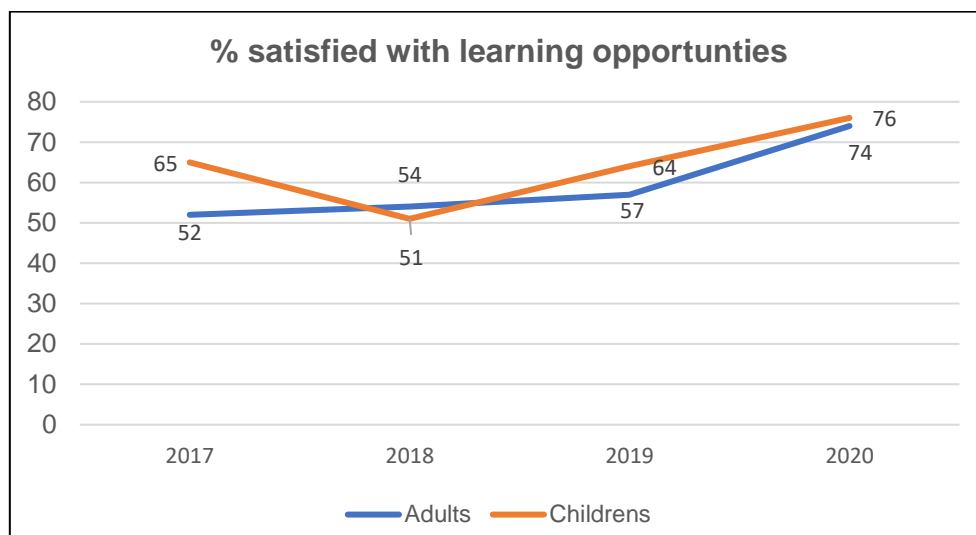
2020 in order to renew their registration to practice as a social worker. One of the key roles of the PSW alongside Organisational Development was to support all social workers to meet the re-registration requirement. The PSW acted as a conduit for engagement with Social Work England inviting the regional lead to speak to social workers directly at Social Work briefings and also at individual workshops across the year, with over 200 social workers attending one session held in the autumn. Social workers have had opportunities to access training throughout the year to evidence CPD and also have access to Research in Practice / Research in Practice for Adults which provides resources and articles to inform their practice. As of November 2020 – all social workers across adults and children’s services had re-registered successfully.

- 3.58 The PSW leads on social work development plans for Adult and Children’s social workers and ensures that training opportunities are offered in line with service priorities. Covid initially made delivery of training more challenging as sessions had to take place virtually rather than face to face. However, the transition was ultimately very successful and over the year a wide variety of training opportunities were delivered linked to key priorities in adults and children’s services including continue the development of strengths based approaches and relational social work and also to support practice and legal literacy during Covid. Some examples included Mental Capacity Assessment training, including a focus on self-neglect, Managing Unseen Risk, Accountable and Defensible Practice in Challenging Times, Getting your Conversation Records write, Life Story Work, Child Protection Best Practice and Three Conversations© refresher workshops.
- 3.59 The PSW arranges three separate Children’s and Adult’s social work briefings a year that provide critical space for social workers to share their views with senior leaders, ensure important information is shared face to face with frontline social workers. The sessions also have a learning and development focus often chosen by social workers themselves. These have proved to be highly successful with social workers reporting that they are able to apply their learning to practice and generally state in feedback that everything presented is of use to their practice. This year subjects have featured sessions on trauma informed practice in adults, LGBT awareness, exploitation and modern slavery and Mental Capacity considerations during Covid and legal updates.
- 3.60 The joint Adults and Children’s Social Work Conference took place virtually in October 2020 on the theme of Safeguarding. It featured a keynote speech by Clenton Farquharson MBE, who describes himself as a disabled person with lived experience of health and social care, Chair of the Think Local Act Personal partnership board, and member of the Coalition for Collaborative Care. A second keynote was presented by Luke Hart from Co•co Awareness who, with his brother, share their family’s story of coercive control and domestic homicide. Social workers also shared stories from their practice and a number of workshops were delivered including: Societal Context of Men’s Violence Against Women; the Impact of Trauma on development and how this relates to adults and children’s social care and Transitional Safeguarding

3.61 Over 240 social workers attended the joint conference and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Some comments included:

- A. "This is one of the best Social Work Conference we have had...One of the core principles of learning is sometimes learning and receiving information from people who have lived experiences and that is what has been significant in today's conference. Thank you"
- B. "3 of the best contributor speeches we have ever had at SW conference"
- C. "Well Done, all the speakers we have had today are of such high calibre and so knowledgeable."

3.62 This year's Social Work Health Check surveys showed that more social workers this year across Children's and Adult's Services feel satisfied with the learning opportunities available to them:



3.63 Raising the profile of social work and connecting with practice

3.64 This year the PSWs and team have continued to celebrate good practice in monthly newsletters and raised the profile of the profession by recognising key events such as World Social Work Day. The PSW also represented the council by co-hosting a session at Social Work England's first Social Work Week in March 2021. The session was called "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: A Wolverhampton Perspective" and showcased a video created locally ([Equality, diversity and inclusion - A Wolverhampton Perspective. – YouTube](#)). Over 130 people attended from across the country including people with lived experience, social work students, professionals, academics and anyone with an interest in social work. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

- A. "Thank you there was so much in this to take away and reflect on. Well done!"
- B. "Fantastic, so moving, couldn't be prouder...Well done Wolverhampton"

C. “Lovely work you are doing Wolverhampton”

- 3.65 In March 2021, a social work blog “*Remembering to be kind to yourself when caring for others*” was produced and published by the Department of Education on their website to highlight importance of well-being and self-care in social work
- 3.66 The PSWs have continued to work closely with social workers connecting with practice and being the voice of social work for the city. In the Peer Challenge Practice Review (September 2020) for example practitioners said they were aware of the host PSW and said she had been a presence undertaking drop-ins, delivering training and delivering virtual workshops. Practitioners said that they knew she was available which was “really re-assuring”.

3.67 Challenging inequality

- 3.68 Equalities has been a central focus this year with the creation and delivery of cultural competence workshops by the Advanced Practitioners. To date there have been five full day training sessions delivered to over 100 practitioners across Children’s and Adult’s services. Practitioners have reported that workshops have helped them to self-reflect on their own cultural competency. There have also been discussions in equalities champions meetings and the aim is to begin to disseminate tools/articles/resources for champions to present at their team meetings.
- 3.69 There has been dedicated time at social work briefings this year to reflect on inequalities and the Black Lives Matter movement. Equality and diversity is also a standard agenda item at all team meetings and is discussed within supervisions.
- 3.70 The PSWs commissioned anti-racist practice training from the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) in January 2021 with 205 social workers attending from across Adults and Children’s Service.
- 3.71 The PSW has supported Heads of Service in the creation of Service Equality Plans in Adults with a particular focus on making sure the workforce is skilled and confident to have good conversations about people’s uniqueness in the collection of equality monitoring data. The PSW will also be supporting Children’s Services with this in 2021-2022.
- 3.72 In Children’s Services the PSW has been an active part of the Practitioner’s Forum on race and culture.
- 3.73 From April 2021 the PSW became a lead ally and will be supporting the Rainbow staff equality and diversity forum this coming year

4.0 Key priorities for PSW work plan 2021-22

- 4.1 As well as the priorities already mentioned in this report the PSW will continue to ensure that the social work development plan incorporates a good development offer for social workers that enables them to continue to develop their practice whilst still not yet being

able to access face to face training. It is imperative that social workers are highly skilled as it is known that good social work intervention can reduce the risk of children needing to be received into care and can enable adults with care and support needs to remain or become as independent as possible. It also ensures that council resources are being used appropriately and effectively.

- 4.2 The PSW will continue to provide leadership, mentoring and coaching to the six (FTE) Advanced Social Work Practitioners in Children's Services. The focus of this work will be to support the ongoing improvement of frontline social work practice. Advanced Practitioners will assist with the service's journey towards excellence in social work practice and the transition from being a "good" rated local authority to an "outstanding" one. The PSW will oversee and lead all quality assurance activity and develop the "Aiming for Excellence Plan" in Children's Services and Adults.
- 4.3 There will be continued local delivery of the NAAS and the PSW will play a key role in the ongoing embedding of Restorative Practice across Children's Services and introducing this in Adult Services by end of the year to enhance the Three Conversations© approach and strengths-based practice. There will be a particular focus on the use of restorative language.
- 4.4 The PSW will ensure that issues relating to tackling inequality for all groups of people with protected characteristics continues to be incorporated into social work development plans and will ensure social workers are exposed to the voices of people with lived experiences to better inform their practice and approaches. The PSW, as lead ally, will promote the leadership equality pledges, support EDI strategy (including being visible and active in forums and EDI events), and actively challenge where needed. The theme for this coming year's Joint conference will be: "Celebrating Diversity: Tackling Inequality".
- 4.5 A key priority for the PSW for 2021-2022 in conjunction with other leads within the council will be to ensure the social work workforce is prepared for the introduction of the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) by April 2022. This will replace the current Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) scheme. The introduction of this was delayed due to Covid.
- 4.6 As previously mentioned, the PSW will ensure mechanisms are in place to support social work wellbeing during Covid (and post Covid), this includes the production of a wellbeing framework, as recommended by the 2020 Local Government Association's Standards for employers of Social Workers.
- 4.7 The PSW will continue to take lead responsibility along with Human Resources and Workforce Development for the implementation of the recruitment and retention plan to support a mixed economy of routes into social work and strengthen current recruitment activity, ensuring the council is able to meet demand and supply needs now and for the future. The plan will also build on existing strategies and explore new ways to retain social workers to ensure social workers see the council as a place where they can

develop their practice and career and feel valued, trusted and proud, an example of this is a celebration event for those who have completed their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and Practice Educator training later in the year

- 4.8 The PSW's Quality and Improvement team will continue to support with the annual Social Work Health Check, seeking feedback from the workforce to increase response rates, and take the lead on sector-led improvement activity and inspections.
- 4.9 The PSW will continue to support a range of engagement activities between the Directors for Adults and Children's Services and social workers but will explore different ways to communicate and interact with social work teams this year, including digital solutions.
- 4.10 The PSW will meet monthly with Heads of Service and Deputy Directors to ensure operational engagement and oversight.
- 4.11 The PSW will also play a key role in the redesign of Adult's Social Care in 2021-2022, providing independence challenge and assurance in relation to social work and any changes to the practice model.
- 4.12 There will also be a role for the PSW to ensure social workers are kept informed about, and have a chance to engage with, the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, which is now underway. This is a national review which will have significant implications for Children's Social Care. It is being called a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform systems and services. The review will report to ministers and the government will publish a report and response.
- 4.13 It is important that the PSW continues to maintain a presence in national PSW forums. These meetings are learning and development opportunities and provides opportunity for the Chief Social Workers for Adults and Children to share the direction of travel, answer questions and receive feedback from PSW's. These events also provide opportunity for the sharing of good practice.
- 4.14 The PSW also attends regional network meeting on a bi-monthly basis. This allows regional work to take place as directed by the regional West Midlands Association of Directors of Children's Services and the Association of Directors of Adults Services. The PSW will also continue to on the strategic board for the Regional West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership and will be facilitating quarterly meetings with the University of Wolverhampton and Heads of Service.

5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 5.1 This report highlights the impact on the service, city and residents that the PSW role can bring including ensuring quality of good social work practice and improved outcomes for people. There is evidence that this role has a positive impact on the profession and the people being supported across Adult and Children's Services.

- 5.2 There is an option of not having a PSW, but it needs to be noted that the PSW role in adults is set out in statutory guidance. Without a PSW there could be a decline in quality of practice which would affect the lives of those children, young people and adults who seek social care support.

6.0 Reasons for decision

- 6.1 The role of the PSW contributes to a number of key priorities across Children's and Adults Services including Restorative Practice and Three Conversations© which are approaches and models that enable social workers to build professional relationships with people who need services that help and promote a strength-based approach to their practice. These approaches enable the workforce to strengthen families where children are at risk, promote the independence of older people and people with disabilities as well safeguarding people in vulnerable situations.
- 6.2 The PSW provides dedicated resource to the recruitment and retention strategy which in turn helps the Council reduce the spend on agency. The role is also responsible for raising the profile of social work in the City which also contributes to making the City of Wolverhampton a social work employer of choice.
- 6.3 The role also provides the professional knowledge required to drive local and regional workforce development plan that will contribute to high quality, excellent practice and assist the journey from a good to outstanding Ofsted rating.

7.0 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising directly from this report. Any costs arising from the actions in the workplan and priorities set by the PSW will be met from existing budgets. [MK/01072021/U]

8.0 Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.
[SB/11062021/Z]

9.0 Equalities implications

- 9.1 Social workers provide support to the whole community covering all the protected characteristics. One of the key roles of the Principal Social Worker is to support the continual improvement of social work practice. Excellent quality social work practice is more attuned to the equality issues experienced by individuals, families and communities. This annual report highlights the actions being taken to ensure that Children's and Adults Service and social work practice generally is of a high quality and being supported to consider and tackle inequalities for all groups. The PSW will continue to ensure that issues relating to inequality for all groups of people with protected characteristics is well incorporated unto the social work development plan for 2021-2022 and also considered as part of recruitment and retention activity.

10.0 All other Implications

- 10.1 There are no human resources implications. However, it is noted that close collaborative working has taken place over the last year on the implementation of the recruitment and retention strategy and action plan. This includes back office support and attendance at Social Worker interviews and recruitment campaigns.
- 10.2 Good social work practice will support the health and wellbeing of children, young people and adults who access services. The PSW has a key role in supporting the wellbeing of social workers and this has been highlighted in this report.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

- 11.1 There are no background papers for this report.

Wolverhampton Children and Young People's Self-Evaluation 2021-22

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EMMA BENNETT
ALISON HINDS

Director of Children's Services
Deputy Director, Children's Social
Care

Agenda Item No: 8

Executive Summary

- 2021 was a year that required flexibility and adaptability in the way we worked to continue to work with our children, young people and families alongside managing the effects of the Covid19 pandemic
- Our workforce responded positively and remained committed to ensuring relationships with children young people and families continued, and children in the city were safeguarded
- We worked closely with partners, strengthening our already solid relationships to safeguard our vulnerable children in the city
- We have experienced the benefits of a strong stable social work workforce during this period with only 4.5 social work vacancies at the end of March 2021. The social work health check was positive with social workers feel well supported and committed to continuing their careers in Wolverhampton
- We were able to flex and respond when demand increased. We did not see in the City of Wolverhampton an unusual big spike in referrals as was expected as schools reopened .This was in line with the regional and national position.
- We have maintained our focus on ensuring we work with families at the earliest opportunity, utilising the powers of state intervention only at the appropriate level and for the length of time required
- Children in care have experienced even better placement stability this year with continuing good outcomes.
- We have implemented and embedded three new areas of work: A local House Project for care leavers, a Social Work in Schools DfE funded pilot project, and a multi agency Missing and Exploitation Hub, all of which are demonstrating difference and positive outcomes for young people

Executive Summary continued

In 2021/22 we will:

- Evaluate support services to young parents and adapt the service delivery model
- Develop a programme of intervention and support to work with parents who do not have the care of previous children to support children living in their families
- Further expand of the use of Family Group Conferencing to strengthen opportunities for children to live within their families
- Progress all aspects of our Aiming for Excellence Improvement Plan, to include ensuring all reflective discussions and supervisions are recorded on children's records, ensuring consistent good quality records are kept for all children with the voice of children and young people is strong throughout all records
- Ensure we have consistent good quality robust care plans and pathway plans for all children and young people
- Ensure children in care regularly attend the dentist and have an up to date health assessment so that we can be confident we are meeting their health needs
- Embed the Emotional Wellbeing and the Specialist Family Therapeutic Support Services to support children, young people and their families

The City Of Wolverhampton

The City of Wolverhampton Council is committed to ensuring children and young people have the best start in life and as such this is a central component of the Council Plan 2019-2024. There are 263,357 people who live in the City, 62,276 of these are children under the age of 18.

The City is home to people from all over the world – one third of the population is from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and 19% of residents were born outside of the UK. There are around 90 languages spoken in the City.

The number of children receiving formal support has incrementally decreased across all areas of Children's Social Care over the last 5 years. In order to achieve this the Children and Young People's Service has embedded its early Intervention offer, and there has been a focus on relational practice making a difference through restorative practice. Additionally, robust management oversight ensures the right children are received into care and once in care, plans for permanency are progressed with a sense of urgency.

Children receiving support as at end of March 2021

547 Children and young people in care
243 Children who have a Child Protection Plan
715 Children who have a Child in Need Plan



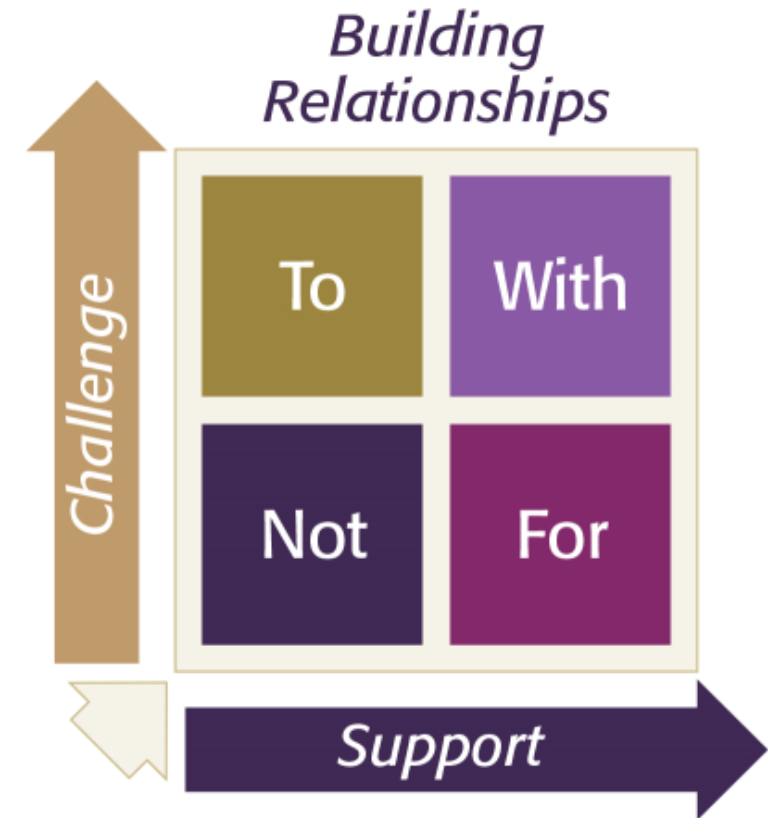
Our Values for Children Services

- To develop respectful and empowering relationships with children, young people and families
- To ensure children are at the centre of everything we do
- High aspirations, high expectations

The Children and Young People's services began adopting a restorative approach to practice in November 2016. All practitioners are trained in the approach.

The approach emphasises the importance of building effective relationships, working with families rather than doing things to them or for them, to help families make sustainable change.

Restorative Practice is a high support, high challenge model that supports practitioners to be clear about concerns and set clear expectations, whilst providing support to help families achieve these goals.



There are good examples of employees using the approach to help family members understand how their actions impact on their loved ones. For some this has been effective in increasing the family's motivation to change. Many employees also use restorative solution circles to generate ideas to work creatively with children and families where they feel the plan has not been effective in supporting change.

2020-2021- An Exceptional Year

- We believe we have continued to deliver good quality services to children and families throughout the year, whilst evolving and adapting in line with restrictions enforced by Covid-19
- We quickly moved to an agile way of working utilising only virtual methods to continue to work our children and young people . This was supported by utilising our existing equipment and technology.
- We have been creative in our approach and responded to the changing need and environment
- Our core value and principles remained strong; developing and maintaining respectful and empowering relationships with children, young people and families
- Despite the restrictions of Covid -19 we are proud of our workforce who have remained motivated and shown strength and resilience continuing to put children at the centre of all they do
- We have continued to work with children and young people to support them in achieving their expectations and aspirations through our relationship-based approach. Examples include improved stability of children in care, improved educational outcomes for children in care, and a reduction in reoffending rates for young people in the city
- We have built on our strong relationships with internal and external partners by responding to changing need as a partnership. Examples being the implementation of the Partnership Missing and Exploitation Hub, the implementation of the Social Work in Schools project, the detached youth work provision delivered with our partner Base 25, and the embedding of our Local House Project
- We have ensured that all colleagues feel supported embedding flexibility, trust and confidence in our new way of working which has contributed to the stability of our workforce and our low social work vacancy rate
- On our journey to Relighting our City we will continue to learn, adapt and co-produce on our approach and will be thoughtful in what we do and how we do it to best meet the needs of children and families and our workforce
- We will take with us the things that have worked well and be informed by consultation with staff and our children and young people.

Impact of Covid-19 on Referrals

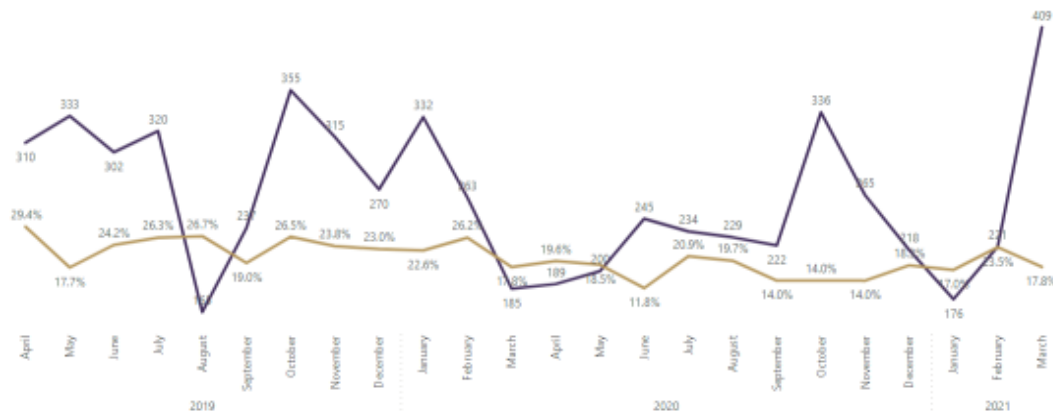
Referral rates are 481 per 10,000 which is below the England average. There was a reduction in referral rates between March and July 2020. Since that time referral rates began to return to normal levels. They were, however, above normal levels in March 2021. Head teachers have reported that as children have started to settle back into schools' they have been talking more about events that may have taken place during lockdown. This has resulted in an increase in Early Help and Children in Need assessments.

Work has been undertaken to understand the nature of referrals. Workers initially reported feeling that work was more complex during lockdown but analysis found that the percentage split for each category of need has not significantly changed.

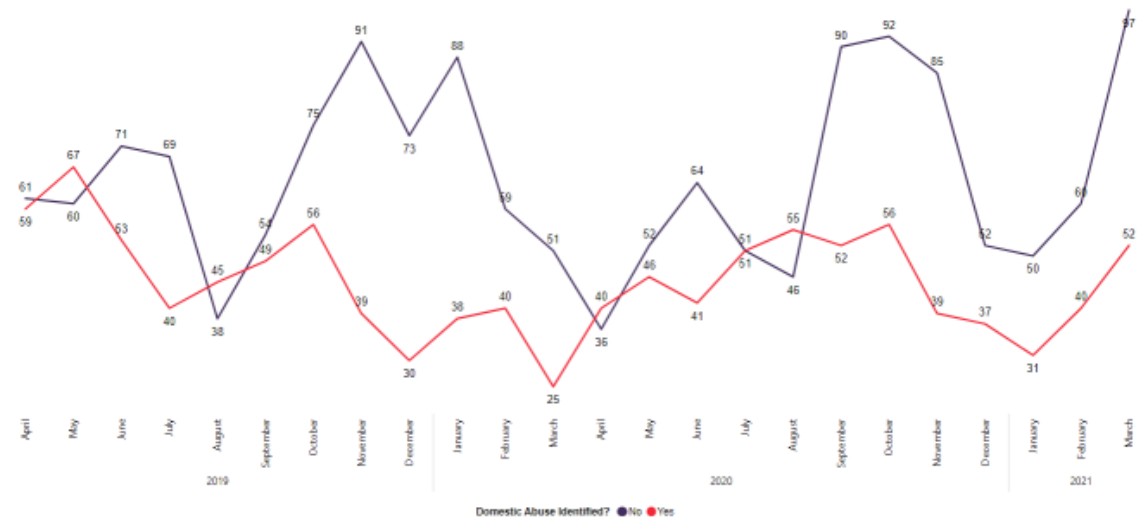
- When schools returned in September 20 there appeared to be an increase in peer –on - peer sexual abuse
- In March 2021 there was an increase in young children being referred for physical abuse
- Managers feel there has been an increase of referrals regarding child mental health
- Wolverhampton have not seen an increase in referrals around CSE or exploitation

Referrals Started and re-referrals

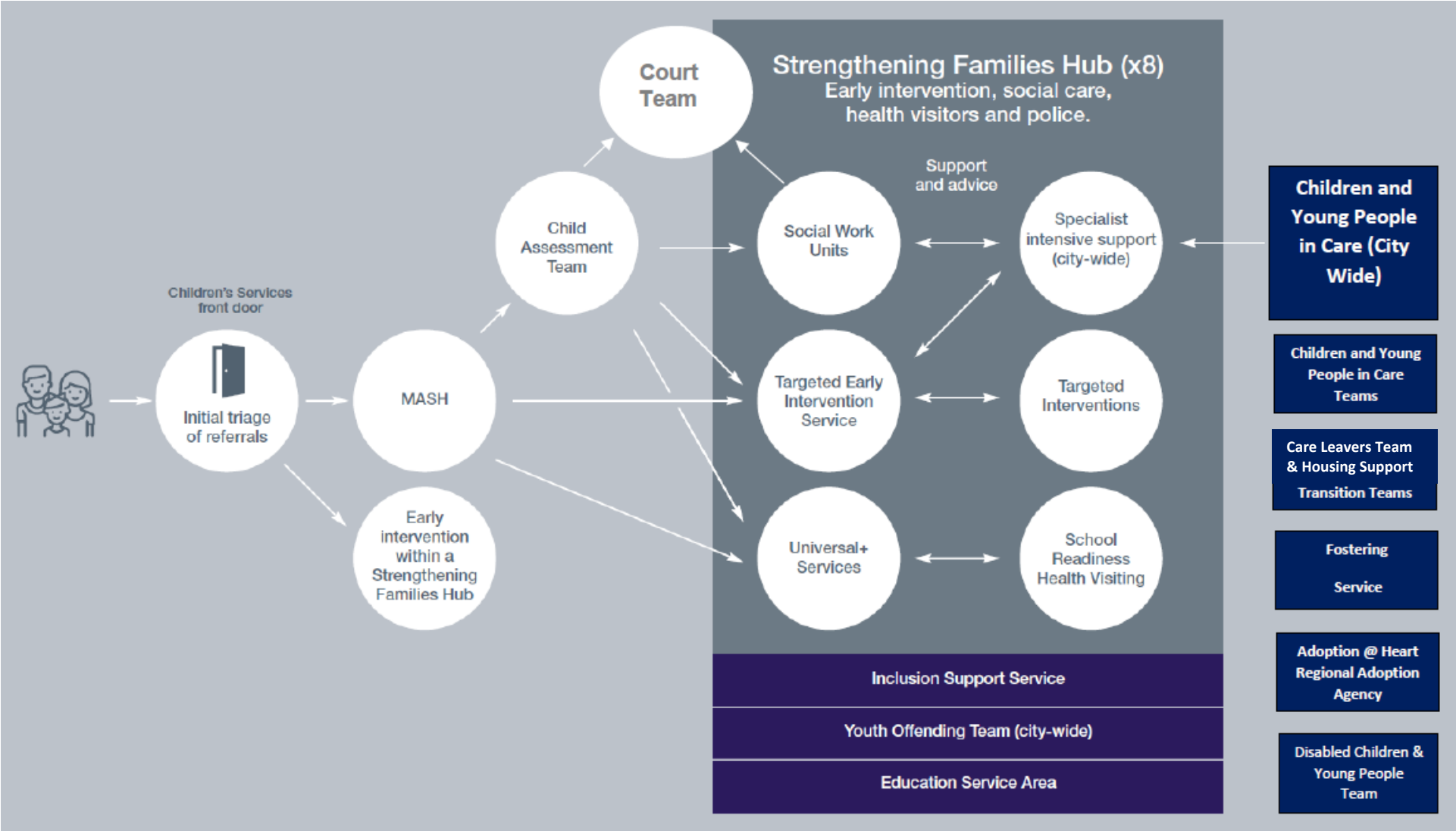
● Number of referrals ● % of referrals repeat in previous 12 months



Number of Contacts into MASH with Domestic Violence Identified with an outcome of refer to Social Care or Strategy Discussion



City of Wolverhampton Children and Young People's Service Operating Model



City of Wolverhampton Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, Report published: 31 March 2017

Inspection Findings: Children's Services in Wolverhampton are Good

Children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good
Children looked after and achieving permanence	Good
Adoption performance	Good
Experience and progress of care leavers	Good
Leadership, management and governance	Good

In September 2018, a Focussed Visit was undertaken focussing on assessments and Children in Need and Child Protection Plans. The following areas for development were noted.

1. Many assessments did not sufficiently describe the changes and emerging needs being experienced by children and families.
2. Plans were not sufficiently effective in reducing needs. They did not adapt to changing circumstances, they were not sufficiently clear or specific and did not include achievable actions and outcomes.
3. Social workers experienced excessively high caseloads.
4. Supervision was not being used effectively to improve practice. Supervision was not sufficiently detailed or reflective and was not being used efficiently to improve practice.

Through a performance improvement plan we have upskilled social workers and managers to enable improvement in practice in the above areas. Through our QA process we continue to monitor practice and the impact on outcomes for children and young people. We have seen an improvement in the quality of assessments and plans but recognise that we need to see this consistently on all records. Average caseloads for social workers are now significantly lower at 22 for Strengthening Families social workers and 18 for Children and Young People in Care social workers.

Quality Assurance

Audit Period	O	G	Total	RI	I	Total	Overall total
2018-2019 (audits)	3	37	40 (40%)	43	17	60 (60%)	100
April 2019 – March 2020 (Audits) (Sept, Dec 2019 & Feb 2020 Practice Weeks)	9	38	47 (57%)	33	2	35 (43%)	82
April 2019 – March 2020 (Observations)	7	32	39 (92%)	2	1	3 (8%)	42
April 2019 – March 2020 (Dips)	11	50	61 (67%)	27	3	30 (33%)	91
April 2020 – March 2021 (Audits) (Dec 2020 & Feb 2021 Practice Weeks)	2	22	24 (72%)	7	2	9 (28%)	33
April 2020 – March 2021 (Dips) (Feb 2021 Practice Weeks Dip)	2	10	12 (86%)	2	0	2 (14%)	14
Trajectory	A increase in the number of good/outstanding audits when comparing year on year for 2019/20 with 2020/21.			The number of inadequate and RI audits has reduced when comparing year on year with 2019/20 and 2020/21.			



The Children and Young People's service has significantly improved the way in which audit is undertaken across the service. Practice Weeks have been introduced since September 2018. We review the model after each practice week to ensure we are getting the best from it. All senior managers including the Director of Children's Services now spend up to four days over two weeks undertaking audits alongside practitioners, observing visits, meetings and practice, and spending time with teams. This provides workers with immediate feedback, allows managers to understand how interventions are experienced by children and families first-hand, and increases the visibility of senior managers. From the start of the pandemic, we have been working flexibly and our approach to practice weeks has also been delivered virtually. Undertaking the number of audit and observations has been a challenge during Covid, particularly due to limited opportunities to observe in a safe way and minimise risk to families and staff. From June 2021 as part of our Quality Assurance process we will be engaging parents, carers and young people to provide more detailed feedback to us via electronic surveys, incorporating feedback from compliments and complaints and linking learning from local reviews, peer audits and performance information and analysis.

Quality Assurance feedback from practice weeks

Key areas of strength as identified through audit in practice weeks during 20/21 :

- Practitioners know the children and families they work with well.
- Assessments are timely, of good quality and help to make things better for the child or young person.
- Direct work through the establishment of relationships is linked to sustained changes.
- Family meetings are regularly taking place increasing family resilience and helping us to build relationships with families.
- Collaborative working is strongly evidenced on children's records reflecting a good multi agency approach to our work.
- Social workers feel they receive good supervision and direction.
- Permanency planning is a strength and outcomes are improved for our children and families.
- Social workers are considering the diverse needs of children and young people we are working with.
- Children we work with are safe, demonstrating our intervention and support is appropriate and is making a positive difference.

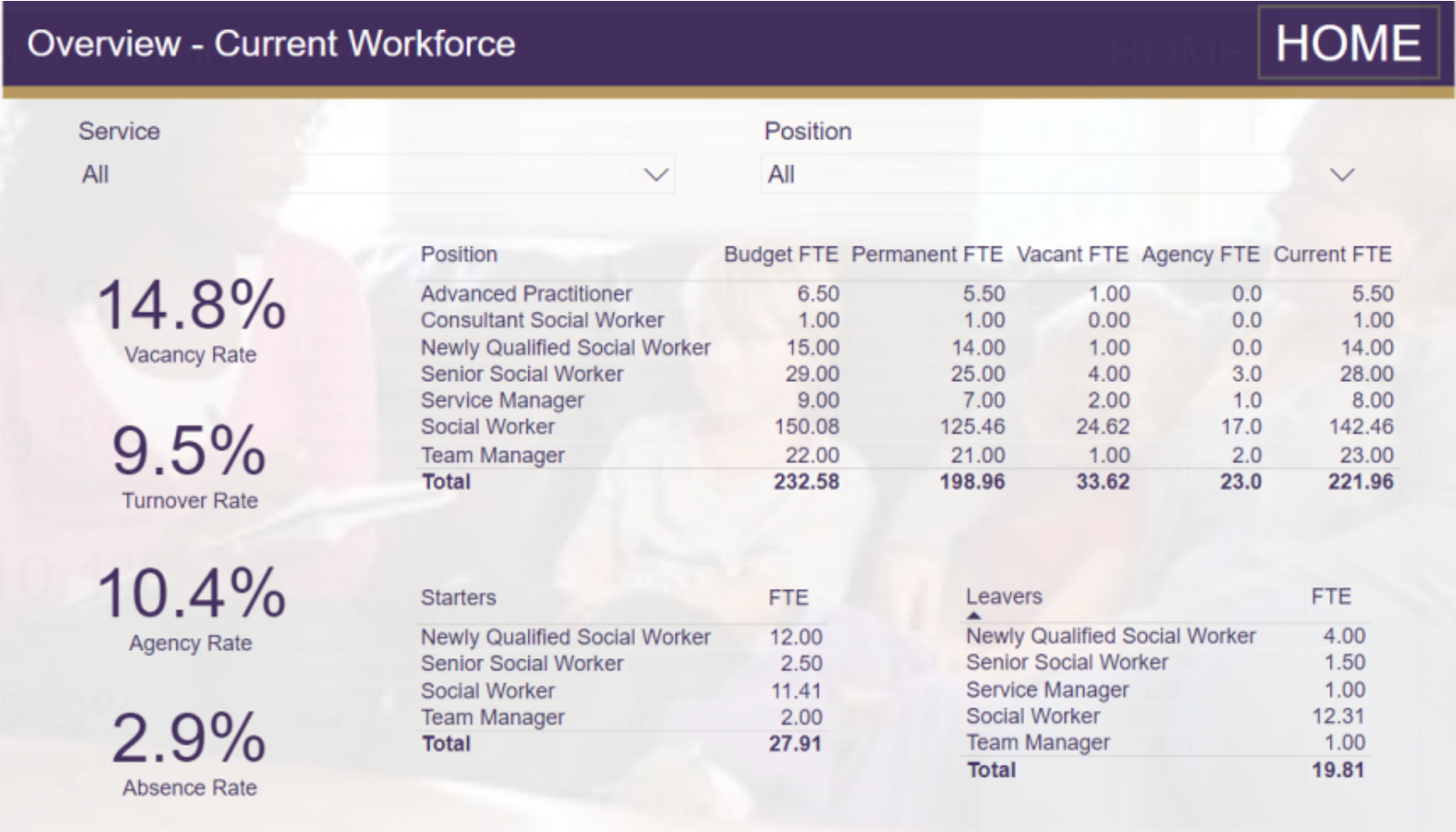
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Our Practice Improvement Plan for 21/22, Excellence in Practice is in place and will be utilised as a tool to support our continuing improvement journey. The plan will be reviewed regularly by colleagues across the service at a range of leadership tiers.

This self-assessment demonstrates that through our strength based relational approach to our work we are making a difference to the outcomes for children and young people across the city. Over the next 12 months our key priority is to embed consistency of excellent practice across all areas. We are committed to our restorative approach to practice and will continue to embed this in all our interactions. We are intending to work closely with all colleagues in Social Care to develop a positive culture which incorporates the need for good quality written records to be regarded as an essential integral part of the excellent work we do with children and young people and their families. The impact of reflective discussions and supervisions will form part of children's records.

Workforce

The City of Wolverhampton Council is bucking the national trend in the recruitment and retention of children’s social workers. In Wolverhampton, the picture is positive, and the numbers of permanent social workers is heading in the right direction. Wolverhampton’s vacancy rate now stands at just 14.8%. . This marks a significant improvement on March 2019 when 28% of children’s social work posts locally were unfilled. The majority of vacancies have been created by secondments and recent analysis evidenced that there were just 4.5 true vacant positions to be filled.



* Data as at 29/03/2021

Children Receiving Statutory Support

The number of children receiving statutory support has reduced incrementally between 2016 and 2021.

The main areas to see a sustained decrease in the last 12 months are children subject to Child Protection Planning and Children and Young People in Care. Quality Assurance activity seems to evidence that this is due to the services' success at embedding a relational approach to practice that enables families to remain safely together wherever possible. Most audits and observations of practice are good and evidence skilled social work intervention, strong relationship building skills and that the lived experience of children has improved. There have been no concerns raised by auditors around the level of support being provided.

During the pandemic both the Early Intervention Service and Specialist Support Services have continued to work with families to reduce potential for escalation of family difficulties.

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Team managers and service managers undertake CiN reviews bi-monthly. This ensures children are supported at the right level and provides challenge with regards to whether families should step up to Child Protection Planning remain subject to Child in Need Planning or be supported by the Early Intervention service.

Service managers also review children who have been open to child protection planning for more than 15 months to ensure progress is being made and the lived experience of children is being improved.

There was an independent review of the work being held by the Early Intervention service in 2019 and no children were identified as being held at the wrong level. This exercise was refreshed internally in 2020, again no children were identified for whom it was felt statutory services would have been more appropriate.

There has been a decrease in the number of Children in Need during the pandemic, but early indicators suggest that these numbers are beginning to rise as schools return to business as usual.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

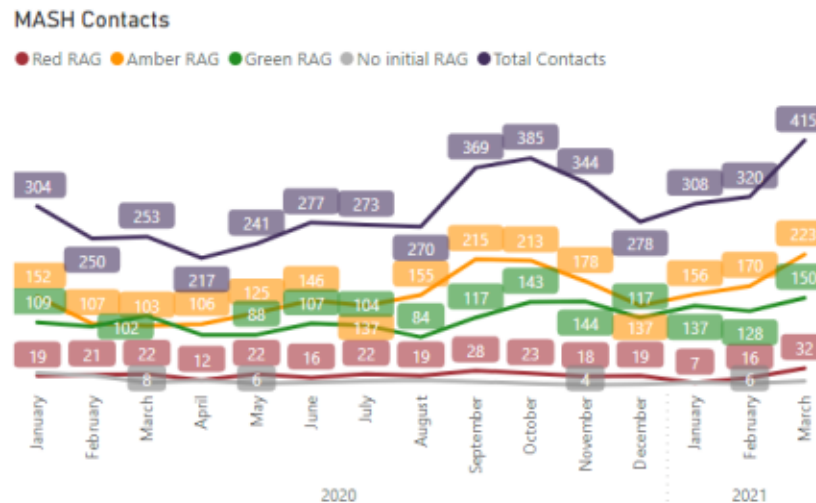
The City of Wolverhampton MASH continues to perform well. It consists of Children and Adult Social Care, Early Intervention, Police, Wolverhampton Homes, Recovery Near You, Probation Service, Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, Black Country Partnership Foundation Trust and Education representation. Since March 2020 the MASH has continued to work virtually and partners in the MASH are all working well as a team remotely.

The Children's MASH service ensures that all referrals are triaged by managers in a timely manner and threshold decision is applied. Children who may be at risk of significant harm are safeguarded appropriately and there are positive links with the Child Assessment Team.

Between March and August 2020 there were an average of 255 contacts into MASH, this is a reduction in the average number of contacts when compared to the same period the previous year (Avg. 299). This reduction is likely to have been significantly affected by Covid-19 Pandemic.

September 20 saw an increase to 369 which was higher than the same month the previous year (320), this increase was to be expected in September but also indicated that contacts were resuming after the reduction in the summer. Since April 2020, the largest number of contacts into the MASH have been from the Police (26%), this is partly due to the closures of schools. A similar expected increase in referrals has been experienced since schools reopened on 8 March 2021.

MASH have taken steps to become very visible within other agencies to help and discuss the contact process. Visits have been made to health services, including the 0-19 year old service, midwives, and mental health services. DSL events have taken place on a quarterly basis, and meetings regularly take place with Wolverhampton Homes, Police and Recovery Near You. This has helped to build positive relationships whereby threshold conversations can happen as required. Circular review systems are in place to consider any contacts which are not accepted to ensure that the family receive the right help at the right time. MASH have been working closely with the Early Intervention teams and the Early Help Navigators to help ensure that there is support in place for partner agencies completing the Early Help Assessment to build confidence not only in the computer systems, but also in talking to parents and offering support. An Early Help Navigator for Health has been appointed to extend this good practice.



Supporting through Early Intervention

Early Intervention (EI) services are offered through eight locality based strengthening family hubs. At the end of March 2021, 1234 children were being supported by Strengthening Families workers. Early Intervention is currently working with 266 children that are open to statutory social work services at Child in Need, Child Protection and Public Law Proceedings threshold; providing targeted interventions, direct work with children and young people, supporting victims and child witnesses of Domestic Abuse, and addressing 'Troubled Families' factors that are impacting such as worklessness or school attendance.

Both audit activity and performance data indicate that Strengthening Families workers make a difference. At the end of an intervention and period of working with us most families are closed because sustained progress has been achieved and just 3.6% of families were stepped up to social work locality teams.

The reduction in the number of children open to Early Intervention across the year is due to a combination of factors including; roll out of Early Help training for partners, the appointment of Early Help navigators and a reduction of referrals in March 20 due the Covid 19 pandemic. There has been a reduction in the number EI referrals in the past twelve months (Avg. 273 per month) when compared with the previous year. (Avg. 367 per month). However, referral rates have continued to increase since September 2020. The overall number of children open to Early Intervention is now in line with 2019 numbers and closer to what would be expected without the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Year	2020											2021		
Outcome	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	
Referred to Early Help	65	54	45	65	67	64	70	85	90	84	92	87	109	

Early Intervention achievements

- Covid- 19 has brought about an unprecedented change in our interactions, routines and daily lives. Consequently, staying in isolation during the crisis has been a real challenge for many families. In order to meet the changing needs of families the Early Intervention Service quickly implemented an online parenting programme. This enabled families to access parenting support as and when and formed part of our Stay Safe Be Kind Covid-19 support for vulnerable families in the City.

Parents can either self serve by accessing an online course or they can take part in a virtual group.

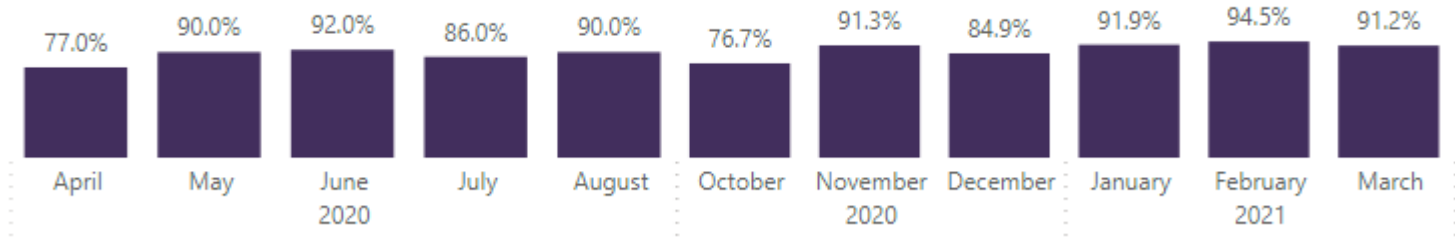
- The Play Workers continued to provide opportunities for young people to engage in a range of positive activities across the City. Alongside increased detached youth work provision through our partner Base 25 they have helped to divert young people who may have been at increased risk of criminal exploitation and have worked well with hub officers and other partners to engage young people and reduce youth violence.
- Strengthening families workers have delivered the Freedom Programme and McEwan Programme virtually on a one to one basis for women affected by Domestic Violence or families affected by sexual abuse to ensure this crucial work continued during lockdown.
- Adult Education is now delivered from within the Strengthening Families Hubs. This includes ESOL courses, helping families who do not have English as their first language access language courses in their own area.
- The service has continued to support robust parenting assessments in order to ensure Court work was not delayed.

Working with our Children in Need

As at the end of March 2021 there were 885 children open as CiN. 91% of children had a visit within the expected timescales as at the end of March 21, which are set at a minimum of once a month. Some children were seen more frequently as per their CiN plan. The September 2020 data was impacted by the migration to Eclipse and is unavailable. There was a decline in relation to timeliness of CiN visits in April 20 as teams transitioned into a different way of working due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

An average of 81% of assessments were completed within 45 days.

CiN Visits Timescale

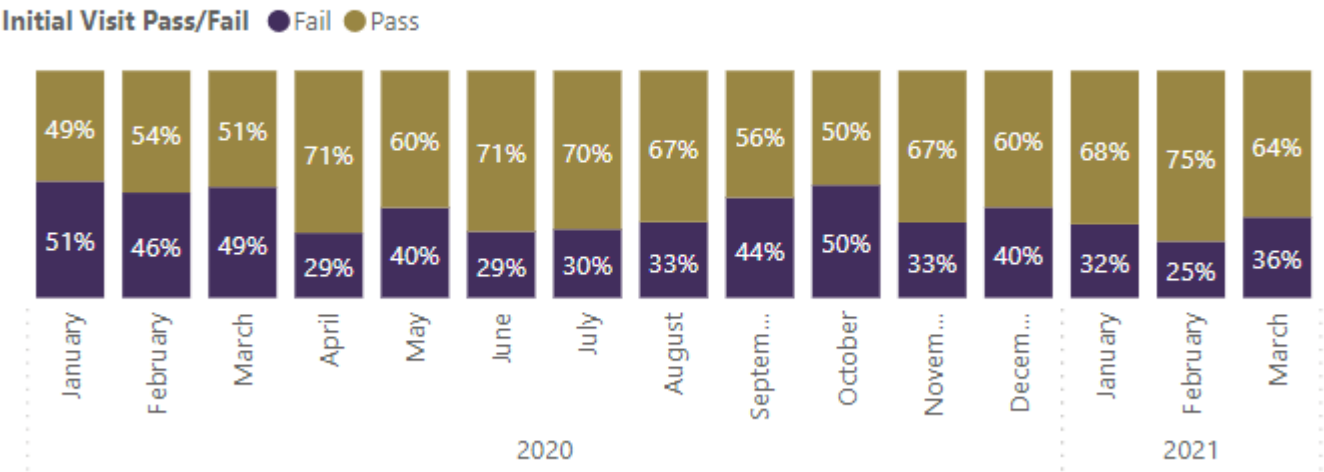


Performance data and some QA activity indicates that social workers alongside partners achieve positive outcomes with families through CiN planning. Most CiN plans are closed within 12 months of starting as improvements have been achieved and risks have reduced for children.

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The service believes it is important to see children quickly once a referral has been accepted in order to ensure children are safe and to enable support to be delivered in a timely manner. This reduces the risk of needs and concerns escalating. There has been steady improvement in performance in the number of children who are seen within 5 days of referral over the year and most children are seen within 7 days. An assessment of their circumstances is usually completed within 10 days and where a CiN plan is required the first meeting is completed within 4 weeks.

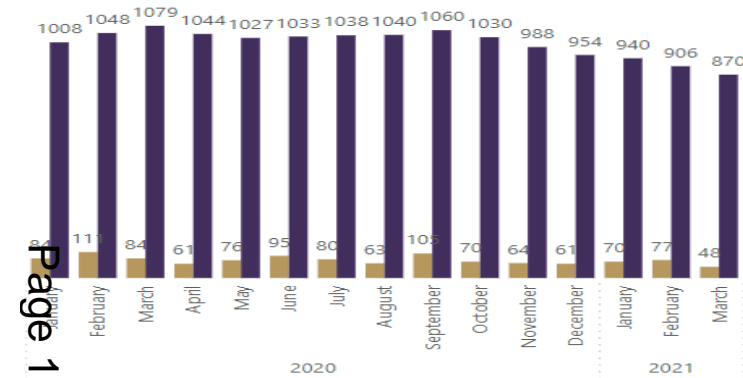
Initial Visit (Visit within 5 working days of referrals form start)



Child Protection Investigations

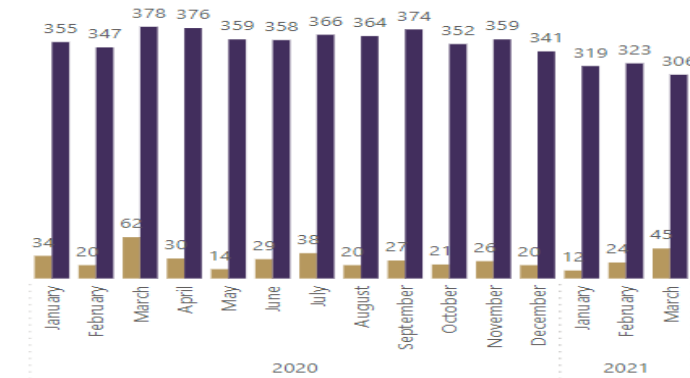
Number of Section 47 Starts (With completion date)

● S47 in Month ● S47 in last 12 months



Number of ICPC Starts (With completion date)

● ICPC in Month ● ICPC in last 12 months



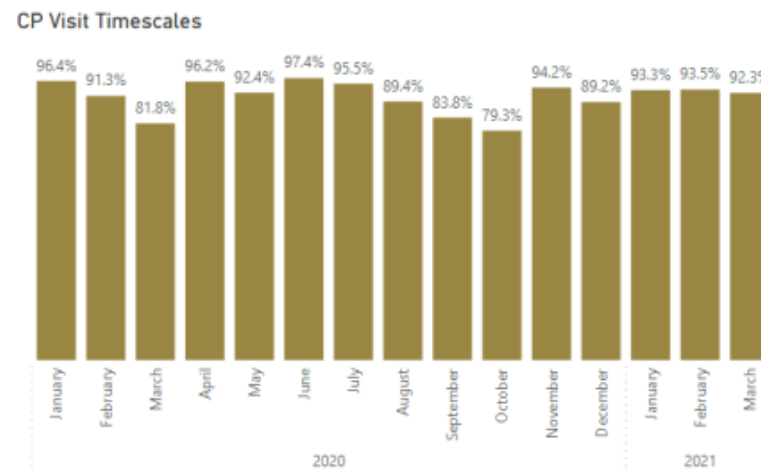
S47 to ICPC Conversion



Where child protection concerns are raised investigations are undertaken in a timely manner and child protection procedures adhered to well. The number of child protection investigations has decreased in the 12-month rolling period. As at March 2021, an average of 41% of section 47 investigations completed within the previous 12 months result in an ICPC. It is important for children and families that concerns are addressed in a safe and proportionate manner. A range of work is being undertaken to ensure this is the case, including work with partners within the MASH and peer challenge of S47's between team managers to increase challenge and learning. Following a dip in conversion rates, a DIP sample was completed of S47's undertaken in the MASH and strengthening family teams. The outcome of this was that we were reassured that the section 47's completed were largely felt to be appropriate.

Safeguarding our Children in Need of Protection

There were 243 children subject of a child protection plan in March 2021. The Safeguarding manager monitors child protection decisions and is confident that threshold is being applied appropriately. The number of child protection cases that are repeats within 2 years over the rolling 12-month period has decreased to 12% from 14% in April 2020. In the main, families are sustaining the changes made whilst children have been subject to child protection planning. An analysis of the children who have become subject to repeat child protection planning within two years has taken place. This found that in the majority of cases children were subject to repeat child protection planning due to their experience of neglect and/or domestic abuse. A strategic partnership approach to understanding the impact of neglect on children is being developed, alongside a review of our response to supporting children and families experiencing domestic abuse.



Timeliness of child protection visits remains an area of focus. Although there was a reduction in the performance in September and October 2020, this was due to the migration to Eclipse. Visits were taking place, but due to an inaccurate method of recording these visits, some were showing as out of timescale. Guidance was issued to all social workers and managers and improved performance has stabilized. This good performance needs to be consistent across all teams to improve this performance further.

Core groups take place regularly and have continued to be well attended by partners utilising virtual meetings in TEAMS during Covid-19 restrictions. Services such as Intensive Family Support, Power2 (a multi-professional service to support teenagers at risk of multiple factors) and Partnering Families (a health service to support new parents who have previously had children removed from their care) are well utilised and help children to remain safely within their birth families.

Working with schools to support children and their families at the earliest opportunity

The Wolverhampton Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) project started in November 20 and is part of a larger scale evaluation (21 local authorities and around 300 schools across England) led by: -

- a) Department for Education (DfE)
- b) What Works for Children's Social Care
- c) The Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE, Cardiff University)

Six social workers are based within the school environment of six schools to develop early relationships and a partnership approach with school staff, young people and their families.

The social workers are currently working with 98 young people supported by Child in Need, Child Protection planning and in assessment. Social workers complete the majority of Section 47's and start working with families from initial point of referral - they are able to talk with school before referral and signpost to early help or community services if appropriate at the earliest opportunity.

The SWIS team have been able to work closely with children and families and other professionals to help families improve their circumstances and reduce concerns about children's wellbeing and safety. So far there has been no children stepped up to Child Protection and the team have not needed to receive any of the children they are working with into care.

Early feedback from schools is very positive. One Head Teacher stated that she cannot imagine not having a social worker in her school again, another Head Teacher from a large school in a particularly deprived area of the City has stated that he would like more than one. Schools have reported a greater understanding of the social work role and feel that communication is much better.

Our partnership approach to tackling violence and exploitation

Wolverhampton has adopted a new approach to address issues of violence and exploitation (V&E) in the City, as set out in our Strategy. It is recognised that the landscape of exploitation requires a more flexible and agile approach across the partnership and a commitment to tackle violence and exploitation in its entirety.

In order to improve how we work together to identify and protect young people at risk of or experiencing exploitation in all its forms, we have redesigned our whole system to ensure that support is joined-up and effective. This has included a revised threshold document to clearly identify the extra familial risks associated with exploitation and an updated exploitation screening tool to ensure it supports the identification of all forms of exploitation. Training via a suite of online modules is also available to all staff across the safeguarding partnership.

In February 2021, the Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub went live. All referrals supported by a completed screening tool are now risk assessed within the MASH, including information and intelligence from the newly established Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub. All young people identified at risk (even where risks are low) receive support from either Early Intervention or Social Care. Daily partnership briefings are being held to discuss all young people and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation.

Since the launch of the Exploitation Hub on 22 February until 31 March 2021:

- Daily briefings are attended by Police, Children and Adult social care, YOT, Missing Return Officer, Early Intervention, Education, Community Safety Partnership and the Violence Reduction Unit
- 197 young people have been discussed
- 31 Exploitation screening tools have been received and discussed
- Review of missing young people is embedded into the daily briefings
- Timely response to concerns from a wide range of professionals
- Co-ordinated information sharing/ intelligence gathering – developing a profile of activity across the city to inform prevention and disruption activity

Our response to Child Exploitation

In Wolverhampton, the response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is well embedded and there is a CSE Problem Profile produced on an annual basis.

Local CSE Figures 2020-2021

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
At Risk	80	77	82	89	86	94	88	97	101	105	107	116
Significant	13	12	13	9	10	10	12	12	8	7	8	8
Serious	4	4	4	3	3	4	1	2	3	3	3	5
3 Month Monitoring	19	16	17	23	25	28	32	30	31	20	18	10
Case Closed	15	9	8	3	7	12	9	4	11	17	14	12
Total Young People	131	118	124	127	131	148	142	145	154	152	150	151

The response to wider forms of exploitation is being developed through the recently launched Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub. It is recognised that the gathering of data and intelligence is key to understanding the levels of exploitation across the city. The Hub has a dedicated information analyst post to focus on this. As at the end of March 2021, the breakdown of young people known to be at risk or involved in exploitation; 111 CSE, 19 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), 6 County Lines (CL), and 8 Modern Day Slavery (MDS). Some young people are involved in more than one form of exploitation. Currently 22 young people have National Referral Mechanism (NRM) status as a result of being involved in modern day slavery/ trafficking.

The referral pathway for exploitation has been strengthened to ensure that all young people identified as being 'at risk' will receive an offer of support, thus ensuring that no referrals get NFA'd. Multi-agency Child Exploitation meetings (MACE) are held for all young people identified at significant or serious risk of all forms of exploitation. Young people identified as low risk are referred to Early Intervention. Emerging operational themes and areas of concern are escalated to the Child Exploitation and Missing Operational Group (CEMOG) and exploitation remains a priority for the Wolverhampton Safeguarding partnership.

Supporting our Vulnerable Adolescents at Risk of Exploitation

The Power2 team was established in December 2019 as a pilot project funded for 2 years, to work with young people aged 11-17 at risk of exploitation. During 2020-2021, additional funding was identified through a PCC grant and additional contributions from the CCG / local authority, to extend the remit up to the age of 25. The team is multi-disciplinary with social workers (children and adults), speech and language therapist, educational psychologist, substance misuse worker, play/ drama therapist and keyworker support commissioned from the voluntary sector. Young people and their families receive an intensive service for 6-12 months, using trauma informed practice to take adverse childhood experiences into account (ACEs). Funding for the team has been extended until the end of March 2022 to allow for a detailed evaluation to be undertaken.

Power2 work with :

- Young people aged between 11 and 25 years of age who are at risk of exploitation;
- Young people where there is current or recent escalation in high risk-taking behaviours;
- Young people where there has been support and interventions implemented to decrease risk, which have not proved effective;
- Young people transitioning into adulthood who would not ordinarily meet the adult social care criteria for support.

Early indications of positive outcomes:

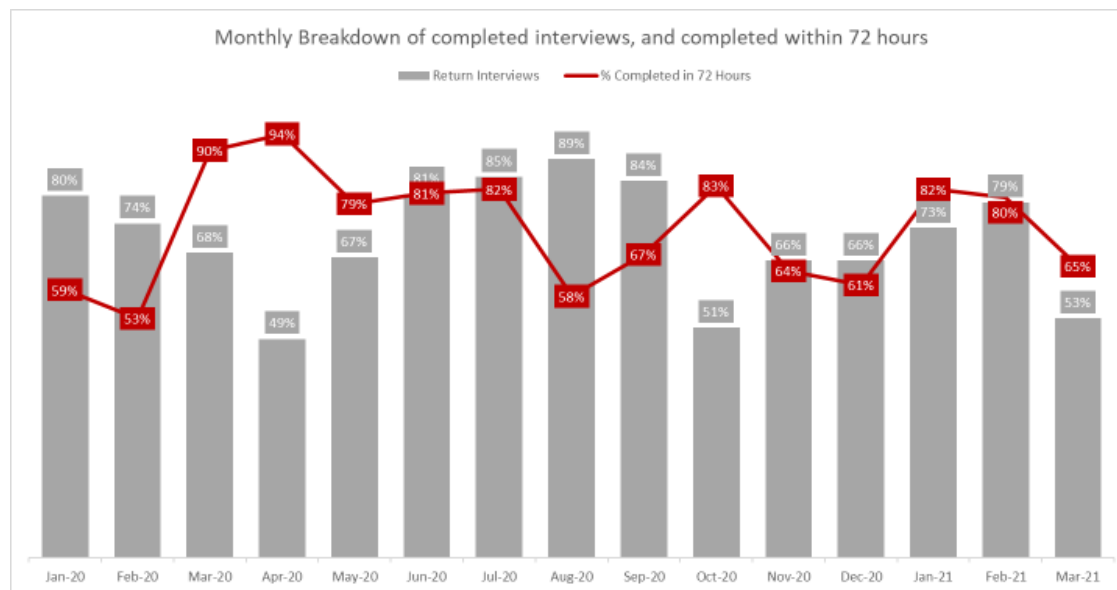
- Reduction in CSE risk
- Reduction in number/ length of missing episodes
- Step down from child protection to child in need
- No further offending behaviour

Next steps:

- For an evaluation to be produced that considers quantitative/ qualitative outcomes and cost benefits. This will inform future funding discussions.

Our response to children who are missing

The number of missing episodes saw a dip at the start of the lockdown period in April 2020. However, from July 2020 onwards there has been a steady increase, and the numbers of missing episodes per month has returned to pre-covid figures.



As part of the return interview, the exploitation screening tool is always completed to ensure consideration is given to missing young people being at risk of exploitation. All screening tools are considered by the Exploitation Hub to ensure all young people identified at risk are offered support.

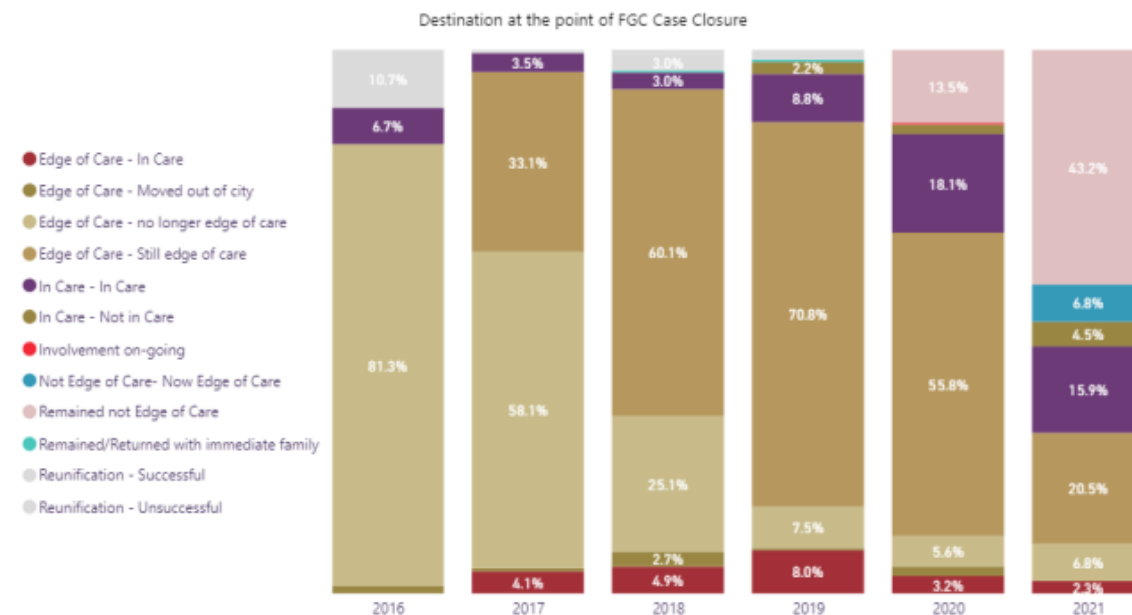
The number of missing episodes followed up with a missing return interview is monitored on a monthly basis. Whilst not all of these are completed within the 72 hour timescale, there remains a commitment to always persist in engaging with young people.

The Missing Return Officer has been having a daily missing triage with Police Locate officers during 2020-21. This has provided an opportunity to review all missing young people, review risk levels and share intelligence.

From February 2021, the daily review of missing young people has been incorporated into the work of the Exploitation Hub.

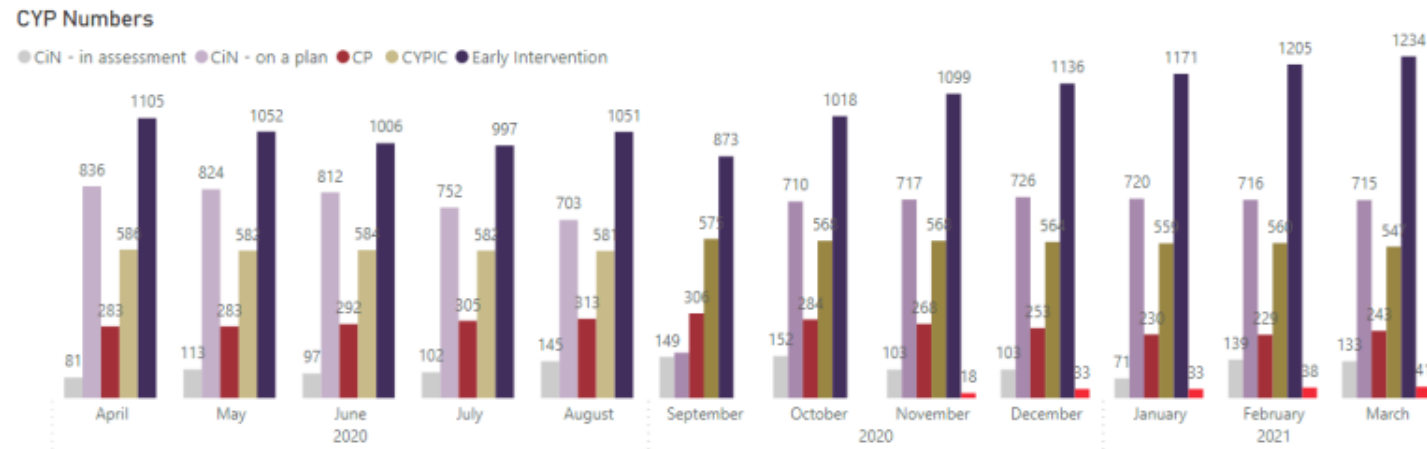
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Intensive Family Support



Children and Young People in Care

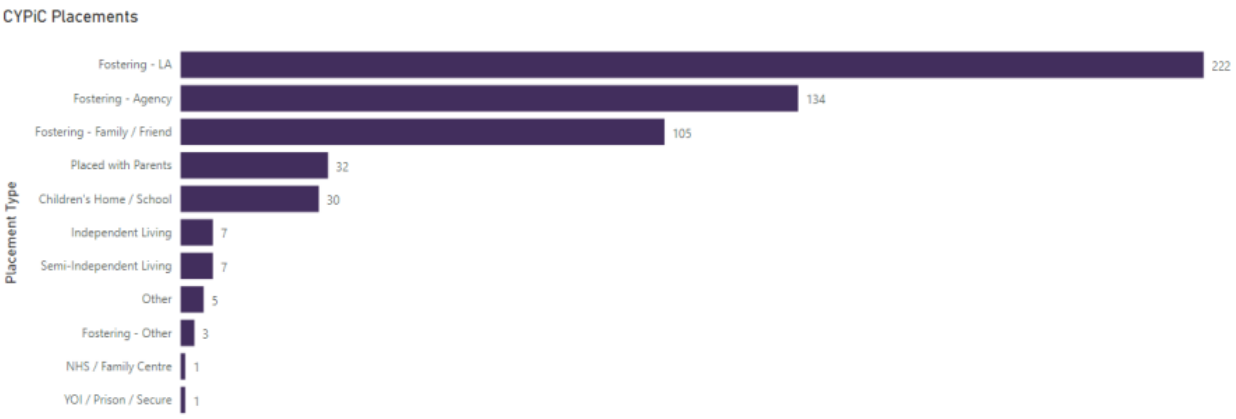
There is a clear vision that is shared across the Children and Young People in Care service which is focused on achieving permanence and stability for children. The number of children in care in Wolverhampton has historically been considerably higher than comparator authorities, over the last ten years. There now is greater emphasis on tackling issues within the family unit and offering support at an earlier stage, preventing the need for children and young people to become looked after. This work, together with the co-location of early intervention and statutory social work teams and the introduction of a relational and strength-based practice framework has contributed to year-on-year reductions in the number of children in care. The number as at the end of March 2021 is 547 (89.4 per 10,000), this is an in year 7 % reduction of 41 from 588 C&YPiC (94 per 10,000).



Robust decision-making processes are in place to ensure that when children cannot be cared for at home, their entry into care is planned appropriately ensuring there is a care plan in place that focuses on achieving permanence in a timely manner. The effectiveness of care planning had been evidenced by good timeliness in proceedings and improved timeliness for children with a plan of adoption. However, during 20/21 we did see a detrimental impact on timeliness of care proceedings due to the impact of the pandemic on the functioning of the Court.

Stability for our Children and Young People in Care

In Wolverhampton we believe that wherever possible children should live with families in or close to our city. The Family Values project focusses on increasing the number of internal fostering households, and improving the offer of support to increase the retention of foster carers. The foster carers support has been enhanced by the introduction of therapeutic training, peer support for foster cares through Fostering Families United, the use of buddies, and restorative practice training. The ambition is to increase the net gain of fostering households approved by the City of Wolverhampton by 81 households by July 2021.



Mainstream foster carer approvals have increased year on year since the start of the Family Values programme. In 2020/2021 31 new foster carers were approved, with 14 of these mainstream carers and 17 family and friends carer approvals. We had an overall net gain of 23 carers. This enables us to place many more of our children with our own internal carers. The gap of placements of children in external placements and those in internal placements continues to widen.

At the end of March 2021, of the 461 children placed in foster homes 327 are with internal carers. This is almost three quarters experiencing the benefits of being placed with our own carers.

The average time to assess and approve foster carers was an average of 157 days in 2020/21. This is 10 days longer than 2019/21 however this is still an achievement given the additional challenges with the pandemic.

Supporting our carers to provide stable placements

- Continuing to improve placement stability remains a key priority. Placement stability is now better than statistical neighbours and national averages. In March 2021 72% of children in care had been in the same placement for two years and the percentage of children with three or more placements in the past 12 months had decreased from 9% to 6% since 2020. Both of these indicators continue to demonstrate strong performance. In order to achieve even better placement stability, plans include:
 - Fostering Families United - a support mechanism which offers foster carers a community of support and access to therapeutic advice. Launched in May 2019, the aim of the pilot was to support the stability of placements. Foster carers work together in small teams supported by an experienced foster carer team leader. Foster carers have found the support invaluable, and this has enabled them to care for children with some complex care histories. Due to the success of the pilot team, there are now 3 Fostering Families United Teams in place with a plan to continue to expand this delivery model to all carers. It is expected that during 2021/22 3 additional Foster Families United Teams will be developed.
 - A therapeutic training programme delivered to all foster carers. Fostering staff have all been trained in this model to ensure consistency of support, advice and consultation. Weekly support sessions continue to take place for foster carers and staff to discuss and reflect on their experiences.
- Children placed in foster care have continued to experience strong secure foster placements during Covid-19 pandemic with foster carers showing strong resilience and support to our children in care

Achieving permanence through adoption

Year 2 of A@H has seen a successful year with increased numbers of adopters approved, and children placed, despite the impact of Covid-19. The partnership between the three local authorities and the Children's Trust in the Black Country has embedded further over the year.

Overall adoption timeliness in 2020/21 has improved compared to 2019/20 with children coming into care and being placed for adoption (indicator A1) in an average of 508 days; a reduction of 51 days. However, A2 has seen a slight increase from 306 in 2019/20 to 313 in 2020/21 and A10 has also increased from 386 in 2019/20 to 435 days in 2020/21.

Wolverhampton continues to be appropriately optimistic when planning for adoption for children who are unable to live with their birth family. This includes children who may be regarded as harder to place and hence may take longer to identify a suitable adoptive family.

A reduction in Adoption Orders granted this year is a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure and backlog in the courts. The court are now issuing hearing dates for adoption applications.

A@H has approved 69 adopters (an increase of 18 since 19/20) and received 117 Registrations of Interest to Adopt (an increase of 53 since 19/20).

- 124 (an increase of 24 children since 19/20) children were placed across the region and 26 children were placed via Foster for Adopt.
- 38 Wolverhampton children have been placed with their adopters (an increase of 15 since 19/20)
- 9 Wolverhampton children were placed via Early Permanence under Fostering to Adopt regulations
- It is positive to note that despite restrictions experienced through the lock down period children have continued to move into their adoptive families with introductions planned creatively and subject to risk assessments.

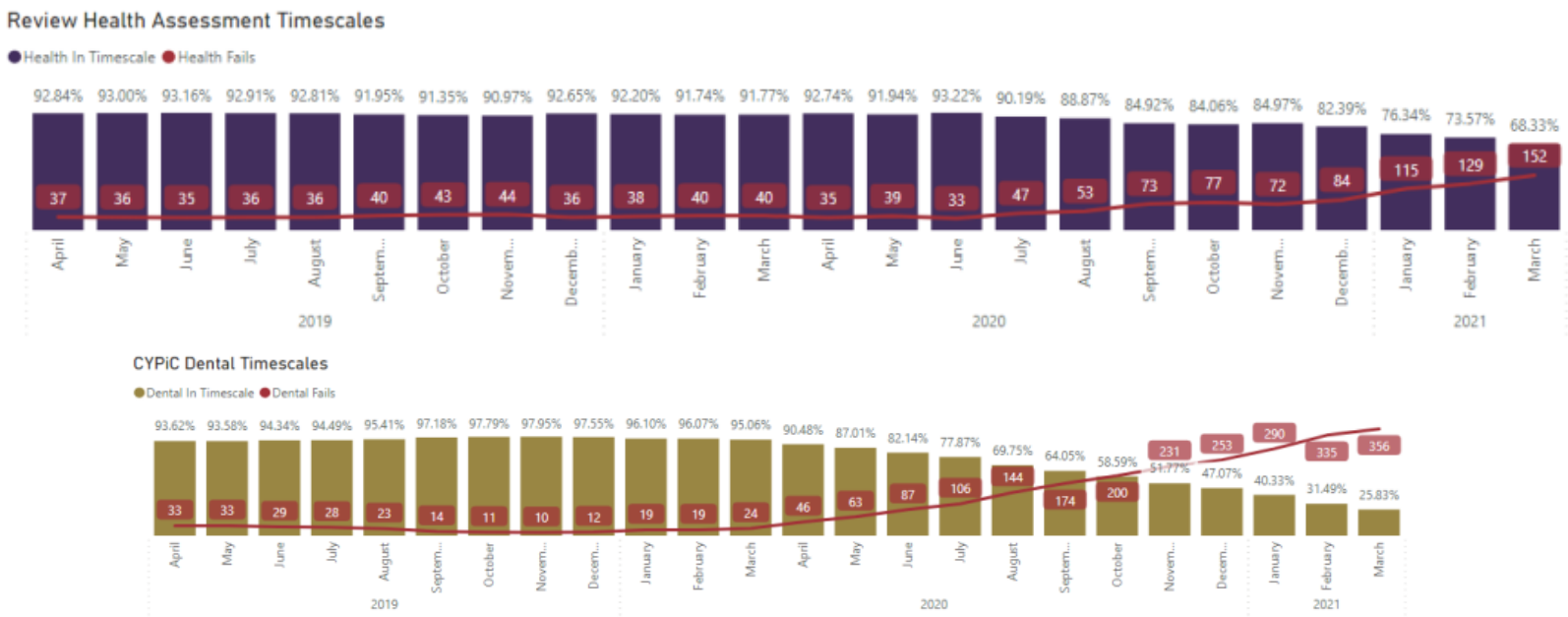
Achieving good health and wellbeing for our Children and Young people in Care

Physical Health

The health and wellbeing of C&YPiC is a priority. All new children into care have Health Passports which have been established with the support of partners in the CCG, ensuring health information is readily available to children and their carers.

The percentage of dentals completed in timescales has seen a considerable dip since April 2020 and is directly linked to the pandemic. This is an area of concern for the local authority and representation has been made to regional dental providers to prioritise appointments for children in care.

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All C&YPiC have health assessments unless they have refused to attend. However, the timeliness of review health assessments has been declining since July 2020 with performance since September 2020 being impacted upon by the migration to Eclipse. We continue to work closely with health colleagues to ensure we have strong systems in place to avoid delay in completion.



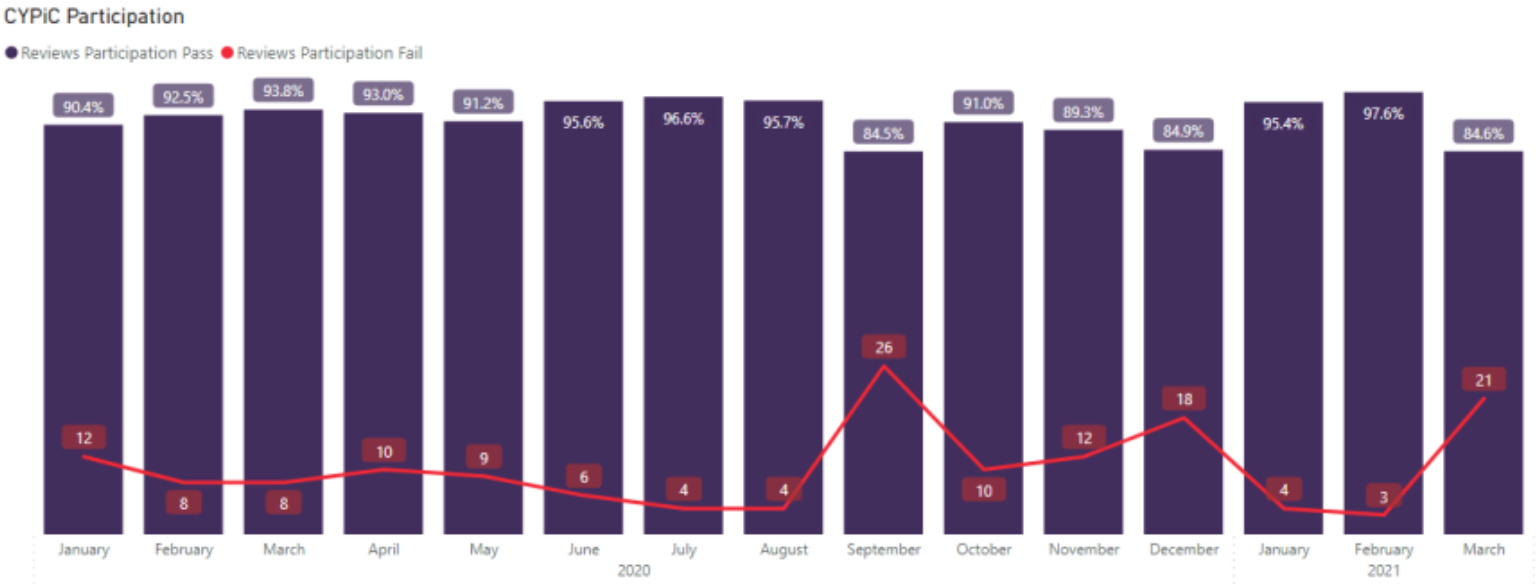
Emotional Health and Wellbeing

At the end of year March 2020 the SDQ score of 13.4 gives Wolverhampton an average of 'normal'. This score shows Wolverhampton positively in comparison to statistical and national comparators and year on year improvement since 2016. Wolverhampton is ranked as the 44th best performing authority in this area. Furthermore, the return rate for 2019/20 was extremely positive at 99%. This helps us to understand and meet the needs of all our children and young people in care.

Emotional and Behavioural Wellbeing - SDQ average scores	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Wolverhampton	12.6	12.3	13.2	14.2	14.4	13.7	13.7	13.4
West Midlands	13.7	13.5	13.5	14.1	13.9	13.7	14.3	14.2
Statistical Neighbours	14.77	14.51	14.52	15.16	14.26	14.3	14.7	14.5
England	14	13.9	13.9	14	14.1	14.2	14.2	14.1

A specialist family therapeutic service has been commissioned to support the specialist therapeutic needs of children young people and their families. This service will not only strengthen the support to children and families to enable them to continue living together but will also offer therapeutic services to children in care and care leavers. The service will be operational by 1 May 2021 and will complement the services offered by the universal emotional wellbeing services and CAMHS.

How we work with Children and Young People in Care

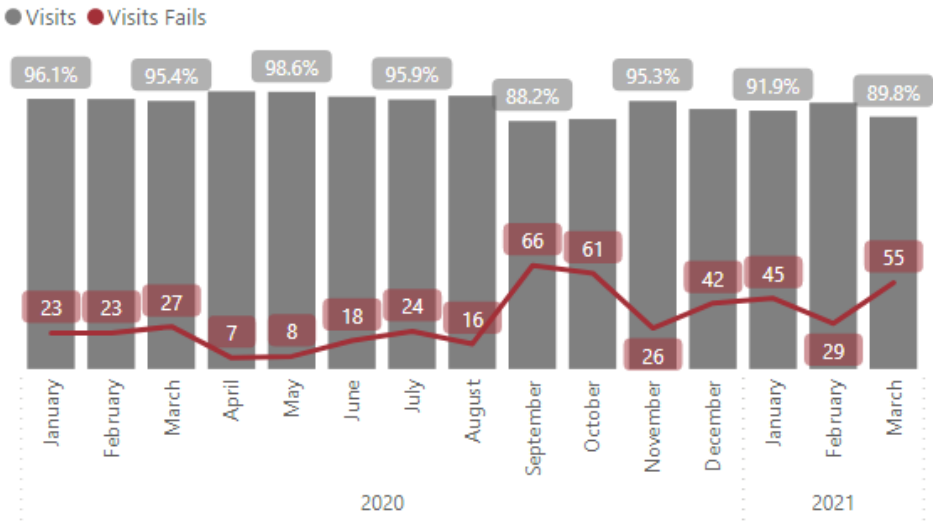


Social work visits to Children and Young People in Care fulfil a range of critical roles and functions not least to enable the child’s circumstances to be observed and monitored. Visits are carried out at least once every 6 weeks or once every 12 weeks in a stable placement.

During the year the vast majority of children received visits from their social workers within statutory timescales. As with CP visits, there was a reduction in the percentage for September, this indicator was affected by the migration to the new system. Visits had been taking place but due to misuse of the new form used to record these visits, some had been showing as out of timescale. Audits have continued to identify evidence of excellent relationship building and direct work.

There is strong evidence of children contributing to their plans and participating in their Children and Young People in Care reviews. The majority of children participated by speaking for themselves and some children chaired their own review.

Visits in Timescale



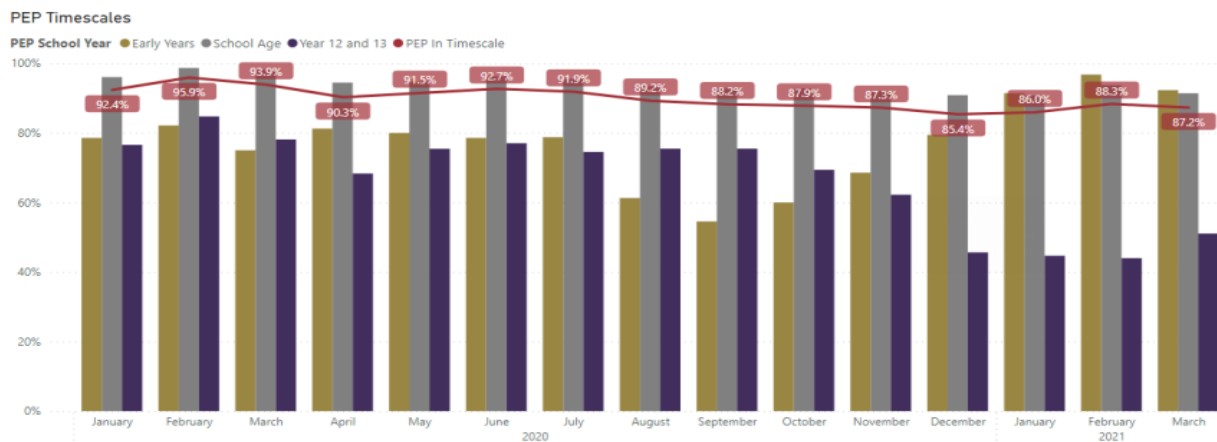
Impact of our work with Children and Young People in Care

Audits of files suggest that the work undertaken by social workers alongside the Virtual School and other professionals, as well as strategic activity is contributing to improved outcomes for children and young people. Children and young people in care are achieving educationally. Previously, outcomes for the whole cohort at KS1 – 4 were broadly in line with national and regional averages, although KS1 and KS2 data is not available from the summer term 2020 due to assessments not being completed by schools. At GCSE, however, outcomes improved significantly for children and young people in care in 2020 - 25% of eligible children in the cohort achieved grade 4 or above in both English and maths. We feel that this improvement is due to grades being based on teacher assessments rather than exams.

School attendance is high with low levels of persistent absence. No children and young people in care were permanently excluded from school in the 2020/21 academic year to date and fixed term exclusions have significantly reduced.

Six Wolverhampton care leavers graduated from university in 2020, including one who achieved a first-class honours degree and three achieved upper second class (2.1) honours. We currently have 26 care leavers in higher education with 5 new starters in 2020.

Percentage of Children with a Personal Education Plan

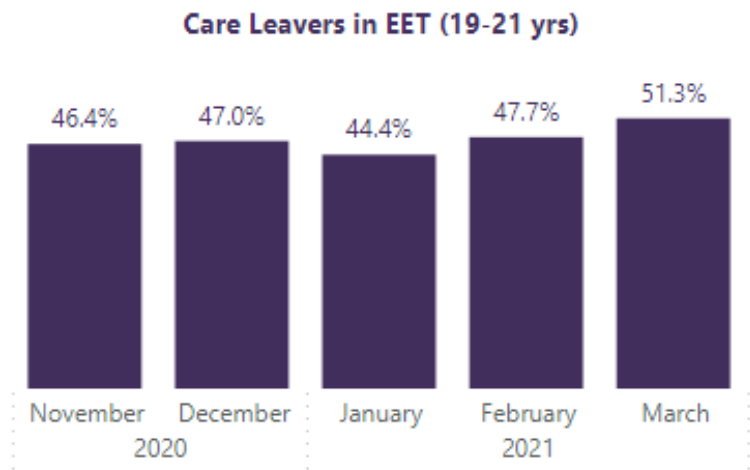


The pupil premium is used effectively to ensure children are achieving. Personal Education Plans (PEP's) completion rates are high and the recently developed Electronic PEP is supporting a detailed understanding of progress that children are making in schools as well as identifying areas that require additional support. Targeted work is taking place with the Reach 14 Plus Team to improve the completion of PEPs for young people in years 12 and 13.

Supporting positive outcomes for Care Leavers

Social workers, young people’s advisors, family support workers, housing support workers and an education, employment and training (EET) co-ordinator facilitate excellent joint working arrangements to support young people into independence. Young people are aware of their entitlements as detailed in the Local Offer for Care Leavers - Reach. Key information leaflets and booklets are incorporated into a post-16 independence pack, and the information is on the care leavers’ Facebook page and CYPiC website. The teams are committed to increasing partnership working with young people and empowering them to develop confidence and achieve their aspirations. The Reach Offer has been revised and improved to increase support to care leavers throughout the pandemic, evidencing strong relationships across the council and with partner agencies.

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Engagement in the variety of EET opportunities available is given a high priority within the service. Young people have priority interviews for apprenticeships within the council, and the offer of apprenticeships has now been extended for those up to 20 years of age. The council offers 10 inclusive apprenticeship posts. The number of apprenticeships within CYPiC Service has increased from two to four over the last two years and senior managers have committed to continue to increase this number across Children and Young People’s service. In addition, Reconomy, our House Project private company partner, are offering five apprenticeship positions for care leavers. The numbers of young people in EET at the end of 2020 is 51.3% compared to 57.9% at the end of 2020. EET opportunities for care leavers nationally and locally have been significantly impacted upon by the pandemic. However, we have continued to work with care leavers and partners to support young people into available opportunities as soon as possible which is reflected in the increase in EET for 19-21 year olds over the last five months.

Housing options to support children in care and care leavers

Care leavers have a choice of accommodation provision including; Supported accommodation provision managed by Accord Housing, Wolverhampton Homes accommodation supported by our own Housing Support Service, Staying Put (over 18), Independent Accommodation (over 18) and local quality assured and monitored Supported Accommodation provisions. Additionally, up to 10 young people per year are supported into their own accommodation by our Local House Project .

The Housing Support Service has access to up to 33 Wolverhampton Homes flats, 2 crash pads and 2 training flats. Each young person has a designated housing support worker (HSW) who remains with them throughout their time in the service. Support hours vary, with a maximum of 30 hours per week, as the young person progresses, the number of hours decrease. The HSW draws up an individual support plan for each young person.

Between April 2020 and March 2021, 7 young people moved into independent living in a flat with a bespoke package of support from the Housing Support Team. All seven of these young people have maintained their tenancy for at least 6 months. The 10 young people in cohort one of our Local House Project have also all moved into their own accommodation. Of the 6 that have been living in their own accommodation for over 6 months, all 6 are still maintaining their tenancy. Cohort 2 young people, who joined the project in September 20 are now starting to move into their own properties.

We have continued to support young people to move into their own homes through this project during the Covid -19 restrictions and have utilised virtual meetings to maintain and establish support and learning opportunities. We have established, and recruited to, an apprenticeship mentor post within the House Project which was ringfenced to a care leaver.

An internal Supported Lodgings Service has been developed with 4 supported lodgings carers recruited and further development taking place. This will compliment the varied range of accommodation options available to children and young people in care.

The percentage of young people in suitable accommodation is 90%.

Corporate Parenting

The Council believes it is important to invest in children and young people in care - the Corporate Parenting Strategy is supported by the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board (CPPB) chaired by the Council's Deputy Chief Executive. The CiCC and CLIC both produce an annual survey, the outcomes of which are used to form the Corporate Parenting Action plan which is then progressed by the board.

Some of our significant achievements that we have worked on with children in care and care leavers this year include:

- With the support of Violence Reduction Unit resources support sessions were delivered to care leavers using music, sport and online support to address issues of resilience, risky relationships and impact of adverse childhood experiences
- Development of the Grandmentors provision to widen the geographical area for those accessing a mentor to young people living outside of the city and widening of the age of referred young people from 18+ to 14+
- Development of links with social value partners – Engie delivering a career in construction workshop, interviews and support for CVs in Care Leavers' Week.
- Development of stronger relationships with Wolverhampton College, with the delivery of Total Respect Training and the inclusive apprenticeship offer.
- The use of the Winter Grant Scheme Fund to support the most vulnerable care leavers living independently with additional fuel and food costs during the winter months due to the impact of Covid-19

The Reach Local Offer for care leavers offer was reviewed in September 2020. Examples of additional offers includes;

- Extension of access to Kooth (an online counselling support) for care leavers up to 25
- A tailored support page on the Wolves Workbox to support care leavers into EET

Participation and co-production with our Children in Care Council and Care leavers Forum

Children in Care Council (CiCC) has had 13 members in this period with 6 males and 7 females. Care leavers Independent Collective (CLIC) has had 7 members with 2 male and 5 female. Both groups have continued to meet fortnightly using Microsoft Teams.

Achievements for CiCC in 2020/2021 include:

- Produced an annual survey for Children in Care to influence their group priorities over the year completed by 81 young people
- Co-produced a virtual annual conference focussing on the key highlights from the annual survey/achievements of the group
- The key highlights from the survey were presented by the vice chair of the group during the conference. The group also produced a video about advocacy as they felt it was important young people knew about the services to support them
- 9 new members have been recruited to the group since the start of the pandemic.
- Children in Care Council members took part in a virtual kindness conference with other youth voice groups in the city and shared ideas on how young people can be kinder to each other.

Achievements for CLIC in 2020/2021 include:

- Co-produced a virtual care leavers' conference gathering views and insight from their peers to inform their work
- Reviewed the Care Leaver Offer, influencing the Care Leaver Offer Steering Group in expanding the offer
- Co-designed Care Leavers' Week for 2020
- Hosted Care Leaver of the Year awards and evaluated the nominations
- Met with the Corporate Parenting Board promoting the need for support with PPE and the costs of transport for care leavers
- Supported the National Care Leavers Benchmarking Forum promoting the needs of care leavers nationally
- Invite extended to the National House Project's Care Leavers' National Movement

Both the CiCC and CLIC helped develop the online learning Gamification modules on key issues relating to keeping young people safe including: bullying, mental health and money management.

Both groups were involved in the recruitment of 30 social workers, in addition to the Deputy Director of Children's Social Care and HoS for Children in Care. Members have co-produced and adapted Total Respect activities so they can be delivered virtually.

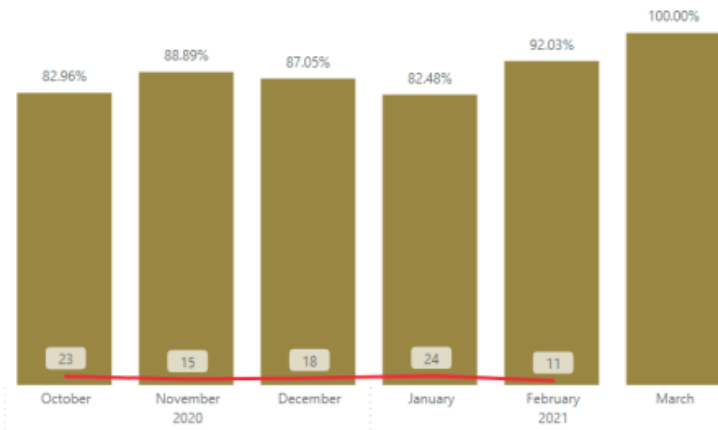
Supporting our children and young people with disabilities

- The establishment of a Designated Social Care Officer ensures that the needs of our SEND children are appropriately met at the earliest opportunity, with champions being established across the service to support this. Only when it is assessed that a specialist social work service is required to support a child with a disability and their family, a social worker is allocated from the Disabled Children and Young Person's (DCYP) team.
- Young people up to the age of 25 allocated to DCYPT are successfully supported on their journey to adulthood and benefit from consistent social work support during this crucial transition period. At this time, in particular, a strong partnership working approach between adult and children's social care, and health supports the needs of our most complex young people.
- Through Voice4Parents, the views of parents of our SEND children are integral to ensuring we are responsive in our service provision and planning.
- Support to children with disabilities through the DCYP team is strong and we are confident we understand their needs and know them well.

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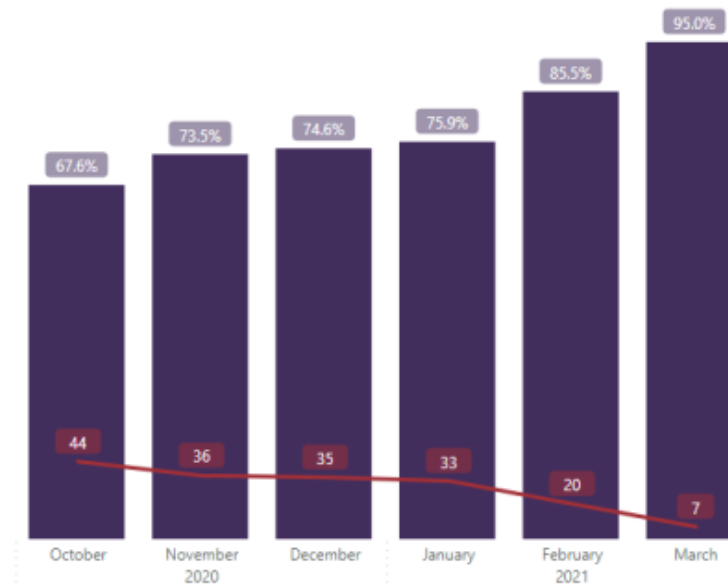
DCYP Visit Timescales

● Visits In Timescale ● Visits Fails



DCYP Assessments in Timescale

● Assessment ● Number of Assessment Fails



Supporting inclusion of all children in school

The rate of permanent exclusion from schools in Wolverhampton has been significantly higher than the national average since 2015/6. In response to this and to more broadly promote educational engagement of vulnerable learners, we developed the Culture of Belonging Programme, following extensive engagement with all stakeholders. This is a whole system approach which focuses on three key areas: supporting more inclusive schools; having a clear pathway to multiagency support; and ensuring there is a positive alternative for children who need it. Schools are supportive of the Culture of Belonging activity and actively seek alternatives to exclusion with support from Inclusion officers.

The Inclusion Team work closely with schools and alternative providers in the city, along with other key partners to ensure that permanently excluded pupils are referred to alternative provision in a timely manner. Transitions between schools and alternative providers are supported throughout the process and excluded children, and their parents/carers, are enabled to express their wishes and feelings throughout. We undertake preventative work alongside Strengthening Families teams. We have an established Inclusion Support and Alternative Provision Panel, which is currently under review to enable closer co-ordination with Fair Access panels. We are also investing in an additional resource base attached to a mainstream school to provide short-term additional support for young people with challenging behaviour.

Permanent exclusions numbers have fallen year-on-year since 2016/17, and when schools were closed in March 2020, we were at a lower level than the equivalent point of previous years.

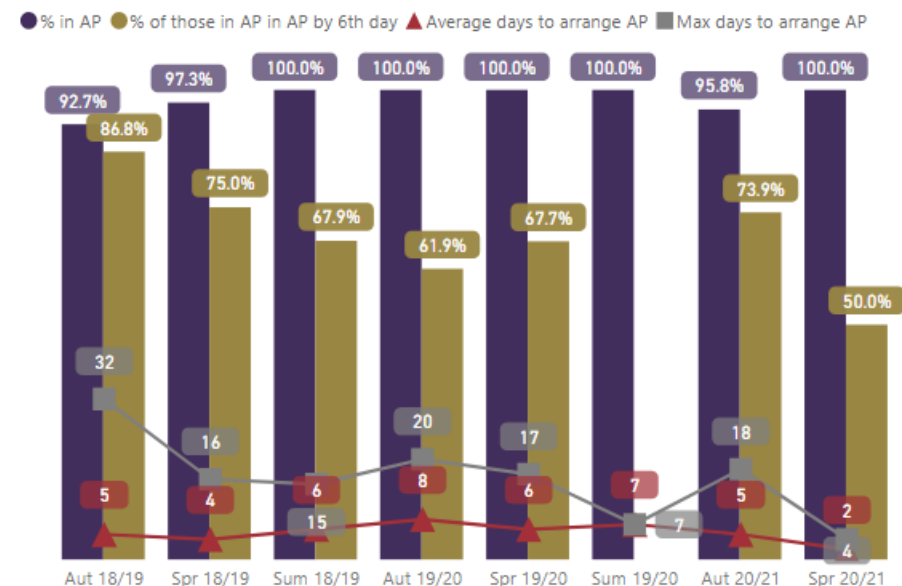
The bottom table shows numbers and impact of exclusion prevention meetings (EPM) held, by academic year. The use of EPMs has increased and show a high degree of success, with 93% of those in 2019/20 who had one not being excluded within 3 months.

Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Primary (exc. Withdrawn/Overtured/Pending)	22	18	15	5
Secondary (exc. Withdrawn/Overtured/Pending)	104	100	64	22
Special/PRU (exc. Withdrawn/Overtured/Pending)	1	1	2	0
X-City	9	12	2	0
Pending Permanent Exclusions		3		
Withdrawn/Overtured	1/5	4/1	2/0	0/0
Average number of Days taken to arrange Provision	6	5	8	5
Fixed Period Exclusions	2466	3016	1645	936

Exclusion prevention meetings	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Meetings Held	79	105	74	35
% Meetings that did not result in Permanent Exclusion within 3 months	84%	87%	92%	94%
% Meetings but still resulted in Permanent Exclusion within 3 months	16%	13%	8%	6%
% Permanent Exclusions with no meeting within 3 months	91%	89%	93%	93%

All permanently excluded pupils are offered alternative provision, as shown in the graph below. The % of pupils offered provision by the 6th day of a permanent exclusion did see a drop from Autumn 2019 to Autumn 2020. Appropriate focus will be given to this area as school have now reopened to all pupils. We are also increasing quality assurance monitoring of APs with half termly meetings to be established from June 2021 attended by commissioning, education effectiveness and SEND officers

Statutory Timeliness for Permanent Exclusions



Children Missing Education and Electively Home Educated

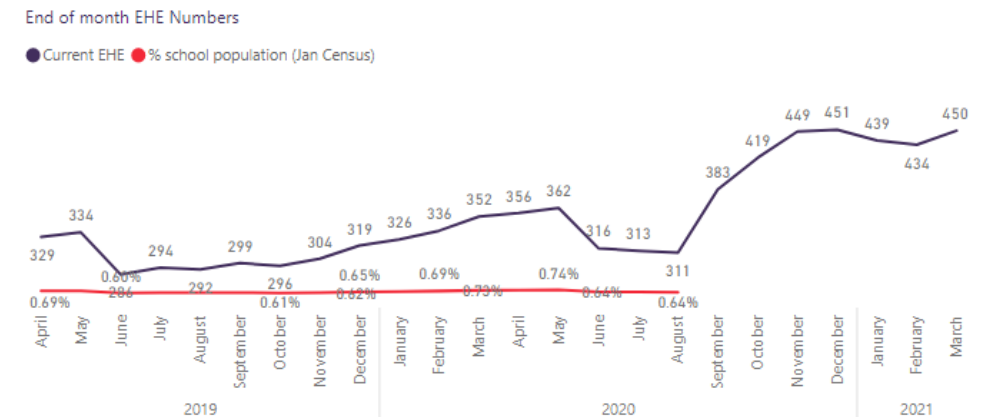
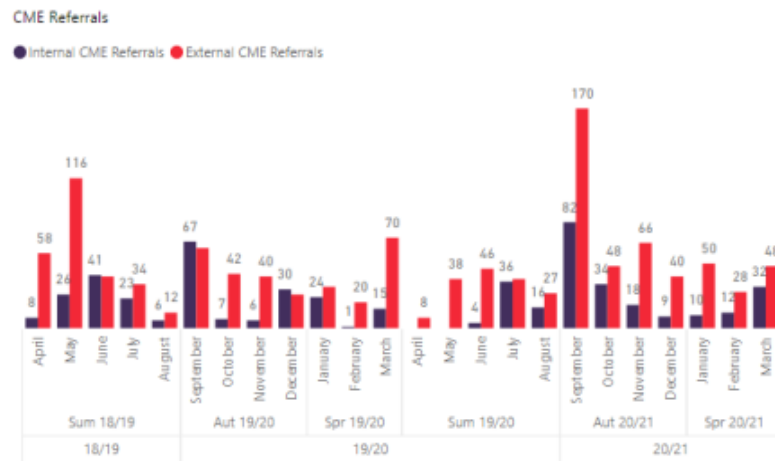
The Attendance Team conduct investigations into all children who are reported as missing from education (CME) in a timely and efficient manner. The bar graph below relates to children who have applied to a Wolverhampton school but have not started at the school after 4 weeks. School admissions are monitored and supported for these children and School Attendance Orders (SAOs) are issued where appropriate. The Attendance Team have robust systems in place to monitor CME, conducting lateral checks, making home visits where appropriate, and liaising with key partner agencies. A sharp rise in CME investigations in September 2020 was largely due to a significant number of Eastern European families who returned to Eastern Europe over the summer period (likely to be linked to COVID19). It is not considered to be linked to the rise in EHE.

Since schools reopened to all pupils in September 2020 there has been a significant rise in parents electing to home educate their children. The attendance team is offering advice support and challenge to all parents who make an enquiry about EHE. Additional Education Welfare Officers have been appointed to ensure additional monitoring and support is available to EHE families and for any other attendance issues that are related to Covid – 19. Where we have concerns that the decision to home educate is not a positive one for the child, we will challenge parents and schools.

One of the aims of the Culture of Belonging Programme is to reduce the number of pupils leaving school to become home educated. We continue to work with schools when this happens, so that if there is a need for support, challenge or advice this is available before a child is off-registered.

A pathway has been developed to identify and support children with emotionally-based reasons for non-attendance at school.

The graphs below illustrate the numbers of internal CME investigations by school term, and numbers of children who are EHE by calendar month.



Summary of achievements - 2020-2021

- Reduction of overall demand across the social care system meaning the right support is offered to children young people and their families at the right time and at the earliest opportunity.
- Successful implementation of the children's electronic recording system Eclipse enabling a single record from early help through to social care
- Social work caseloads continue to stay at a manageable level
- We have a stable social work workforce with only 4.5 social worker vacancies
- Establishment of Social Worker in Schools pilot
- Review and refresh of our targeted 'earliest' early help offer
- Power2 team established and working with young people up to the age of 25 at risk of exploitation
- Establishment of Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub
- Reduction in the numbers of children subject to a child protection plan for longer than 15 months
- Reduction of number of children in care
- Improved partnership approach to working with schools and education settings has been embedded further through the established integration of the Children and Young People and Education Directorates
- Culture of Belonging programme embedded improving children's inclusion in schools
- Wolverhampton achieved its target of 'turning around' 484 families as part of the Troubled Families programme in 20/21
- Embedding of the Youth Engagement Strategy, #YES, through co-production with children, young people and their families across the city, with success in virtual engagement throughout the year
- Reduced reoffending rates for young people remains spectacular, alongside a reduction in custodial sentences and numbers of young people on Remand

Summary of achievements - 2020-2021 continued

- Winner of Children and Young People Now Award 2021 in the Care Leaver category for the impact of the House Project on improved outcomes for young people, and finalist in the Children In Care category for our Aspire2Uni programme
- Expansion of apprenticeships ringfenced for care leavers at CWC and establishment of inclusive apprenticeships within the council to support young people needing additional flexible apprenticeship support
- Improved education outcomes for children in care including increased numbers of young people attending university and graduating with excellent degrees. We have 3 times the national average number of care leavers attending university
- Further increase in number of foster carers approved by CWC ,with three quarters of children in care being placed with foster carers approved by CWC
- Continued improvement in long and short term placement stability for children in care
- Established support offer to families who have no recourse to public funding has resulted in families achieving an immigration outcome earlier and therefore enabled children to achieve a sense of permanence and have access to services earlier when they are given right to remain.
- Successful implementation of Local House Project, now working with 9 young people in cohort 2, having worked with 10 young people in cohort 1, to support their move into their own homes
- With support of young people and the House Project a co-production hub has been secured, providing a venue for young people to call their own, accommodating the House Project , a drop in for care leavers, The Reach Café, and a base for co-production with children and young people.
- Successful partnership working across Children's Social Care, Adults Services and the CCG with 0-25 year olds, this has resulted in smooth transitions into adulthood for our young people with more complex needs.
- Successful implementation of Eclipse ,our new electronic recording system

RELIGHTING OUR CITY

Support
people who
need us most

Create more
opportunities
for young people

Generate more
jobs and learning
opportunities

Grow our
vital local
businesses

Deliver vibrant
high streets and
communities

COUNCIL PLAN

Wulfrunians live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives

VISION 2030

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OUR PRINCIPLES

We will underpin our work with the following key principles;



CLIMATE FOCUSED

This recovery commitment is aligned to our climate change strategy 'Future Generations' and our target to make the City of Wolverhampton Council carbon – neutral by 2028. We are committed to delivering on the recommendations of our Climate Citizen Assembly and to upholding the promises we made when the Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019.



DRIVEN BY DIGITAL

The city is at the forefront of digital infrastructure and innovation, Wolverhampton will be one of the first cities in the world to host a 5G accelerator hub making us truly a world leader in emerging technology. Now more than ever digital skills and connectivity are vital to ensure our residents can access services, interact with friends and family, and enter the job market.



FAIR AND INCLUSIVE

We will continue to tackle the inequalities in our communities which impact on the opportunities of local people. The Council's 'Excellent' rated equalities framework is at the heart of our recovery commitment. No community will be left behind as we transform our city together.

Relighting Our City: Our key priorities for 21/22

Support people who need us most

- Build on the successful opportunities provided by the Winter Grant Scheme and Holiday Activities Fund to support our most vulnerable families in the city by working collaboratively with our voluntary and community partners
- Develop a fully integrated offer across Children's and Adult services to enable our families to thrive
- Implementation of MASH24, our combined MASH EDT service
- Achieve an allocated target of 'turning around' 505 families as part of the extended Supporting Families Programme as part of our Strengthening Families approach
- Continue to work with partners to embed the outcomes of the contextual safeguarding review to further safeguard children, young people and young adults at risk of exploitation
- Evaluate support services to young parents and adapt the service delivery model
- Develop a programme of intervention and support to work with parents who do not have the care of previous children to support children living in their families
- Further expansion of the use of Family Group Conferencing to strengthen opportunities for children to live within their families
- Ensure all reflective discussions and supervisions are recorded on children's records
- Ensure consistent good quality records are kept for all children with the voice of children and young people being strong throughout all records

Support people who need us most

- Continue to increase the number of children that have been seen within 5 days of referral
- Ensure we have consistent good quality robust care plans and pathway plans for all children and young people
- Further improve placement stability for children in care
- Increase early permanence opportunities for children with a plan of adoption
- Ensure children in care in care have good quality life journey work that meets their individual needs
- Ensure children in care regularly attend the dentist and have an up to date health assessment so that we can be confident we are meeting their health needs
- Embed the Emotional Wellbeing and the Specialist Family Therapeutic Support Services to support children, young people and their families
- Continue to embed Restorative Practice across Children's Services looking particularly at developing restorative approaches to child protection conferences

Relighting Our City

Create more opportunities for young people

- Embed the extension of the Grandmentor programme to young people in care aged 14 and above and those that live outside of the city who are in our care
- Continue to improve support and opportunities for our most vulnerable young people to be able to access a range of EET opportunities
- Embed further opportunities for co-production with children in the city
- Establish utilisation of the co-production hub as a base for co-production and participation of young people and to offer a base for a drop in for care leavers and the House Project
- Further development of social care support to our SEND children through the strategic lead of our Designated Social Care officer
- Continue to embed Culture of Belonging Programme to support the inclusion and educational engagement of vulnerable learners
- Embed the key priorities of our Equalities action plan to ensure delivery of inclusive services that tackle inequalities that children and young people face

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Scrutiny Work Programme (draft)

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny

Panel 2021-2022

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Scrutiny – A New Approach – **Connected City**

1. **Roles and expectations** have been defined for the Chairs of Scrutiny Panels, Strategic Executive Board (SEB) leads and Scrutiny Officers; creating a collective understanding of scrutiny's role within the Council. These can be seen in Appendix A.
2. Effective **work planning and agenda setting** will take place to produce **jointly owned work plans**.
3. Regular briefings will be arranged with the Scrutiny Panel Chair, Vice Chair, SEB lead and scrutiny officer to enable a shared understanding of priorities and reviews of progress and recommendations.
4. **Improved communication:** 'You said we did' updates and publicity (including social media)
5. Creation of a **strong organisational culture** that supports scrutiny work that **adds real value** and **evidences impact**.

Work Programme considerations:

- 1. Is the issue in the public interest?**
- 2. How can scrutiny add value by looking at it?**
- 3. Where is the evidence to support looking at this issue?**
- 4. Can we evidence impact?**
- 5. Is there a change to National Policy?**
- 6. Does it affect citizens across the City?**
- 7. Are there performance concerns?**
- 8. Is it a safety issue?**

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Chair: Cllr Rita Potter	Vice Chair: Cllr Adam Collinge	SEB Lead: Emma Bennett	Scrutiny Lead: Earl Piggott-Smith
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Date of Meeting	Agenda Publication	Item Description	Lead Report Author	Council Plan Priority	Notes
				Children and young people get the best possible start in life	
14 July 2021	6 July 2021	1. Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2. Education Excellence Strategy (pre-decision scrutiny) 3. Children and Young People's Social Work Self-Evaluation 2021 - 2022	Jenny Rogers Brenda Wile and Phil Leivers Alison Hinds		
13 October 2021	5 October 2021	1. Feedback on the outcomes and lessons learnt from the Yo! Summer Festival programme	Alison Hinds		Visit to The Way to be arranged for panel members

		2. SEND Strategy Action Plan update	Brenda Wile/Helen Bakewell		Report to include details on work done to prepare for the inspection of service. Representatives from Voice of Parents to be invited to brief panel on work done to support the aims of the strategy.
2 February 2022	25 January 2022	Spotlight on Safeguarding 1. Report on the work of the Exploitation HUB and MASH 24 2. Virtual School – progress report 3. Educational Performance Report	Alison Hinds Darren Martindale Phil Leivers		Virtual School promotes the educational achievement of children and young people in care through a range of strategies including direct pupil support and training/advisory work with schools

Agenda items – actions agreed in 2020-21 – update

Action	Update
Report on the experiences of young people of being educated remotely and the work being done to meet different needs and support remote learning.	Heather Clarke to lead drafting of briefing paper to be shared with the panel.
Report on the issues of apprenticeships and job opportunities for care leavers, particularly given the challenging employment situation.	A paper presented to Corporate Parenting Board on current progress by Alison Hinds was recently sent to panel members.
Report on the progress of implementing the School Improvement Strategy 2018-2021.	Brenda Wile to present report to July 2021 panel meeting. The document has been retitled Education Excellence Strategy

Information Items

1. Briefing paper on support to given to schools to manage Covid pandemic and update on proposed plans for a vaccination rollout programme for children. The paper to include work done to support Covid testing and the distribution of testing kits. Brenda Wiles.
2. Briefing paper on provision for post 16 education and support offered to young people – Alison Hinds.

Scrutiny Panel Remit & Functions

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

The scrutiny of the provision of all local authority services for children and young people including education, early intervention and prevention, social care, special needs and commissioned services and children's safeguarding including child exploitation

Specific responsibilities

The Panel will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- Children in need/child protection
- Children and young people in care and care Leavers
- Early intervention and prevention
- Youth offending
- Children's commissioning
- School planning and resources
- Standards and vulnerable pupils
- Family learning
- School improvement
- Special educational needs
- Early years
- Youth employment, skills and apprenticeships

General Role of the Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Panels

Within the terms of reference set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Scrutiny Board will:

1. Co-ordinate the work of the Scrutiny Panels and Scrutiny Review Groups.
2. Receive annual reports from the Councillor Champion and give consideration to the work undertaken and issues that the Councillor Champion wishes scrutiny to consider investigating further.
3. Maintain regular dialogue with the Cabinet on service improvement, performance management of cross-cutting issues, policy development and budgetary provision.
4. Oversee and ensure access to appropriate learning and development for scrutiny Councillors.
5. Discharge the call-in procedures relevant to its overarching role.

The Scrutiny Panels will:

1. Maintain regular dialogue with the Cabinet, Scrutiny Board and Councillor Champions.
2. Ensure that members of the public and stakeholders are informed of and involved in issues within the remit of each Panel.
3. Discharge the call-in procedure relevant to their terms of reference.

Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities

1. Chair of Scrutiny Panel:

- To attend fortnightly meetings with the SEB lead and Scrutiny Officer
- To attend agenda setting meetings and other relevant briefings on a regular basis
- To contribute to the work planning for the panel and to bring forward relevant topics and issues for inclusion
- To chair meetings in a fair and open way and to encourage participation from panel members
- To attend Scrutiny Board (where appropriate) to provide feedback and updates on progress
- To prepare, when possible, questions in advance of a meeting to allow for healthy debate and to ensure that clear resolutions are made that add value and show impact
- To act as champion for scrutiny and to represent the best interests of the citizens of Wolverhampton

2. SEB Lead:

- Meet with the Chair, the Vice Chair and the Scrutiny Officer fortnightly to discuss upcoming issues, updates from previous meetings, workplans and any other relevant business as agreed by all parties.
- Recommend topics for inclusion on the workplan, working proactively with the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Officer to address any issues/opportunities/challenges that fit with the remit of the panel.
- To advise on the viability of any issues put forward by the panel for inclusion on the work plan.
- To attend relevant Scrutiny Panel meetings and provide an update at each meeting on any relevant issues within the remit of the panel. Also, attending Scrutiny Board (as appropriate) to provide feedback.
- To act as a champion for scrutiny in the Council and to encourage engagement with the scrutiny function and promote a healthy culture within which scrutiny can thrive

3. Scrutiny Officer:

- Provide support and guidance to the panel, its members, officers, partners and other stakeholders regarding the scrutiny function
- To ensure openness and transparency in the scrutiny function and to make sure that information is continuously shared and communicated between all relevant parties in a timely and suitable fashion
- To ensure that the appropriate persons are invited to meetings and that they are given adequate time to prepare and to provide guidance and support where appropriate
- To manage the administration of all relevant panels and meetings within statutory timescales
- To carry out research and information gathering exercises when required
- To provide advice on policy and legislation where appropriate
- To ensure that all resolutions are followed up and responses or actions fed back, monitored and recorded
- To act as liaison between the Chair and the SEB lead to ensure a shared understanding of priorities and work planning.
- To manage the agreed work plan and its outcomes to show impact and added value