

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

2 February 2022

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 Qaiser Azeem
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Val Evans
Cllr Jaspreet Jaspal
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr Gillian Wildman

Conservative

Cllr Stephanie Haynes
Cllr Mak Singh

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/>
Email democratic.services@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Tel 01902 555046

Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

If you are reading these papers on an electronic device you have saved the Council £11.33 and helped reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

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 (13 October 2021) (Pages 3 - 14)
[To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021 as a correct record] |
| 6 | Minutes of the meeting (6 January 2022) (Pages 15 - 18)
[To approve the minutes of the meeting of 6 January 2022 as a correct record] |

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Spotlight on Education

- | | |
|----|--|
| 7 | Children's Residential Provision Review - pre-decision scrutiny (Pages 19 - 62)
[This item is being considered as pre-decision scrutiny and will therefore not be available for Call-in once a decision has been made by the Executive].

[Rachel King, Head of Service, and Steven Larking, Commissioning Manager, to present report] |
| 8 | Virtual School Head Annual Report 2021 (Pages 63 - 82)
[Darren Martindale, Service Manager, to present report] |
| 9 | Annual Report on Schools' Education Performance (Pages 83 - 130)
[Phil Leivers, Head of Education Excellence, to present report] |
| 10 | Member visit to The Way 14.9.21 - update (Pages 131 - 136)
[Cllr Collinge, Vice Chair, to present briefing] |
| 11 | Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel 2021-2022 Draft Workplan
(Pages 137 - 156)
[Earl Piggott-Smith, Scrutiny Officer, to present report] |

Attendance

Members of the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Rita Potter (Chair)
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Qaiser Azeem
Cllr Christopher Burden
Cllr Adam Collinge (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Wendy Dalton
Cllr Val Evans
Cllr Stephanie Haynes
Cllr Gillian Wildman

Members of the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel in attendance via Teams

Cllr Qaiser Azeem
Cllr Paul Sweet

Co-opted Members (5)

Wolverhampton Youth Council

In Attendance

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Welcome and Introductions**
Cllr Rita Potter, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised it was also 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
- 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.
- 3 **Apologies**
Apologies were received from the following members of the panel:

Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Christopher Burden

4 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

5 **Minutes of the previous meeting (14 July 2021)**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

6 **Feedback on the outcomes and lessons learnt from the Yo! Summer Festival programme**

Andrew Wolverson, Head of Service Children's Strategy and Partnership gave an overview of the Yo! Summer Festival Programme. The programme of activities follows on from previous programmes aimed families and young people in Wolverhampton. The Head of Service outlined the four objectives of the programme and gave an analysis of the data under each in terms of level of community engagement and the number of events.

The Head of Service commented that the Council is committed to providing activities and opportunities for children and young people and to create opportunities for local organisations to benefit from the funding available. The Head of Service added that over 18,000 young people and parents enjoyed activities during the programme.

The Head of Service commented on the community and leisure offer to vulnerable children and their families during the programme of activities. The Head of Service added that 5000 children took up the offer of six-week programme of activities which was co-ordinated and supported by members of Voice for Parents. The Voice for Parents co-ordinated the SEND offer for the programme and commissioned over 15 organisations.

The scheme was funded by DFE and aimed at children in receipt of free school meals to allow them to access an activity, which also included an offer of a meal. To avoid being stigmatised when attending events, a holiday activity card was issued and piloted to allow people to register for events. The Head of Service commented that the scheme worked well and was developed by ICT. The card was scanned 2,800 times during the programme. In total, 21 local organisations across the city were commissioned to deliver activities as part of the holiday programme.

The Head of Service commented on the efforts from across the Council to support the delivery of the summer programme, which cover over £700,000 to deliver.

The Head of Service commented on the extra wider support provided for disadvantaged families and children who were particularly affected by the impact of Covid pandemic. The project was funded by over £900,000 from the Government's Covid Support Grant. The Head of Service gave a breakdown of how the money was spent on different projects and activities between June 2021 and September 2021.

The Head of Service commented on the success of the Beat the Street scheme and that 3 out of 4 players who took part were from the most deprived communities.

The Head of Service commented on positive comments from children during the programme and an analysis of internet traffic when people have used the Yo! Programme website. There are plans to further develop the site to become the main source for information about sources of help and advice on different aspects of family life.

The Head of Service commented on plans to build on the success of the summer programme and outlined plans for the October 2021 half term school holiday. The service has received 20 applications from organisations to provide activities in the holiday and 17 have since been granted funding by members of YES Board who assessed them.

The Head of Service outlined plans for the service and highlighted plans to offer continued support for local foodbanks and community cafes. £250,000 has been allocated by the Council for the programme titled No Child Goes Hungry.

The Chair thanked the Head of Service for a positive report and specifically the work done to support deprived communities across the City. The members of the panel were invited to comment and ask questions on the presentation and report.

The panel queried if judging by the photographs of the events that the programme was aimed at the age range of five to 13 years for cost savings reasons and expressed concern about how needs of older young people were met during the holiday programme.

The Head of Service commented that the service has worked hard to offer a wide programme of activities across a range of age groups and added that many of the providers involved in the summer programme offered specific services and activities to a younger age profile. The Head of Service reassured the panel that providers have been asked to offer some activities for older children as part of the overall October half term school holiday programme and accepted that more work is needed to give secondary age children more activities.

The panel queried the reference in the presentation to budget of £1.4 million used to fund the summer programme and wanted clarification in the report of £700,000 from the DFE for holiday activities and £900,000 funding from the Covid Support Grant meant that £200,000 was unspent from the total of £1.6 million.

The Head of Service confirmed that £1.4 million of the budget had been spent on the summer activities programme. Emma Bennett, Executive Director for Families, added that money from Covid Support Grant is a ring-fenced fund that was specifically targeted at those families, individual households in financial hardship or fuel poverty. The grant fund was also used to cover the cost of providing meals alongside the holiday activities programme and supporting the work of the foodbanks and community cafes.

The panel queried the future sustainability of the programme at a time of increasing need for services in the community. The panel were advised that an extra £2.6 million grant of Government funding to support the work had recently been awarded from the Household Support Fund, which was previously called the Covid Support Grant. The money must be spent by the end of March 2022.

The Executive Director added that there was no commitment from Government to continue funding this work after March 2022. However, there are discussions within the Council about developing a strategy to continue supporting residents in financial hardship. The Executive Director of Families reassured the panel of the Council's commitment to providing support activities, such as targeted and detached youth work in the future.

The panel queried the lack of information in the report about the range of activities offered analysed by ward and asked for more details.

The Head of Service commented on the difficulties in getting an accurate data from all providers on the young people they have worked with during the summer programme and reassured the panel that work is ongoing to collate details about other activities across the City to get a more accurate picture. The Head of Service stated that he was confident that there was a good range of activities across the wards delivered as part of the summer programme.

The Head of Service encouraged Cllrs to get involved in developing the programme of activities for the October school holiday and suggested that ward funds could be used to support children and families in their area. In addition, Cllrs were encouraged to refer local groups known to them to contact the service so they can be added to the programme to get publicity and to apply for funds available to support their activities.

The Head of Service commented that the service is working with providers to get a better spread of activities across the City. Cllr Beverley Momenabadi, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, endorsed the plea from the Head of Service about Cllrs getting involved in the programme of activities by encouraging organisations known to them to contact the service so families and children can get better access to support and leisure activities across the whole City.

The panel queried the levels of participation by young people and families in the activities estimated to be below 50 percent on average and the sale of tickets to events linked to the Relight Festival and asked what more could be done to increase numbers of people attending.

The Head of Service commented that a lot of work was done to increase the participation levels in recognition of the low numbers attending large scale events which may have been due to concerns among families about Covid 19.

The uncertainty about the restrictions due to Covid 19 meant that the service had to plan events both for a virtual programme and a face-to-face programme depending on the situation at the time, which was a challenge. The Head of Service added that the service has learnt from this experience and the issues highlighted will be considered when planning future events.

The panel queried the profile of the people who took part in the Beat the Streets initiative and the reasons for the data showing an under representation of males and if there were any specific plans to get more males involved in the future. The Head of Service commented that the Beat the Streets initiative is part of an overall strategy from colleagues in public health to get communities more fit and active, and to offer

activities that may be attractive to males. The service will be looking at different ideas for improving participation and to increase take up levels among specific groups.

The panel queried if the Council was committed to continue working with members of Voice for Parents in the future when planning events and activities. The Head of Service confirmed that the Voice for Parents is a strategic partner and will continue to be involved in the co-production and co-ordination of the programme of activities in the future.

The panel discussed the opportunity to still use ward funds as the understanding that the deadline was 30 September 2021. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People advised the panel that it was still possible to make a funding application.

The panel expressed concern of reports from parents complaining about using the Yo programme website and in some situations being timed out when trying to access information. The panel suggested changes were needed to make it more user friendly for the public.

The Head of Service advised the panel that work had been done to improve the website and welcomed feedback from members of any specific areas that are not working well, which will help to address the concerns raised and make the service better in the future.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work commented on a response to an earlier question about the involvement of Voice for Parents in planning activities and events in the summer holiday programme. The Cabinet Member advised the panel that there are fortnightly meetings with members of the group to provide them with the opportunity to share concerns directly and in developing the SEND offer during the summer programme of activities. The panel thanked the Cabinet member for the comments.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People advised the panel that there was still time for panel members to contact the service about local providers within their ward that can be added to the programme for half term holiday activities programme. The panel were advised to contact the Cabinet Member to discuss the matter further.

The panel thanked the Head of Service for the presentation. The panel asked for the panel comments on the report to be considered in the development of future holiday activities programme.

Resolved:

- The panel agreed to note the report.
- The Head of Service to consider the comments of panel about the findings from the review of the Yo! Summer Festival programme.
- The Head of Service to update the panel on progress of future activities aimed at supporting vulnerable children and families.

7 **SEND Update (report to follow)**

Cllr Dr Mike Hardacre, Cabinet Member Education and Skills, gave a brief introduction to the report which gives details about the Ofsted/CQC inspection of the Local Area special education needs and disabilities (SEND) support and provision.

The Cabinet Member commented on the change in approach to the inspection of SEND services by over the years and the focus is now on having a dialogue with the local authority about any issues highlighted during their visit. The Cabinet Member advised the panel that the Council was being assessed against the current inspection framework. A new SEND assessment framework will be issued in April 2022. The framework has been informed by the lessons learnt and experience of how the current framework works.

The findings from the inspection completed in September 2021 will report on areas that the Council is doing well and areas for improvement. The SEND report findings will be published in the early 2022 and the Council will have the opportunity to comment on the draft before publication.

The Chair invited Brenda Wile, Deputy Director of Education, to give the detailed presentation to the panel on progress made provide services for children, young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND). The Deputy Director advised the panel that the update on SEND provision would cover the SEND leisure offer provided during the Easter and summer programmes, an update on the Ofsted/CQC inspection of the Local Area SEND support and provision, and comments from Councillors who visited Green Park School recently.

The Deputy Director of Education added that representatives from Voice for Parents who contributed to the development of the SEND holiday provision will also be sharing their experiences.

The Deputy Director of Education stated that the vision of the SEND policy was that families with children with special educational needs and disabilities have good quality, ordinary life and are supported to achieve their full potential. The stated vision for SEND links to the priorities in the Relighting Our City plan to support people who need us most and create more opportunities for young people.

The Deputy Director of Education gave further details about the vision and priorities of the SEND strategy and the background to how it was developed and would be used to support the provision of services in the future. The Deputy Director of Education outlined the planned key actions for 2021 – 2022 for implementing the strategy and explained how the service will be focused on moving the service forward. The plan will be reviewed when the new SEND framework is published. The Deputy Director invited Sarah Barker, Voice for Parents, to brief the panel about their role in the development of the Easter activity sensory and wellbeing pack 2021.

Sarah Barker, Chair Voice for Parents, advised the panel that an application was made to the Council earlier in the year to fund the development of a sensory pack for families, who felt isolated and wanting opportunities for their children. At the same time Voice for Parents did a survey to find out what local families thought about the leisure offer for children, young people with SEND. The information from the survey will help to inform the wider offer in the future.

Sarah Baker, Voice for Parents, added that the activities had a positive impact of children and young people taking part, some of the children took part in horse riding,

travelling on a narrow boat for the first time. Sarah Baker commented on positive benefits for families being able to meet other families in the same situation in terms of making new friends and getting support. Sarah Baker highlighted the positive impact on the siblings of children with SEND being able to meet other children and to take part in different leisure activities during the summer holidays.

Jayne Evans, Voice for Parents, commented on the SEND offer to older children during the summer programme and welcomed the fact that they attended events. Jayne Evans, Voice for Parents, added that there is a recognition within the group that families struggle to find suitable activities. Jayne Evans, Voice for Parents, commented on the activities planned for the October half term holiday for families with SEND needs.

The Deputy Director thanked the speakers for their support in co-ordinating the summer holiday programme of activities.

The Deputy Director outlined the timetable of the SEND Local Area Inspection since they received the telephone call on 13 September 2021. The Council received unofficial feedback from the inspectors on 24 September 2021. A letter of findings is expected at the end of October 2021. The inspectors looked at the quality of SEND provision for the provision for children, young people and how well the Council had implemented the reforms from 2014. The inspectors gathered evidence from key colleagues across the partnership and from families using different consultation methods to find out how they felt their children needs had been identified and met.

The Deputy Director gave a summary of some of the unofficial feedback from the inspectors on the final day of their visit.

The panel thanked the Deputy Director for the presentation and welcomed the support offered to families with children or young people with SEND and added that the service is making a huge difference to them.

The panel queried the provision of leisure activities for SEND children outside of the holiday periods, which had been highlighted as an issue during the inspection. The panel also queried the difficulties reported by some families in getting access to the sensory support services and that Brickkiln Community Centre and Sensory Room site is still closed.

The panel wanted more opportunities for parents to attend in the week, due to the cost of using the facilities at the weekend.

The Deputy Director commented that immediate changes were made to the provision of this service at Brickkiln Community Centre and Sensory Room in response to some feedback from parents of young people about opening times offered. The Deputy Director advised the panel that service accepted the feedback and in response there is now provision of sensory support at The Way and the Centre for Children. The Deputy Director agreed to update the panel on the current situation as regards Brickkiln Street when known.

Andrew Wolverson, Head of Service, added that the new sensory room opened at The Way on 19 October 2021.

The Head of Service accepted that some parents felt that the current offer for young people was not appropriate and suggested that Carla Priddon, Chief Executive, The Way, would be happy to attend a future meeting to brief members on the offer.

The Head of Service added that some young people from Brickkiln Street are now attending The Way, however the number of COVID 19 restrictions has meant numbers who can access the facility is limited. The sensory room at Brickkiln Street would be required to be made Covid 19 secure before it can re-open properly. The Head of Service reassured the panel that this situation would be kept under constant review and the facility will be reopened as soon as possible, and parents will be informed.

The Deputy Director advised the panel that in terms of out of holiday SEND provision for young people it is expected that as providers get back to normal the situation is expected to improve. The Deputy Director added that the Council is committed to offering services at the weekend however the requirement to comply with Covid 19 will limit progress. The current high number of Covid 19 cases in the City is a cause of concern and schools are being asked to limit large groups gathering and to wear masks in communal areas.

The Executive Director added that feedback from families has highlighted the concern from families that the universal SEND offer is not enough. The panel were reassured that the continued work with members of Voice for Parents is an indication of the Council's commitment to develop and broaden the universal SEND offer.

The panel commented on difficulties reported by parents when booking sessions at The Children's Village Strengthening Families Hub and would like to see improvements to address these concerns. The Deputy Director of Education accepted there were concerns from parents about the service and the website was not most user-friendly system. The current system is old and there are plans to replace it with a system which is more accessible and easier for parents. The Deputy of Director advised the panel that the review is being led by Head of Service who will be commissioning the new system.

The panel commented on the positive impact of children and young people without disabilities who volunteered to help during the summer programme and suggested other young people may also be interested.

The Deputy Director of Education endorsed the comment about the work of volunteers who supported the delivery of activities to young people during the summer programme. The Deputy Director of Education accepted the need to provide young people 16-18 with SEND with more activities for this age group. The Chair thanked the presenters for their presentation.

The Chair invited Cllrs Adam Collinge, Wendy Dalton and Stephanie Haynes who visited Green Park School to give feedback to the panel.

The group who attended the school wanted to firstly express they're thanks to the staff and pupils who were so friendly and welcoming during the tour. The group also wanted to praise the children they met who were both a credit to the school and their families.

The group were impressed by the range of facilities on offer and the level of positive engagement by children in the lessons they observed and with each other, which

was inspiring to see. The group outlined the details about the school catchment area and the outdoor education facilities on offer. There are plans to further develop the outdoor spaces to provide more interactive learning and play spaces suitable for children with a range of needs.

The group were advised the school is focused on meeting the needs of children and young people with profound SEND. The school caters for children aged from early years to the age of 18 years. The school stayed open during the national lockdowns and continued to provide transport for children, in contrast to other similar school's where transport service was suspended. The staff worked hard to protect children and vulnerable staff during the period and reported that only five Covid 19 cases were directly linked to the school. The group welcomed the way that classes were organised based on need rather than age.

The group was advised that the school works closely with colleagues at The Gem Centre when assessing the needs of a child. There was concern about difficulties in children from the school accessing dental services. The level of attendance by pupils has been good since the start of September.

The group commented on discussions during the visit which highlighted issues caused by the current allocation policy and the extent to which the school can best meet the needs of a specific child, whose needs may have changed since they were last assessed. The staffing and resourcing situation at the school was also affected by major changes in the profile of needs of children from one year to next, which added to the challenge of creating educational clusters of children with similar needs.

The situation was further complicated by the delays in completing Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which can take up 20 weeks, during which time a child's needs may have changed from the date of the original assessment.

The group advised the panel that the school was original designed to cater for 100 pupils. There are now 145 children attending the school which presents a challenge due to limited storage space available for equipment that is needed to support a child.

The group explained that several storage spaces areas in the school have been converted to either classrooms or informal breakout areas to meet the increased pupils' numbers.

The group commented on the issue of the career options for young people leaving the school highlighted during the visit and need to offer suitable employment and training opportunities, which are limited. The school wanted support from the Council to help young people during the period of transition from school to work.

The panel discussed the allocation policy and the specific issue raised by the group.

The EHC planning and assessment process should take no more than 20 weeks from the date of the request until the plan is issued. There was acceptance by the pane of the challenges facing the different partner agencies which has led to delays in completing assessments.

The Cabinet Member commented the Council is committed to completing assessments within the agreed target time and was this is seen as a priority for the service. However, the achievement of the target was as stated previously reliant both

on other agencies involved completing their work and the constraints of the school calendar.

The group discussed whether the demand for places at Green Park School by parents was an indication of the quality of mainstream provision to meet the needs of children with SEND. The Executive Director of Families commented that recent visit by inspectors had highlighted the excellent quality of special school provision but identified there were some areas of provision across the City needing improvement.

The Executive Director of Families added there was further work to demonstrate to families with SEND children that mainstream school provision can be as good an experience for children with disabilities as that offered by special schools and reported that good progress was being made.

The panel welcomed the report and thanked the presenters.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to receive detailed findings of the SEND local area inspection to a future meeting for consideration and comment.

8 **Transforming Children Services programme, vision and annual report 2020-2021**

The Chair invited Emma Cleary, Programme Manager, to present the annual Transforming Children's Services report for 2020 – 2021 to the panel. The Programme Manager explained that this was the first report on the work done to deliver a range of services improvements which has led to better outcomes for the children and young people across the city. The Programme Manager explained that the programme evolved five years ago from several projects ongoing across the directorate at the time. The programme has been live since 2016.

The Programme Manager advised the panel that when it was decided to join the directorates of children and education in 2019 under a single portfolio holder and Director it was decided to take the opportunity to refresh the programme and ensure that all the priorities were aligned through the transformation plans. The Programme Manager advised the panel that in July 2020, the Transforming Children's Services Programme (TCSP) Board collectively agreed to reflect on key achievements from the last five years and refresh the programme to ensure that transformation going forward represents the integrated priorities of Children's Services and Education.

The Programme Manager outlined the key achievements of the programme during the period April 2020 to March 2021 and of the young people involved and advised the panel that many of the projects in the programme have ended with successful outcomes. The Programme Manager advised the panel that when asked in a survey young people commented on their highlights of being working with service, for example, the opportunity to make new friends and gain confidence over the past five years.

The Programme Manager outlined the key strategic policy drivers for the programme and listed the outcomes linked to each of them. The service is working with members of Transforming Children Services Board to make sure that our programme is aligned to the diverse needs of children and young people. The Programme Manager

commented on the responses from young members when asked to share views about what 'good support' looks like.

The Programme Manager commented that the TCSP Programme will have children, young people, and families at the heart of all its activity and it will be developing ambitious and innovative programme that will improve outcomes for children and young people in Wolverhampton, generating the opportunity equitably and inclusively. The Programme Manager outlined further details of the vision for the programme. The Programme Manager shared a short audio clip of an interview with a young person to share their experiences of the support they had received.

The Programme Manager gave further details of the programme outcomes and the linked key measures that will be used to assess progress. The Programme Manager commented on the priorities moving forward and the importance of celebrating successes and keeping stakeholders informed. The decision to bring the annual report to the panel is example of this.

The Programme Manager commented that the service is learning from the experience of Covid 19, and the key priority is to ensure that where there are changing priorities they are incorporated into the programme. The focus of future work will be adding value and capacity to current statutory provision and maintaining representation from frontline workers.

The Programme Manager invited panel members comments and questions about the annual report and presentation.

The Chair thanked the presenter for the report.

The panel queried the limited references to the impact of Covid 19 on the delivery of programme of activities and services during the pandemic and asked for more details. The Programme Manager commented that the main task for the TCSP programme was to keep it aligned to priorities of the Relighting our City plan, which details the response to Covid 19 and the recovery plans for the City. The programme is learning from the impact of Covid 19 and recognising changes in priorities and understanding the impact on local communities. The Programme Manager added the service will be working alongside members of the Board.

Andrew Wolverson, Head of Service, offered reassurance that all the projects in the programme were able to adapt to the impact of Covid 19, and gave an example of The House Project which started just before the pandemic and the changes made to comply with the restrictions at the time. A flexible approach was taken to the delivery of projects. The Programme Manager advised the panel that the TCSP Board were able to monitor programmes to make sure that they were still delivering what was needed throughout the pandemic.

The panel queried the significance of the increase in Early Help Assessments during in 2019-20 compared to 2020-21 in the report, and if the trend suggests that more work is needed to tackle deprivation levels in the City.

The Executive Director for Families commented that the increase in the number of assessments could be seen in different ways and compared the situation to the reporting of domestic violence cases where you would not want to see an increase in

the numbers, but an increase will tell you that it is an issue. The Executive Director for Families added the service would want to see an increase in request for early help as more families would be supported at a lower level of intervention and in the future less families would need to be supported through statutory plans such as Children in Need or Child Protection. The Executive Director ended by commenting that the more people ask for help and to support at that lower level, the better it would be for the families concerned.

The panel discussed the opportunities as programmes funding ends to consider other support to meet the needs of children and young people and working with schools, training providers etc. The Executive Director for Families supported the focus on this area in responding the issues of skills gap and youth unemployment. The Executive Director for Families commented on the desire among local authorities across the country for longer term Government funding commitment to replace current programmes where funding is ending.

The panel thanked the presenter for the report. The Chair asked for personal congratulations to shared everyone involved with the programme.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to note the report and the progress.

9 **Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel 2021-2022 Draft Work programme**

Earl Piggott-Smith, Scrutiny Officer, presented the report. The Scrutiny Officer advised the panel that there were other opportunities for the panel to add other items to the work programme and to meet informally with lead officers and site visits to discuss issues.

The Scrutiny Officer advised the panel that an extra date will be added to the work programme to consider the findings from the SEND Area Inspection.

Resolved:

The panel agreed the proposed changes to the draft work programme report.

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Appendix Item No: 6

Minutes - 6 January 2022

Attendance

Members of the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Rita Potter (Chair)
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Qaiser Azeem
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Adam Collinge (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Stephanie Haynes
Cllr Jaspreet Jaspal
Cllr Gillian Wildman

Members of the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel in attendance via Teams

Cllr Val Evans
Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Asha Mattu

Co-opted Members (5)

Cyril Randles Church of England Lichfield Board of Education Representative
Wolverhampton Youth Council

In Attendance

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work

Employees

Earl Piggott-Smith
Emma Bennett
Brenda Wile

Scrutiny Officer
Executive Director of Families
Deputy Director of Education

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Welcome and Introductions**
Cllr Rita Potter, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised it was also 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.

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.

3 Apologies

There were no apologies recorded for the meeting.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

5 Local Area Special Education Needs and Disabilities Written Statement of Action

The Chair invited Cllr Michael Hardacre, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work, to make some introductory remarks about the report.

The Cabinet Member outlined the background to the findings from an earlier inspection in September 2021 by Ofsted and CQC of the local area SEND services and provision in Wolverhampton. The Cabinet Member commented on the work done in response to an earlier inspection of the SEND service provision which identified areas where improvements were required and areas of good practice to implement reforms detailed in the Children and Families Act 2014. The Cabinet Member commented on the range of work done to build on existing good practice and respond to areas where further improvements were needed since the earlier inspection.

The Cabinet Member commented on the findings in the current inspection report and the plans detailed in the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) which set out the response to the six areas of significant weakness identified. The Cabinet Member invited the panel to comment on the draft report which will be presented to Cabinet and Council for approval before it is submitted to Ofsted.

The Chair invited Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families, to make some introductory remarks about report. The Executive Director commented on the work done in preparation for the inspection and the work done since to draft the WSOA to respond to the weaknesses identified by the inspectors during their visit. The Executive Director reminded the panel that the inspection covered services delivered by different partner agencies who also share responsibility with the Council for implementing the disability and SEND reforms in Wolverhampton.

The Executive Director of Families outlined the key dates before the draft WSOA document is submitted to Ofsted for approval.

The Executive Director of Families commented on the range of performance and information sources from education, health and social care sectors that was shared with the inspectors.

The Executive Director invited Brenda Wile, Deputy Director Education, to give the detailed presentation and to comment on the WSOA.

The Deputy Director Education commented on the '6 focus areas' in the WSOA referenced in Appendix 1 to the main report and the detailed action being taken to address areas of significant weakness.

The Deputy Director gave further details on each of the areas identified in the report, the plans for drafting the WSOA and an update on the draft work plan to address the issues. The Deputy of Director gave an overall assessment of the work being done by the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group to respond to issues detailed in the Appendix 2 to the main report. The document is still in draft and further details will be added.

The Deputy Director advised the panel that the local authority and area clinical commissioning group are jointly responsible for submitting the WSOA to Ofsted by 16 February 2022 for approval. The Deputy Director advised the panel that Ofsted then have 20 days to make comments on the WSOA, which could require further changes to be made to address any issues highlighted. The Deputy Director advised that work detailed in the Appendix 2 to the main report is planned to be completed over the next 18 months.

The Chair invited panel members to comment on the report.

The panel expressed concern that parents and carers needing advice and support are not already aware of how to access support services and suggested a scheme where key information is provided on cards used elsewhere could be helpful in this situation. The panel commented on the importance of good communication and the use of social media sites to help support parents and carers. The Deputy Director commented on the plan to create a dedicated post to address this issue and explained that the holder would be the lead for improving communication and raising awareness about the Local Offer to parents and carers of children and young people with SEND.

The panel queried the source of the funding for the post and expressed concern if SEND resources were going to be used. The Executive Director advised the panel that the post already exists, and the aim of the change is that there would a stronger focus on improving communication with parents and carers.

The panel endorsed the plan to purchase a new IT system to reduce delays in the production of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and to improve the accuracy of information held.

The panel welcomed the report and supported the plans detailed in the draft WSOA.

The panel discussed and agreed to make some changes to some of the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. The panel agreed to endorse the approach to co-produce the draft Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to be submitted to Ofsted by the 16 February 2022.

2. The panel feedback on the report as consultees in the development of the WSOA plan be considered in future meetings of Cabinet and Council.
3. The panel agreed to receive progress reports on actions detailed in the WSOA, as appropriate, at future meetings in 2022 and 2023.
4. The panel approved the plan for the oversight of the arrangements for reviewing progress of implementing actions detailed in the WSOA.
5. The panel agreed to note the '6 Focus Areas' identified in the Joint area SEND inspection in Wolverhampton report.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel 2 February 2022
--	---

Report title	Children's Residential Provision Review	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Beverley Momenabadi Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families	
Originating service	Children's Services	
Accountable employee	Alison Hinds Tel Email	Deputy Director Social Care 01902 553035 Alison.hinds@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Councillor Briefing CYPF Scrutiny Panel Cabinet Resources Panel	11 January 2022 18 January 2022 18 January 2022 2 February 2022 23 February 2022

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.

Recommendation:

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

1. Comment on the draft Children's Residential Provision Review prior to being presented to Cabinet Resources Panel for approval on 23 February 2022.

Report title	Children's Residential Provision Review	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Beverley Momenabadi – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett – Executive Director Families	
Originating service	Children's Services	
Accountable employee	Alison Hinds Tel Email	Deputy Director Social Care 01902 553035 Alison.hinds@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Councillor Briefing Scrutiny Panel	11 January 2022 13 January 2022 18 January 2022 2 February 2022

Recommendation(s) for decision:

Cabinet Resources Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve the recommended option to progress the development of a full feasibility business case to create a new restorative practice, multi-agency Children's Home(s) within the city.
2. Support the continuation of framework spot purchasing arrangements, to meet the current sufficiency requirements of children and young people in care with complex needs requiring residential provision.
3. Approve the allocation of £35,000 from the Transformation reserve for further development of the project overall business case to be presented to Cabinet Resources Panel in June 2022.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report presents a case for change in regards to the options to meet our statutory duties for sufficiency of residential provision and the wider needs of our children and young people in care. In summary, it is proposed to open an innovative restorative practice Children's Home within the city, whilst continuing to spot purchase placements, in order to address the needs of our most complex Children and Young People. It also explains why the change is required and how the proposal meets both our financial and strategic obligations in regards value for money and giving our children in care requiring residential provision the best start in life.
- 1.2 This paper, the "Home from Home" Children's Residential Commissioning Review (**Appendix 1**) and the Options Paper developed by the Children's Residential Provision Review Project (**Appendix 2**) sets out a case for change and why the preferred option has been recommended.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A review of Residential Care in Wolverhampton, "A Home from Home", was produced and published in July 2021 by the Children's Commissioning Team and sought to take an overview of how City of Wolverhampton Council meets its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places available where Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC) need residential placements.
- 2.2 This internal review was produced at a time of national concern from central government about the provision of residential care. The Children's Commissioner has expressed concern about the growth of private providers, which led to the children's social care review chair asking the Competition and Markets Authority to investigate the market for children in care placements. This led to an investigation of how a lack of availability and increasing costs could be leading to the needs of children in care not being met; does profit come at expense of quality in the children's social care market and what impact does this have on our ability to meet the needs of our Children and Young People in Care?
- 2.3 The report of the Children's Commissioner, '[Private provision in children's social care](#)', explores the growth of private companies providing placements in children's homes. It warns there is a clear lack of planning and oversight for the market, leading to an increasingly fragmented, uncoordinated and irrational market. Private provision accounts for 73% of the growth in the number of children in care between 2011 and 2019. The number of children in homes provided by the private sector has grown by 42% over this period whereas local authority provision has not kept pace and has shrunk in some areas. The Children's Commissioner argues that the responsibility for making the system work has fallen through the cracks: the growth in private provision may not have been a deliberate policy choice but it is a consequence of

government inaction along with the options and funding available to local authorities.

2.4 The report finds that certain large providers are seeing a profit margin of around 17% on fees from local authorities, which can amount to over £200 million a year in total. It is felt that this diverts much needed resources from direct investment into preventing escalation with early intervention. It looks at how the companies providing these services are increasingly being owned by private equity firms and raises questions about the way some large private providers are financed, with high levels of debt that could potentially create instability in future. It also shows how opaque the system has become, with detailed and complex investigation needed to understand the ownership, accountability, profits, costs, and prices of different providers – and the situation changing rapidly.

2.5 A Children’s Residential Provision Review Project was established in November 2022, and the concept brief signed off by the Transforming Children’s Services Project Board. This Project group analysed the Commissioning Review and further data and financial analysis, and has met, produced and approved the Options Paper (**Appendix 2**)

A. The Children’s Residential Provision Review **Project aim:**

To offer suitable, sufficient, and sustainable children’s residential provision that:

- Meets demand
- Promotes the safety of children and young people
- Offers them the best quality support whilst in a placement and,
- Most importantly, puts children at the centre of its design and delivery.

B. The Children’s Residential Provision Review **Project deliverables:**

A new restorative practice, multi-agency Children’s Home(s) for children and young people with complex needs as part of the overall priorities set out in the Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy.

3.0 The Case for Change and current market capacity and usage

3.1 For the past 6 years, Wolverhampton has gradually reduced the number of children in care, although 2017-2018 saw a slight increase before coming down again in March 2019. Table 1 highlights the numbers of CAYPIC at the end of each financial year and our current total as of September 2021.

3.2 Table 2 below shows a snapshot of the placement types at end of each financial year. There has been a year-on-year reduction in the use of external foster placements, however this has increased slightly recently. Again, this is linked to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) as external carers

This report is PUBLIC
NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

are often more experienced and a suitable cultural match to UASC than our internal carers. There has been a slight decrease in use of internal and connected carers which is not linked to the increase in external placements but linked to the reduction in children in care overall. Whilst placement with parents is 35, this will also impact on the reduction of children placed with internal and connected carers which combined is 279.

Table 1 – Starts and Ends Per Year

Financial Year	Starts	Ends	Net	CAYPIC as at 31 March
2015-2016	134	258	-124	654
2016-2017	176	191	-15	639
2017-2018	187	174	13	652
2018-2019	135	160	-26	627
2019-2020	129	167	-38	589
2020-2021	97	143	-46	543
2021-2022 (To end of Sep 21)	61	71	-10	533

Table 2 - Placement Types at end of each Financial Year

Placement Type	Mar 2017	Mar 2018	Mar 2019	Mar 2020	Mar 2021	Sep 2021
Adoption	24	27	27	15	23	27
Connected Carer	73	110	89	111	97	93
Agency (external) FC	247	207	197	149	128	133
LA (internal) FC	188	205	191	210	202	186
Residential Care (EPP and residential)	32	42	42	39	29	36
Placed with Parents	38	20	39	24	35	35
Semi Independent / Independent Living	19	20	28	26	18	15
Residential School	6	0	4	1	1	8
Anything else	12	21	10	14	10	0

TOTAL	639	652	627	589	543	533
-------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

- 3.3 Residential care, which is the focus of this project, has also seen an increase within the year linked to a change of care plan for a small cohort of young people where residential has been agreed as a more suitable placement option. We have also undertaken some work to analyse our placement planning and continue to review use of residential care within our Residential Panel moving young people back to family setting where appropriate.
- 3.4 As an authority, Wolverhampton have achieved and consistently maintained the majority of CYPiC placed with internal foster carers than external providers in the last three years. With careful planning of young people moving into residential with Head of Service oversight, and where appropriate close monitoring for a step down into foster care via both the External Placements Panel (EPP) and residential panels, Wolverhampton have been successful in reducing the number of children and young people placed into residential care in line with a clear sufficiency strategy. However, there remains a small cohort of children where there have been repeated fostering

placement breakdowns and where the external residential market has been unable to meet their needs.

- 3.5 The 2021-22 budget for Children's Services is £49.1 million of which the placement budget is £31.0 million including staffing and other associated costs.
- 3.6 Of this placement budget in 2021-22 we had very high-cost expenditure for two children with complex needs. One child's care totalled £563,423 over the period, at a cost of £11,221 per week, and the other £498,792 at a cost of £9,709 per week. We can see that not meeting the needs of the projects target cohort is costing us in excess of £1m annually.
- 3.7 Wolverhampton has access to a mixed economy of provision in procuring residential placements including the Regional Flexible Contracting Arrangement (FCA) through the West Midlands Placements Portal, other regional block contracts and spot purchase where necessary.
- 3.8 When looking at current open CYPiC the average age at the start of the placement is 7.8 for those not in a residential placement, compared to 13.9 for those in a residential. 62% of those not in residential are under the age of 10 at the start of the placement, when looking at those in residential this reduces to 12%. This indicates that CYPiC are much more likely to be placed in residential at an older age with those not in residential more evenly distributed across the age groups.
- 3.9 Therefore, having the option to place our most complex CYPiC within a residential placement at an earlier stage as part of an evidenced decision would be helpful for placement stability and reduction in placement breakdown for a small cohort of children and young people. However, our strategic approach would always be to maintain family placements where possible.
- 3.10 **Summary of the current market and case for change;**
 - A. The vast majority of residential placement sufficiency can be met through framework and spot purchasing arrangements. Access to Framework and Spot Purchase arrangements needs to be continued, but the provider market developed beyond the reliance on large national provision.
 - B. Placement stability in both Fostering and Residential placements has improved and is being sustained. However, having the option to place our most complex CYPiC within a residential placement at an earlier age as part of an evidenced decision would be helpful for placement stability and reduction in placement breakdown.

- C. The age range for children in Residential is higher than for those not in residential provision. Combined with the higher placement breakdowns and missing episodes, it would suggest that justified and evidenced residential placements as an option to step down from, rather than to utilise as a last resort to step up to would see better outcomes for our CYPiC.
- D. Missing episodes reduce where a clear residential placement decision has been made and is an available placement option, rather than one of last resort.
- E. There would be clear savings made on placement costs by making a residential placement decision earlier, as opposed to attempting repeated fostering placements. This needs to be quantified as part of the overall business case against costs of establishing a new restorative practice, multi-agency Children's Home within the city. However, it is clearly in the best interests of some of the children and young people we place.
- F. Requirements for residential provision is expected to reduce between 2022 and 2025, however, there remains a residential requirement for a small cohort of children with complex needs and this needs to be made available as a placement choice as early as possible. Particularly to reduce our reliance on high cost out of city private provision for this small number of CYPiC.

4.0 Needs Analysis

- 4.1 The needs analysis is available in the Children's Commissioners "Home from Home" Residential Review produced in July 2021. **(Appendix 1)**. This needs analysis clearly establishes the requirement to better meet the needs of;

A. Children in Care with Complex Needs

- this will be the main cohort of children in residential care
- the majority of these children will be open to the Disabled Children and Young People Team
- the majority of these residential placements would be funded through the External Placements Panel
- the needs of this cohort are not currently being met and we require a new smaller in-city residential home for children with the most complex needs.

B. Children in Care with Complex Needs but not Health Needs

- the number of children in this cohort would remain small and,
- they will require full time care in residential placements
- the needs of this cohort are not currently being met and we require a new smaller in-city residential home for children with the most complex needs.

5.0 Feasibility

5.1 A full feasibility Business Case will need to be developed, and this paper requests funding of £35,000 from the transformation reserve to be able to achieve this. This will be developed between February 2022 and May 2022, reporting to Cabinet in June 2022.

6.0 Implementation

6.1 Following submission of a full business case in June 2022, the implementation period would be planned from July 2022 with expected completion in June 2023.

7.0 Evaluation of alternative options

7.1 **Appendix 2** details the five options considered and rationale for the recommended option as part of a full Options Paper. The Children's Residential Provision Review project group analysed and gave collective analysis on all options.

8.0 Recommended Option

8.1 Option 5 - To continue using spot purchase and Framework placements, alongside the establishment of a new restorative practice, multi-agency children's home within the city. The proposal, whilst not at full business case stage, is for two properties to accommodate up to two Children with Complex Needs each and the additional supporting services and staff required to meet their needs.

8.2 It is now unusual for residential children's homes nationally and locally to be more than two bedded homes for young people's compatibility of needs to be managed safely with the right staffing ratio. The proposal is to explore the development of two residential children's homes that would cater for no more than 2 children each.

8.3 The new restorative practice children's home would differ from previous internally run services through its statement of purpose to meet the needs of our most complex cases, and the staffing ratios to achieve this

8.4 The location of the new restorative practice children's home should be conducive to working with highly complex and vulnerable young people. Previous homes were purpose built as an assessment centre and did not have a homely feel. As previous homes were located close to the city centre, close to a main road and in an area where there are issues that could place young people at increased risk of gangs and exploitation, this will be avoided with the development of this project with location a key output.

8.5 The home will provide specialist support to young people who have experienced a significant amount of trauma. The focus of the home will be on trauma recovery with a view to supporting young people to improve their emotional regulation. As such, residential staff will need to be highly skilled

and trained in trauma informed interventions. Input from colleagues in Health will be crucial in meeting the needs of this vulnerable and complex cohort

Reasons for decision(s)

8.6 **Appendix 2** details the five options considered and rationale for the recommended option as part of a full Options Paper. The Children's Residential Provision Review project group analysed and gave collective analysis on all options.

9.0 Timeline for Change

9.1 Needs Analysis (April 2021 – July 2021) COMPLETED

9.2 Feasibility (November 2021 – June 2022) Subject to Cabinet Resources Panel Approval

9.3 Implementation (July 2022 – June 2023) Subject to Cabinet Resources Panel Approval

10.0 Financial implications

10.1 This report requests approval to use £35,000 from the transformation reserve to fund the development of the business case as per the recommended option.

10.2 The development of a Children's residential provision will in all likelihood have capital and revenue financial implications, and these will be detailed in further reports once the business case is completed.

[JB/07012021/E]

11.0 Legal implications

11.1 Legislation is clear that the local authority needs to act in a manner that promotes the safety and wellbeing of children it looks after. This option will allow the local authority to explore whether the proposal can meet the needs of our most complex, vulnerable children in care and achieve the most optimal outcomes and opportunities for them.

11.2 [SB/06012022/E]

12.0 Equalities implications

12.1 When the regional residential provision framework was developed, an initial Equality Analysis was undertaken. There were no specific equalities issues that arose from this. The framework is to enable additional, more specialised support for vulnerable children and young people who require residential care.

- 12.2 At this time, it is not considered that the options paper requires further equalities analysis. However, as part of the commitment in Children's Services to developing work around equalities, there will be regular analysis of the young people accessing residential support in order to identify protective characteristics and any areas disproportionality.
- 12.3 Whilst the numbers to be supported by the recommended option are relatively small and therefore not representative of the wider community, it is important to understand the characteristics of those being supported to help shape the provision and ensure it is accessible to all.
- 12.4 A full equalities impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the full business case to be presented to Cabinet Resources Panel in June 2022.

13.0 All other Implications

- 13.1 Human Resources will ensure that all Council policies and procedures are followed in the development of the new roles required to deliver the proposed option. Particular in relation to recruitment of a new skilled workforce with terms and conditions that meet the Single Status agreement and OFSTED requirements.

Human Resources will keep the Trade Unions informed throughout the process.

- 13.2 As outlined in item 8.0 - Recommended Option 5 of the report, Children's Services will need to work with the Assets and Estates Team in identifying the two properties to fulfil the service area needs and be fit for purpose. Any suitable Council owned assets will initially be explored to meet with the provisions specified within the proposal.
- 13.3 Where no assets within Council ownership can be identified, a review will be undertaken to acquire the properties externally either by freehold or leasehold which will feed into the full feasibility Business Case for Cabinet approval in June 2022.

14.0 Appendices

- 14.1 Appendix 1: "A Home from Home" Children's Commissioning Residential Review
- 14.2 Appendix 2: Children's Residential Provision Review Project Options Paper
- 14.3 Appendix 3: New Concept form - Children's Residential Provision Review Project



Page 31

Children and Young
People's Services

Home from home –

A review of
residential care
placements
Wolverhampton

July 2021

Children on the Edge of Care,
Children and Young People in
Care, Care Leavers and
aspects of Children and Young
People with Special
Educational Needs

Produced by: CYP
Commissioning Team in
conjunction with the Children's
Services Leadership Team

Executive summary

The review of Residential Care in Wolverhampton has been drafted by the Children's Commissioning Team and has sought to take an overview of how City of Wolverhampton Council (CoWC) meets its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places available where Children and Young People in Care (CAYPiC) need residential placements.

For the purposes of the review, we have defined residential placements as those in children's homes regulated through the Ofsted inspection framework.

The review comes at a time of national concern from central government about the provision of residential care. The Children's Commissioner has expressed concern about the growth of private providers, which led to the children's social care review chair asking the Competition and Markets Authority to investigate market for children in care placements. This led to an investigation of how a lack of availability and increasing costs could be leading to the needs of children in care not being met; does profit come at expense of quality in the children's social care market and what impact does this have on our ability to meet the needs of our Children and Young People in Care?

The Local Government Association, in its report on children's homes (January 2021) has examined barriers to entry and the impact of private equity investment on the sector, concluding that both central and local government has a role to play in restructuring the sector in alliance with the providers. The chair of the Association of Directors of Children's Services standards, performance and inspection policy committee,

recognises that it is difficult to reconcile significant profits in the sector as the impact of a decade of austerity continues to bite in local government alongside the impact of the pandemic.

Regionally we are looking at how effective our Flexible Contracting Arrangement is in procuring the residential placements we need, and the landscape will change in the next few years through the introduction of creative and innovative solutions.

In the meantime, the findings of the review propose a twin track approach to residential placements of

- continuing to support our focus on prevention and early intervention through a mixed economy of provision, and
- being at the forefront in the development of the sector where Wolverhampton Children and Young People in Care need residential placements

Our recommendations are

- young people at the centre
- more robust contract monitoring, including high cost placements and quality assurance visits
- continue with mixed economy of provision but with focus on smaller, local units with stable, competent, well trained and supported staff who focus on meeting the individual needs of our Children and Young People
- review transitions adulthood plans and ensure actions are in place
- improve communications with providers through more provider events
- work with regional colleagues to rebalance the market

1. Introduction

This review will look at how City of Wolverhampton Council meets its legal duty to ensure sufficiency of provision for Children and Young People in Care with assessed needs for residential placements. We define residential placements as children's homes regulated through the Ofsted inspection framework.

In Wolverhampton we have seen a year on year decrease the number of our children and young people going into residential care however it is not unusual for us to have difficulty in locating a suitable care home placement. This is a national issue and in November 2020 the Children's Commissioner called for a more proactive approach from central government and local government to address a shortage of provision in this sector and rebalance the market.

2. Vision

Our vision for the sector is to ensure there are sufficient places of suitable quality available where Children and Young People in Care need to be placed in regulated children's homes.

3. Background and context

The state of the market

The report of the Children's Commissioner, '[Private provision in children's social care](#)', explores the growth of private

companies providing placements in children's homes. It warns there is a clear lack of planning and oversight for the market, leading to an increasingly fragmented, uncoordinated and irrational market. Private provision accounts for 73% of the growth in the number of children in care between 2011 and 2019. The number of children in homes provided by the private sector has grown by 42% over this period whereas local authority provision has not kept pace and has shrunk in some areas. The Children's Commissioner argues that the responsibility for making the system work has fallen through the cracks: the growth in private provision may not have been a deliberate policy choice but it is a consequence of government inaction along with the options and funding available to local authorities.

The report finds that certain large providers are seeing a profit margin of around 17% on fees from local authorities, which can amount to over £200 million a year in total. It is felt that this diverts much needed resources from direct investment into preventing escalation with early intervention. It looks at how the companies providing these services are increasingly being owned by private equity firms and raises questions about the way some large private providers are financed, with high levels of debt that could potentially create instability in future. It also shows how opaque the system has become, with detailed and complex investigation needed to understand the ownership, accountability, profits, costs, and prices of different providers – and the situation changing rapidly.

The LGA report '[Children's Homes Research](#)' (January 2021) examined the main barriers to entry into the market; stigma, perceived poor return on investment, need for upfront investment of time and capital without guarantee of positive

outcome, ability to meet complexity of need within regulatory requirements, lack of coordinated and strategic commissioning - local and short-term arrangements mean that long term needs are unmet. Examples of innovative models of funding and delivering residential children's care services were cited including:

- leveraging capital from trusts and foundations to invest in properties to convert into residential care homes
- establishing Community Interest Companies with social investment to set up residential care homes, part-owned by staff
- joint venture partnerships where local authority partnerships with providers enable them to recoup expenditure on placement fees
- investing in residential care staff (both financially and in their professional development) to promote retention and better care
- creating multi-disciplinary services which provide hubs for social care, health, youth justice and education practitioners to work collaboratively in providing intensive preventative support

The strength of the West Midlands regional collaboration was given as an example of good practice, and this can be built on through the work of West Midlands Strategic Commissioning Network (SCN) and Operational Commissioning and Contracting Group (OCCG).

4. What the data tells us

How placements are procured in Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton has access to a mixed economy of provision in procuring residential placements including internal provision, the Regional Flexible Contracting Arrangement (FCA) through the West Midlands Placements Portal, block contracts and spot purchase where necessary.

The City of Wolverhampton, like many major cities nationwide, still has many children in need or who require protection. However, the number and rate of children in care (the most intensive level in intervention) are relatively stable after several years of rapid increases and the national rank of children in care has decreased after being second highest at one point. In August 2020, there were 582 children in care. In April 2021, there were 545 children in care.

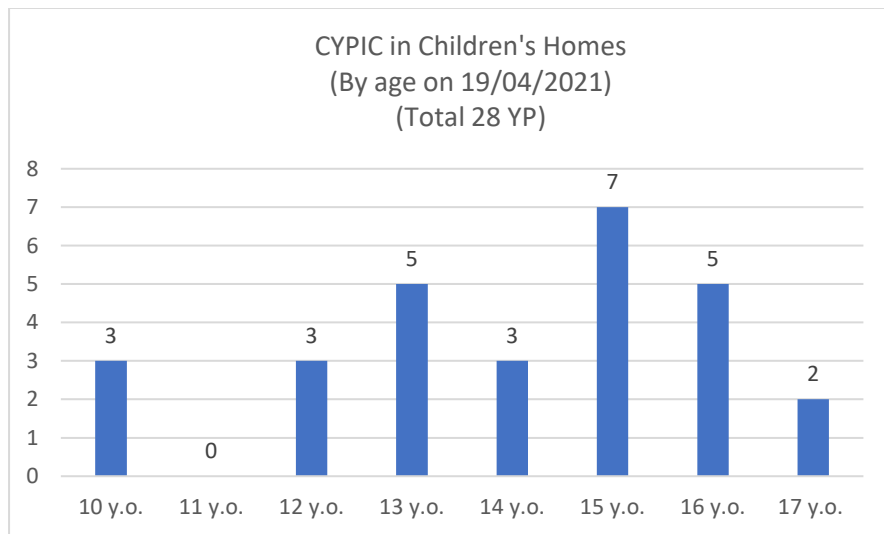
A recent data exercise, carried out as part of the review of the effectiveness of the FCA, showed that the largest percentage of placements purchased are framework (52%) with 41% spot, 3% block and 4% internal.

The data collected suggests that the big providers see no disadvantage in not being part of the FCA. This taken with the fact that 39% of providers reported that they only use the West Midlands Placements Portal to offer placements with 10% completely off portal, leaving just over 50% accessing the portal occasionally to make offers suggest that we be looking for a different approach to procuring residential placements. This is in contrast with the anecdotal evidence that around 85% of fostering placements are framework based through the portal. This raises the question as to

whether the presence of a large internal market within fostering is significant in terms of sufficiency.

Current Residential Placements

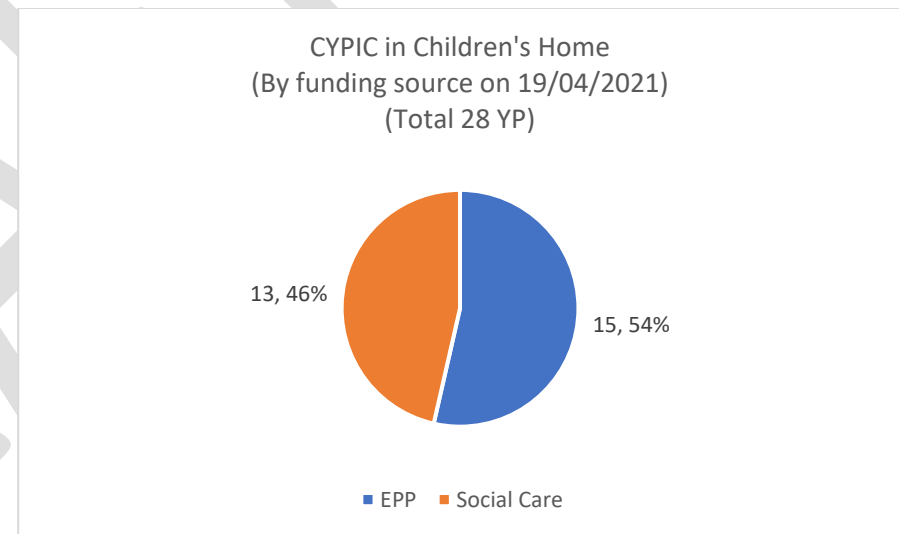
In April 2021, 28 children in care were placed in regulated children’s homes with three in K2I, 1 in Wolverhampton, 22 out of city and 2 in Scotland. These children age from 10 to 17.



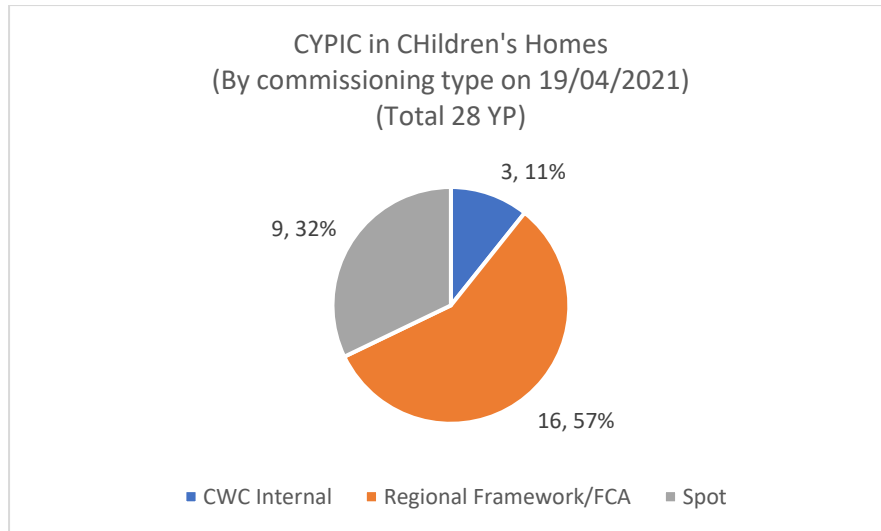
External residential placements are sometimes necessary where the holistic (social, educational and health) needs of a child/young person require specialist support and provision that is not available within Wolverhampton. These are children/young people who may present with the most complex of health, educational and social care needs and

where all local service provision to meet these needs has been exhausted.

The External Placements Panel (EPP) manages a shared funding arrangement between CWC & the Clinical Commissioning Group to fund placements for a small number of children and young people up to the age of 18 who have combined specialised and/ or social care and health needs that cannot be met within internal resources. 54% of residential placements in April 2021 are funded by the EPP.



57% of residential placements in April 2021 are placed with providers under the regional framework or flexible contracting agreement.



Local Trends

Projected demands on Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC) placements

Children's Services have focussed on reducing the number of children in care since 2014. The launch of Children's MASH in 2014 has been instrumental to this objective. At one point, Wolverhampton's rate of children in care was the second highest in England with over 800 children in care. In August 2020, 585 children are currently in the care of City of Wolverhampton Council.

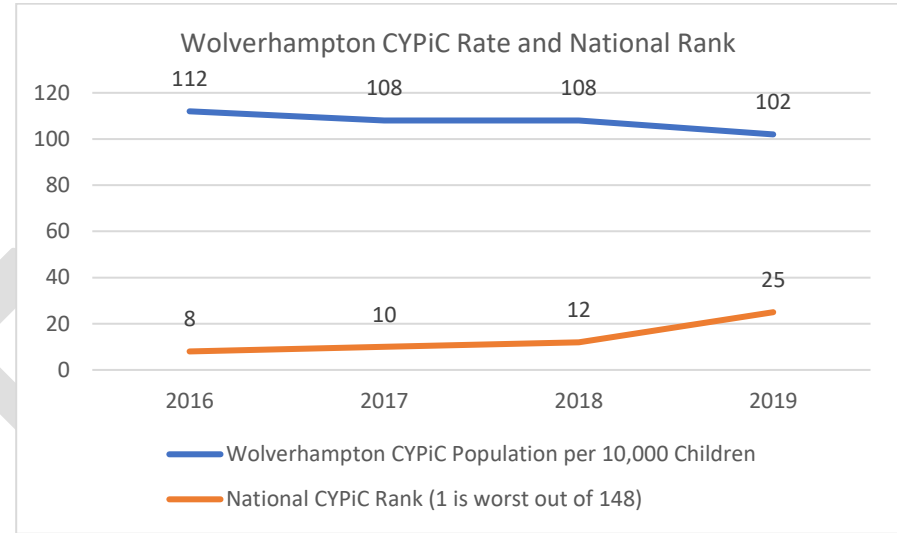
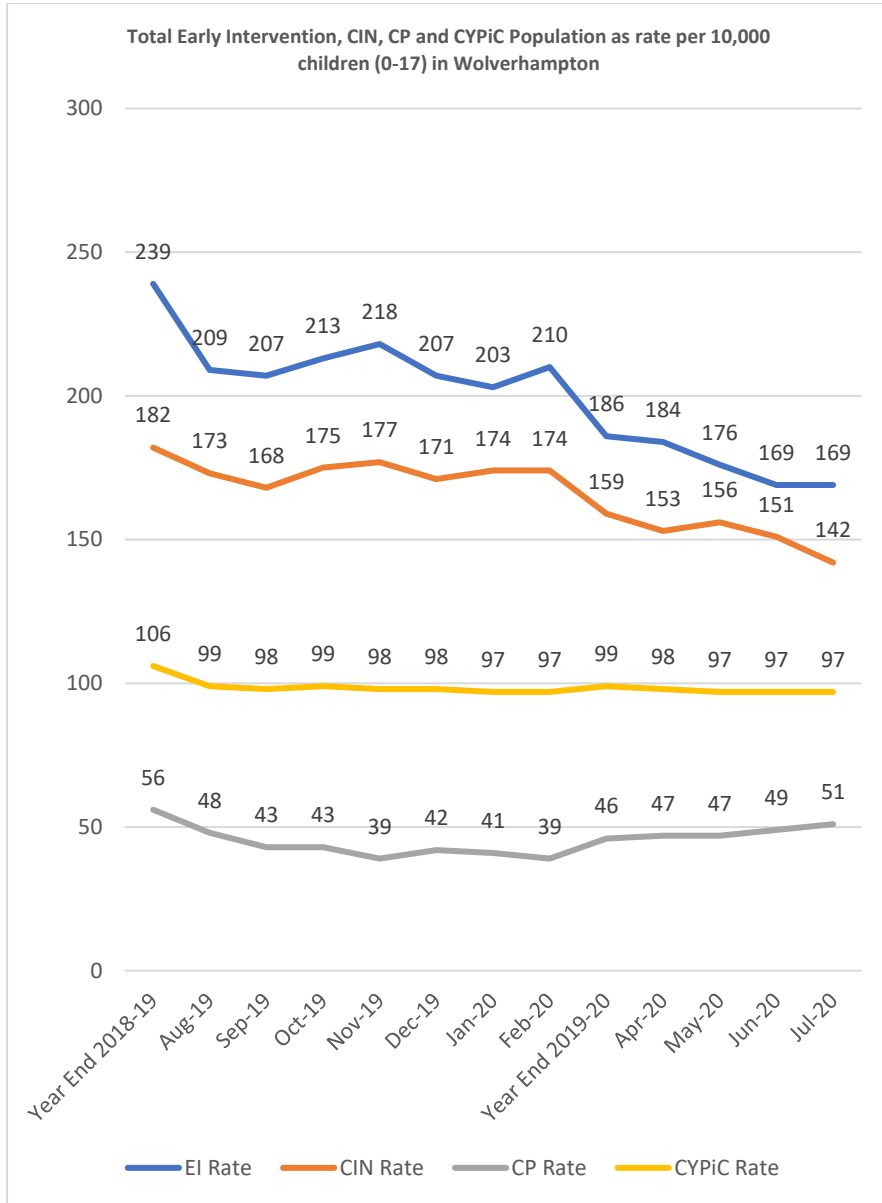
The number of children in care is expected to be more in proportion to the England average by 2023. However, the Covid-19 pandemic started in 2020 inevitably would have some unforeseeable impact on vulnerable children and their families, such as unemployment, school attendance, housing, etc.

During 2020 to 2023, sufficiency will be required to provide suitable placements for children in care in the right place at the right time. The Council will continue to increase internal fostering capacity to ensure majority of children in foster care will be placed with internal foster carers. Generally, dependency on the external market of fostering, children's home and supported accommodation would continue to reduce.

National trends

The Children's Homes Research (Jan 2021) LGA noted

- Increases of the number of children in care by 15% between 2015-2020
- Increases in the proportion of residential care provision provided by a relatively small cohort of private providers
- 60% of children in residential care were living outside of their 'home' local authority
- Out of area placements create barriers to the maintenance of relationships between a child in care and their family and friendship groups
- Concerns raised by local authority members around their level of control in meeting sufficiency duties



Plans to reduce dependency on external care providers include:

Residential homes

- The Council expects the number of children’s home placements to reduce in the next 3 years when some of the young people turn 18
- City of Wolverhampton Council will continue to be part to the West Midlands Regional Framework Contract and collaborate with the Regional Commissioning Hub
- Step Down projects such as The Big Fostering Partnership will ensure children whose care plan is fostering will step down from residential to fostering

Sufficiency for 2021 to 2024

Whilst the dependency on placing children in care with external providers is expected to reduce, placement sufficiency for the following cohorts of children must be considered in the Council's Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy 2021-2024

Children in Care with Complex Needs

- this will be the main cohort of children in residential care
- the majority of these children will be open to the Disabled Children and Young People Team
- the majority of these residential placements would be funded through the External Placements Panel

Children in Care with Complex Needs but not Health Needs

- the number of children in this cohort would remain small and,
- they will require full time care in residential placements
- The needs of this cohort are not currently being met and we require a new smaller in-city residential home for children with the most complex needs.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

City of Wolverhampton Council will continue to work with The Royal School Wolverhampton when the Council receives any new allocation. The working relationship between the Council and the school has been very positive.

The impact of COVID-19 on Children and Young People in Care

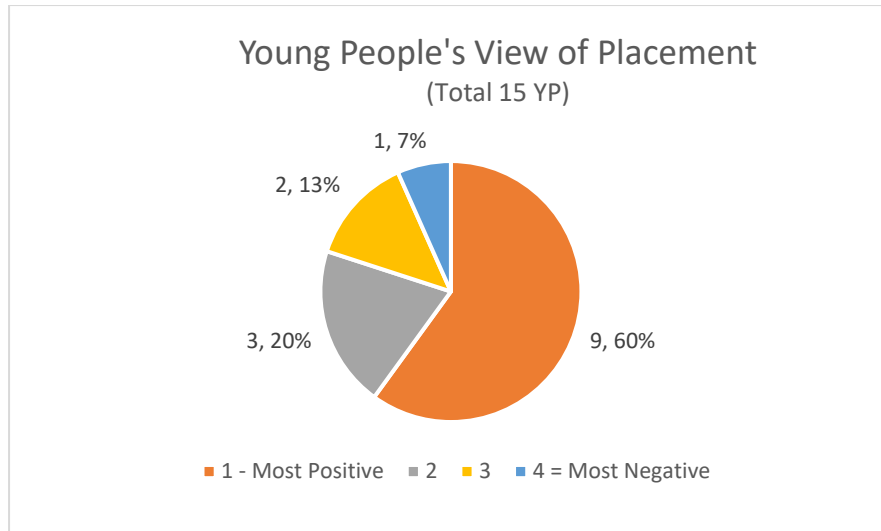
In considering the impact of Covid-19 on families in Wolverhampton who are affected by the trio of vulnerabilities; alcohol/substance abuse, domestic abuse and mental health problems. This trio of vulnerabilities have been evidenced to put children at notably greater risk of immediate harm as well as having a detrimental impact on their later life outcomes. See appendix 1 for more information on the local area profile of child vulnerability.

With the Covid-19 Crisis Scenario targets for children leaving care in consideration, the CYPiC numbers within the above projections would increase. At the end of 2020/21, the projected figure will be 629, which would be an increase of 43 during 2020/21.

5. What our stakeholders told us

What our young people told us

Fifteen young people have shared their experience about living in an Ofsted registered children's home. Nine (60%) young people feel very positive about their placements. One (7%) young person does not like the location of their placement as it is away from their birth family.



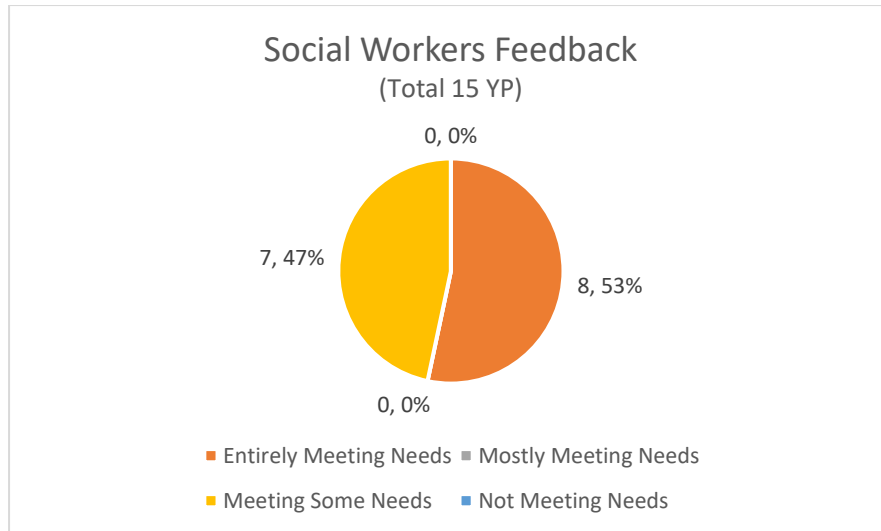
Some of young people's comments are: -

- "I'm happy and settled in the placement. I enjoy the activities within the placement. I like the staff and has a good relationship with them."
- "I don't like being placed away from my family."
- "I enjoy living at my current placement, as I get to do what I enjoy the most. My school and the home are all close together I feel happy and safe all the time."
- "I told my IRO that I did not want to stay in Wales and felt I had been lied to and tricked into going to Wales. I believed it would only be for 2 weeks."
- "I've developed a good relationship with the staff support given to prepare for independence."

- "I don't mind the residential home (K2I) and enjoy talking to staff. However, I cannot wait to have my own flat and my own independence."
- "I did not enjoy my experience of staying at my placement. I felt that the staff did not stop me from self-harming. The staff would watch me break a cup and go to my room and they knew I was going to cut myself they did not intervene at all. Afterwards they would clean up my wounds. When it came to the staff I really liked, the company got rid of them. The staff I really liked were amazing. Certain staff were very supportive and really listened, they cared, which was nice."
- "I have made many good friends at the Royal school and I feel safe and happy in my environment. I miss my family but want to remain at the Royal school."

What our social workers told us

Social workers of fifteen young people have told commissioners whether their placements meet their needs and support them to achieve positive outcomes.



What our Personalised Support Team (PST) colleagues told us

Key themes are

- *Complex cases*
- *Emergencies/same day placements*
- *Process for placements*
- *Timeframes*

Complex cases

- require high quality, detailed, up to date placement requests (PIR)
- there is a shortage of placements for Disabled Children and Young People
- it is important to include any diagnosis that is in place in the PIR

- need more bespoke packages of care for complex cases

Emergencies/same day placements

Placements for Upper Pendeford Farm (UPF) and Key 2 Inspiration (K2I) don't go through PST so we struggle with placing there especially when we have a request for emergency placements e.g. on Friday afternoons. Feel that K2I could be used for bridging placements where there are vacancies.

Process for placements

- We would like to do strengthen the understanding of the placement process from Placement Information Record (PIR) to completed Individual Placement Agreement (IPA).
- The IPA forms part of the contract so it is essential to be completed especially with a non-framework provider
- Some of the big providers aren't on the portal or don't use it at all
- Only head of service can authorise initial costings or increase in costings, we often have providers saying that a SW colleague has agreed additional staffing/increase in fees

Timeframes

Once we have received the request, we need regular updates if plans change for the CYP as we often continue to search for one kind of placement when another is needed.

If you could change one thing?

- Timeliness of communications – lack of communication can lead to placement breakdown which in turn leads an emergency request
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities between us, the provider and social work colleagues – we aren't trained in social work practice, we can't do the social work function or case management
- Improvements to the Placements Portal
 - the referrals close down when one person from the providers have read it even if they are not the right person
 - information needs to be kept up to date, in particular warnings and email addresses

What about Scottish placements? Are there things that impact improved outcomes?

- The regulator is more supportive, there appears to be more interaction, communication and discretion within the inspection system
- The inspection framework requires staff to have qualifications to be paid the qualified rate, whereas in England they can be 'working towards' a qualification for up to two years and this can be avoided by staff moving to another provider and trigger the two years again therefore not ever getting qualified

What our Independent Reviewing Officers and LADO told us

Wolverhampton is on an upward trajectory of continuous improvement; all staff care about improving the lives of the children and young people in care.

Key issues

- We need to prioritise personalised matching, although we recognise that there is a shortage of residential provision
- We need to take into account how it makes a young person feel when there is only one offer for them
- We need to recognise that settings are the young person's home and behave accordingly in terms of language that respects the YP's experience and their routines (e.g. reuniting the YP who has moved on with all of their belongings quickly – carefully collect their belongings)
- Residential care has the reputation of being the option for care when all other options have been exhausted – the 'end of the line' to some extent
- What we look for is placements that are homes with
 - Competent, stable, well trained and supported staff teams
 - Small units to allow for personalisation
 - Focus on meeting the individual needs of the child or young person
 - Open communication and visiting arrangements

- Nurturing environments where young people are given choices and can take pride in their surroundings
- The voice of the child needs to be heard
- There is often a big difference in quality and care between the 'big' companies and small one, for many of the larger providers there is focus on the profit margin and charging for additional elements
- The quality of staff in homes is not just about their qualifications but their understanding of and empathy with the individual and cultural needs. There needs to be a regular review of any barriers present to delivering this kind of service
- We recognise that not all children are suited to foster care, they don't want a replacement set of parents and need a place to stay that is as close a match for their cultural and physical needs as possible (food, self-care, religious observance). It should not be a novelty to have a 'cultural meal'
- We would like to see more robust monitoring of contracts; if there is a therapeutic element or other additional element, is it making a difference - but give it time to work. Are the additional elements actually in place
- We recognise that the further away from home the more at risk they are of running and every day that a child spends outside their home is a day when they are cut off from their home networks which can make it more difficult to achieve a swift return
- There are some providers who are more collaborative than others on getting it right for the individual child and we would like to see these practices more widespread
- Young people need to understand why they are being treated differently from other young people in the same setting (e.g. curfew)
- Some of the settings we have visited are obviously in a poor state of care (cleanliness and repair), this needs to be addressed where it is seen, who is responsible for checking this?
- We have noticed that some providers are resistant to step down and this is sometimes due to the fact that they will lose money. There appear to be elements of collusion to maintain an unsuitable placement
- Other councils respond differently to issues of quality where there are children from more than one area in a setting and this can be challenging for us to reconcile
- We would like to see more emphasis on transition to adulthood from age 16 for the older teenagers; independent living skills and preparation for adulthood

What providers say

An informal exercise to look at how providers determine which authorities they respond to and the key influencing factors are;

- the speed that the payments are made
- speed of decision making on placements
- quality and accuracy of referrals
- support they get from placing authorities, responsiveness of social workers when issues are raised

6. Commissioning recommendations

The review has highlighted a number of areas for further work to support our continuing improvement:

- A new restorative practice, multi agency Children's Home within the City but outside the City Centre to meet the first sufficiency priority of Complex Needs (without Health needs)
- young people at the centre
- more robust contract monitoring, including high cost placements and quality assurance visits
- continue with mixed economy of provision but with focus on smaller, local units with stable, competent, well trained and supported staff who focus on meeting the individual needs of our Children and Young People
- review transitions adulthood plans and ensure actions are in place
- improve communications with providers through more provider events
- work with regional colleagues to rebalance the market

7. Next steps

Where CoWC chooses to deliver services 'in-house' it will use contract management mechanisms with internal services to ensure their performance is aligned to the expectations and standards of the external market and regulatory bodies.

CoWC will seek to manage both internal and external services through the lenses of:

1. Risk
2. Relationships

Service Risks

The safety of our children and young people is of paramount importance to CoWC but the approach will endeavour to be proportionate, pragmatic and provide opportunities for learning and continuous improvement on both the part of the service/provider and the Council.

The following areas of risk will be considered:

- Safety of our children and young people
- Compliance/Regulation – contract, Ofsted etc.
- Service/Market failure
- Financial

The Council will have clear measures in place to flag all risks so that immediate action can be taken to address these with the service/provider.

Relationships

Although managing risks around service provision is critical to the safety and quality of life for our children and young people, the relationship between the council and the service/provider is essential to achieving this.

CoWC will work in partnership with internal services and external providers where there is a contractual relationship between them and the Council.

CoWC will facilitate quarterly forums with our services/providers to maintain partnerships, understand the

challenges within the sector, and ensure quality of provision by continuously developing services that meet the needs of our children and young people.

The Council will value and respect the input of providers, seeing them as professionals who are delivering the service on behalf of CoWC. As such will seek their input and expertise as part of a multi-disciplinary approach.

Appendix 1 Further data

According to the latest local area profiles of child vulnerability from the UK Children's Commissioner Office, the City of Wolverhampton Council's profile is detailed below:

- The projected percentage of children in households where an adult has an alcohol or drug dependency is 4.48% and the projected number of 0–17-year-olds affected is 2,750
- The projected percentage of children in households where an adult experienced domestic abuse in last year is 5.88% and the projected number of 0–17-year-olds affected is 3,600
- The projected percentage of children in households where an adult has severe mental ill-health symptoms is 13.8% and the projected number of 0-17-year-olds affected is 8,450
- The projected percentage of children in households where an adult has any of the above risks is 18.66% and the projected number of 0-17-year-olds affected is 11,430

- The projected percentage of children in households where an adult has two or more of the above risks is 4.69% and the projected number of 0-17-year-olds affected is 2,870
- The projected percentage of children in households where an adult has all three of the above risks is 1.18% and the projected number of 0-17-year-olds affected is 730

Children's Residential Provision

Options Paper

Document Controls

Version Control

Version	Version Date	Author	Reason for Change
0.1	14/12/2021	Steve Larking	First draft
0.2	30/12/2021	Steve Larking	Options appraisal feedback update
0.3	03/01/2022	Steve Larking	Data and Case for Change edits
0.4	05/01/2022	Steve Larking	Project Group feedback and edits
0.5	06/01/2022	Steve Larking	Steering Group feedback and edits
0.6	07/01/2022	Steve Larking	High cost case finances update

Quality Reviews

Version	Review Date	Reviewed By	Role	Reviewers Comments
0.4	05/01/2022	Steve Larking	Commissioner	Project Group feedback & edits
0.5	06/01/2022	Steve Larking	Commissioner	Steering Group feedback & edits

Approvals

Version	Name	Role	Date of Issue
V1.0	Children's Leadership Team		11/01/2022
V1.0	SEB		13/01/2022

Contents

1. Description of the Project	3
2. Purpose of the Project	3
2.1 Background and problem / opportunity to be addressed	3
2.1. Business / Service Area Priority	7
3. Options Considered	7
4. Recommended Option	11
Appendices	11
Appendix 1 – Home from Home – Children’s Commissioning Resident Review	11
Appendix 2 – Children’s Residential Review Dashboard Summary	11

1. Description of the Project

Following a Needs Analysis (Appendix 1) *“Home from Home” Children’s Commissioning Residential Review* which identified the need for a new approach to meeting the Sufficiency requirements of Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC) with Complex Needs and Complex Needs with Health Needs requiring Residential Provision, this project is to assess the best option to achieve this.

2. Purpose of the Project

A review of Residential Care in Wolverhampton, “A Home from Home”, was produced and published in July 2021 by the Children’s Commissioning Team and sought to take an overview of how City of Wolverhampton Council meets its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places available where Children and Young People in Care need residential placements. This Residential Provision Review Project was established to identify the best option to meet the review findings.

2.1 Background and problem / opportunity to be addressed

For the past 6 years, Wolverhampton has gradually reduced the number of children in care, although 2017-2018 saw a slight increase before coming down again in March 2019. Table 1 highlights the numbers of CYPiC at the end of each financial year and our current total as of September 2021.

Table 1 – Starts and Ends Per Year

Financial Year	Starts	Ends	Net	CAYPIC as at 31 March
2015-2016	134	258	-124	654
2016-2017	176	191	-15	639
2017-2018	187	174	13	652
2018-2019	135	160	-26	627
2019-2020	129	167	-38	589
2020-2021	97	143	-46	543
2021-2022 (To end of Sep 21)	61	71	-10	533

Table 2 below shows a snapshot of the placement types at end of each financial year. There has been a year-on-year reduction in the use of external foster placements, however this has increased slightly recently. Again, this is linked to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) as external carers are often more experienced and a suitable cultural match to UASC than our internal carers. There has been a slight decrease in use of internal and connected carers which is not linked to the increase in external placements but linked to the reduction in children in care overall. Whilst placement with parents is 35, this will also impact on the reduction of children placed with internal and connected carers which combined is 279.

Table 2 - Placement Types at end of each Financial Year

Placement Type	Mar 2017	Mar 2018	Mar 2019	Mar 2020	Mar 2021	Sep 2021
Adoption	24	27	27	15	23	27
Connected Carer	73	110	89	111	97	93
Agency (external) FC	247	207	197	149	128	133
LA (internal) FC	188	205	191	210	202	186
Residential Care (EPP and residential)	32	42	42	39	29	36
Placed with Parents	38	20	39	24	35	35
Semi Independent / Independent Living	19	20	28	26	18	15
Residential School	6	0	4	1	1	8
Anything else	12	21	10	14	10	0
TOTAL	639	652	627	589	543	533

Residential care, which is the focus of this project, has also seen an increase within the year linked to a change of care plan for a small cohort of young people where residential has been agreed as a more suitable placement option. We have also undertaken some work to analyse our placement planning and continue to review use of residential care within our Residential Panel moving young people back to family setting where appropriate.

As an authority, Wolverhampton have achieved and consistently maintained the majority of CYPiC placed with internal foster carers than external providers in the last three years. With careful planning of young people moving into residential with Head of Service oversight, and where appropriate close monitoring for a step down into foster care via both the External Placements Panel (EPP) and residential panels, Wolverhampton have been successful in reducing the number of children and young people placed into residential care in line with a clear sufficiency strategy. However, there remains a small cohort of children where there have been repeated fostering placement breakdowns and where the external residential market has been unable to meet their needs.

The 2021-22 budget for Children's Services is £49.1 million of which the placement budget is £31.0 million including staffing and other associated costs. Of this placement budget in 2020-21 we had net expenditure of £5.9m with complex needs who required external private residential provision. This is 25% of the total budget allocated to placements.

EPP placements current active young people average cost per week is £2,655 net of contributions, £5,397 gross. The highest net cost per week is £5,684 net of contributions,

Residential placements average cost per week is £4,053 excluding the Royal Wolverhampton school. The highest cost per week is £5,650.

Wolverhampton has access to a mixed economy of provision in procuring residential placements including the Regional Flexible Contracting

Arrangement (FCA) through the West Midlands Placements Portal, other regional block contracts and spot purchase where necessary.

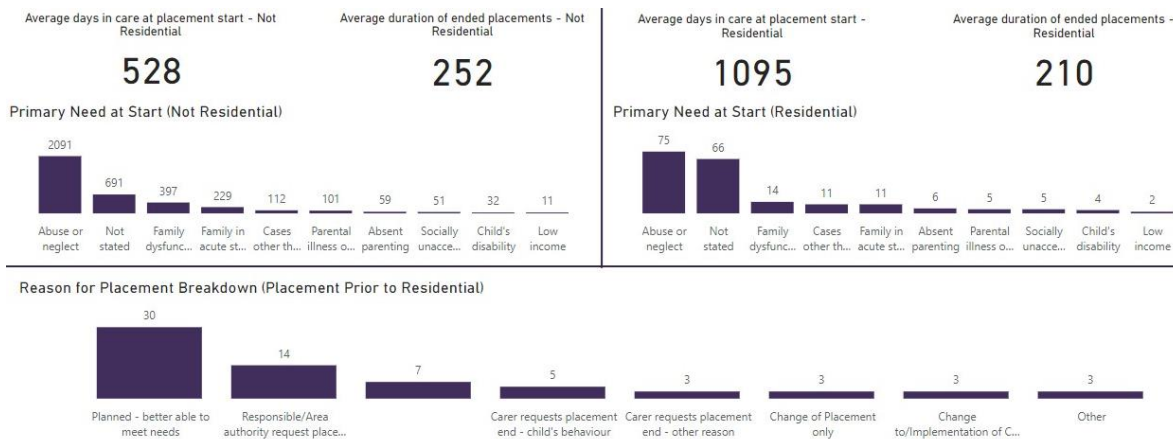
When looking at current open CYPiC the average age at the start of the placement is 7.8 for those not in a residential placement, compared to 13.9 for those in a residential. 62% of those not in residential are under the age of 10 at the start of the placement, when looking at those in residential this reduces to 12%. This indicates that CYPiC are much more likely to be placed in residential at an older age with those not in residential more evenly distributed across the age groups.

Therefore, having the option to place our most complex CYPiC within a residential placement at an earlier stage as part of an evidenced decision would be helpful for placement stability and reduction in placement breakdown for a small cohort of children and young people. However, our strategic approach would always be to maintain family placements where possible.

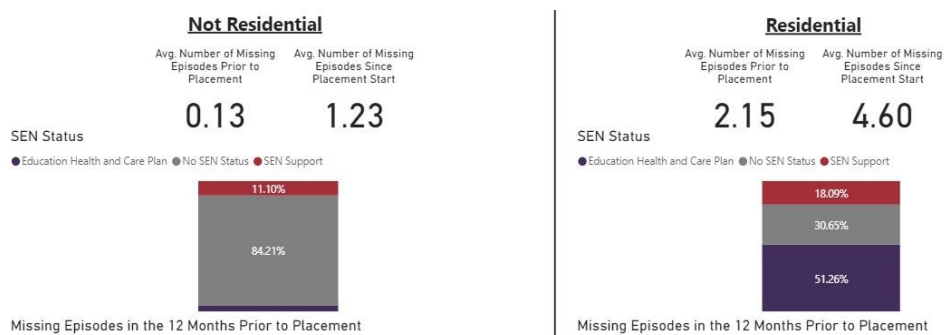


Whilst the dependency on placing children in care with external providers is expected to reduce, placement sufficiency for the following cohorts of children must be considered and responded to by this proposal: both Children in Care with Complex Needs and Children in Care with Complex Needs but not Health Needs. These are our highest cost placements, and those where reliance on Out of City private provision is predominant.

CYPiC are significantly more likely to have more placements prior to their current placement in residential (10.20) than those that are not placed in residential (3.97), although those being placed in residential care were in care for longer prior to them entering residential care with over 500 more days.



Those currently in residential care had an average of 3 missing episodes prior to starting in the placement compared to 0.37 for those not in residential, this difference continues when looking at the number of missing incidents after the placement start with those not in residential care having 0.13 compared to 1.20 for those in residential. It is therefore clear that missing episodes reduce when a justified residential placement has been made and managed supportively although not as positively as outcomes for foster placements or maintaining family placements.



The key to placement stability is identifying the right placement for each child or young person and the availability of an appropriate placement (including the option for residential). This involves having a thorough and holistic assessment to identify the young person's needs. This information is then used to match to the most appropriate placement for the child or young person. The difficulty, however, is a lack of available residential placements or placements with carers skilled and equipped to meet the needs of young people.

There is no clear evidence that one type of placement consistently achieves better outcomes than the other. For some children and young people, foster care is the most appropriate provision, and for other, a residential setting will best meet their needs. The challenge is determining which provision is best for each child and not being led by placement availability.

To have a solution to better meet the needs of our most complex Children and Young People in Care we would;

- Allow Social Workers with leadership support to make evidenced based justified decisions not reliant on availability but appropriateness to meet need.

- Be able to put in place the full range of support at an earlier opportunity rather than waiting for placements to break down. Allowing a reversal to step down from rather than up to residential provision.
- End our reliance on high cost out of city private provision which has proven to be detrimental to our CYPiC, lacking the local support networks they require.
- Be able to redeploy highly skilled staff serving this provision during periods of voids to other areas of the business. Something we are unable to do with private providers.
- Have flexibility with oversight of the service model in order to adapt to meet changes in Government Policy or Strategic Priorities.

2.1. Business / Service Area Priority

Aim		Rationale
Community and Place	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The recommended option would provide a highly skilled in city workforce and employer.
Families	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The recommended option would deliver better outcomes for our Children and Young People
Organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The recommended option would allow the council to better deliver its strategic priorities

3. Options Considered

3.1. Option 1 - Continue as we are spot purchasing placements

- **Outputs**
Placement can be made at short notice and assessed against need
- **Benefits**
Placement can be made at short notice and assessed against need
- **Outline Costs**
Out of city placements can lead to higher other costs, i.e. school transport, social worker travel & time
As of December 2021, the current financial projection is as follows:
A total of 22 young people in EPP placements, 32 in total within the year at a forecast projection net of £2.4m. Current active young people average cost per week is £2,655
Residential placements excluding contributions are 24, 7 of which are residing in the Royal Wolverhampton school, 38 in total at a forecast projection of £3.5m. Current active cost per week excluding the Royal Wolverhampton school is £4,053 per week.
A revenue budget for K2I exists of £858,940 in 2022-23
- **Timescale**
Immediate

- **Risk**

This can lead to poor quality, high cost and limited options. If we continue with this approach, we should consider what 'strategic' relationships we have with providers – which are good quality, reliable etc.

Increasing complexity of the young person support needs could potentially see an increase in cost / cost per week, therefore increasing overall spend if a bespoke package is required.

cost per week risk of increasing due to national demands outstripping supply.

Placement stability, emergency moves potential to increase the weekly cost

3.2. Option 2 - Block Contracting

- **Outputs**

Block contract in place with a provider to meet the residential placements of Children and Young People with complex needs.
- **Benefits**

No risk of capacity issues for under occupied beds

Potential to sell VOIDS to other Local Authorities (with the potential risk to our own sufficiency)
- **Outline Costs**

As at December 2021 the current financial projection is as follows:
A total of 22 young people in EPP placements, 32 in total within the year at a forecast projection net of £2.4m. Current active young people average cost per week is £2,655

Residential placements excluding contributions are 24, 7 of which are residing in the Royal Wolverhampton school, 38 in total at a forecast projection of £3.5m. Current active cost per week excluding the Royal Wolverhampton school is £4,053 per week.

A revenue budget for K2I exists of £858,940 in 2022-23
- **Timescale**

6-month procurement process
- **Risk**

It is difficult to predict the kind of complexity we need to place and block contracts rarely provide the flexibility required to meet the range of needs. Robust contract management, particularly around QA and Ofsted compliance is essential for this option particularly for high-cost placements. The key challenges for block contracting are handling voids (although empty beds could be offered to other authorities) and negotiating with the contracted providers who refuse our referrals, particularly for complex needs.

3.3. Option 3 - Commission a Provider

- **Outputs**

Contracted provider to meet the residential placements of Children and Young People with complex needs.
- **Benefits**

This might be an option if we could identify a local partner who would develop a bespoke joint Wolverhampton approach. It might also be possible to identify an existing larger provider who had the investment capacity

Outline Costs

As at December 2021 the current financial projection is as follows:
A total of 22 young people in EPP placements, 32 in total within the year at a forecast projection net of £2.4m. Current active young people average cost per week is £2,655

Residential placements excluding contributions are 24, seven of which are residing in the Royal Wolverhampton school, 38 in total at a forecast projection of £3.5m. Current active cost per week excluding the Royal Wolverhampton school is £4,053 per week.

A revenue budget for K2I exists of £858,940 in 2022-23

- **Timescale**

6-month procurement process

- **Risk**

It is difficult to predict the kind of complexity we need to place contracts rarely provide the flexibility required to meet the range of needs. Robust contract management, particularly around QA and Ofsted compliance is essential for this option particularly for high-cost placements.

3.4. Option 4 - in-house City of Wolverhampton Council owned provision

- **Outputs**

A new in-city restorative practice children's home (x2 for 2 children), outside of the city centre, with a clear statement of purpose to meet the needs of our most complex Children and Young People in Care requiring residential provision.

- **Benefits**

Allow placement teams to make evidenced based justified decisions not reliant on availability but appropriateness to meet need.

Be able to put in place the full range of support at an earlier opportunity rather than waiting for placements to break down. Allowing a reversal to step down from rather than up to residential provision.

End our reliance on high cost out of city private provision which has proven to be detrimental to our CYPiC, lacking the local support networks they require.

Be able to redeploy highly skilled staff serving this provision during periods of voids to other areas of the business. Something we are unable to do with private providers.

Have flexibility with oversight of the service model in order to adapt to meet changes in Government Policy or Strategic Priorities

- **Outline Costs**

A Full Business Case is required to understand the full costs.

As of December 2021 the current financial projection is as follows:

A total of 22 young people in EPP placements, 32 in total within the year at a forecast projection net of £2.4m. Current active young people average cost per week is £2,655

Residential placements excluding contributions are 24, 7 of which are residing in the Royal Wolverhampton school, 38 in total at a forecast projection of £3.5m. Current active cost per week excluding the Royal Wolverhampton school is £4,053 per week.

A revenue budget for K2I exists of £858,940 in 2022-23

- **Timescale**

12 months

- **Risk**
Establishing in house provision would require both capital and revenue streams and upfront costs may impact on the value for money of the project outputs.
Without the ability to spot purchase or access framework providers then we would be solely reliant on this internal provision.

Option 5 - A Combination of Option 1 and 4 above

- **Outputs**
A new in-city restorative practice children's home (two homes to house two children each x2 for 2 children), outside of the city centre, with a clear statement of purpose to meet the needs of our most complex Children and Young People in Care requiring residential provision and use of spot purchasing and framework provision.
- **Benefits**
Allow placement teams to make evidenced based justified decisions not reliant on availability but appropriateness to meet need.
Be able to put in place the full range of support at an earlier opportunity rather than waiting for placements to break down. Allowing a reversal to step down from rather than up to residential provision.
End our reliance on high cost out of city private provision which has proven to be detrimental to our CYPiC, lacking the local support networks they require.
Be able to redeploy highly skilled staff serving this provision during periods of voids to other areas of the business. Something we are unable to do with private providers.
Have flexibility with oversight of the service model in order to adapt to meet changes in Government Policy or Strategic Priorities
- **Outline Costs**
A Full Business Case is required to understand the full costs.
As at December 2021 the current financial projection is as follows:
A total of 22 young people in EPP placements, 32 in total within the year at a forecast projection net of £2.4m. Current active young people average cost per week is £2,655
Residential placements excluding contributions are 24, seven of which are residing in the Royal Wolverhampton school, 38 in total at a forecast projection of £3.5m. Current active cost per week excluding the Royal Wolverhampton school is £4,053 per week.
A revenue budget for K2I exists of £858,940 in 2022-23
- **Timescale**
12 months
Immediate use of framework and spot purchasing in the interim period
- **Risk**
Establishing in house provision would require both capital and revenue streams and upfront costs may impact on the value for money of the project outputs.

As above – is there a risk to what we do in the meantime or is this a benefit in that we can start spot purchasing straight away?

4. Recommended Option

The Residential Provision Review Project Group recommends Option 5. By opening our own specialist restorative practice children’s home AND continuing with spot purchasing and framework provision. this option allows us to;

- Have ownership and control over the statement of purpose and running of the children’s home.
- Means we keep the flexibility of regional framework and spot purchasing arrangements.
- Allow placement teams to make evidenced based justified decisions not reliant on availability but appropriateness to meet need.
- Be able to put in place the full range of support at an earlier opportunity rather than waiting for placements to break down. Allowing a reversal to step down from rather than up to residential provision.
- End our reliance on high cost out of city private provision which has proven to be detrimental to our CYPiC, lacking the local support networks they require.
- Be able to redeploy highly skilled staff serving this provision during periods of voids to other areas of the business. Something we are unable to do with private providers.
- Have flexibility with oversight of the service model in order to adapt to meet changes in Government Policy or Strategic Priorities.

This option, however, requires further analysis and a fully costed business case before proceeding.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Home from Home – Children’s Commissioning Resident Review



Home from Home
Childrens Commissior

Appendix 2 – Children’s Residential Review Dashboard Summary



Children’s%20Reside
ntial%20Review%20D

This page is intentionally left blank

New Concept Form – Children’s Residential Review (TBC)




Recommendations to TSCP Board:

1. Establish the Children’s Residential Provision Review Project as a corporate project under TCSP as it meets the following criteria:
 - Is considered transformational and above and beyond service improvements
 - Has a start and end date
 - Contributes to one or more of the TCSP outcomes
 - Would move forward within expected timescales with robust project management and oversight from TCSP
2. Resource this project as follows:
 - Contractor in the interim to complete specific works for options appraisal, business case and support the DfE application until either an internal Project Officer or Project Manager become available to support delivery.


First Name	Alison
Surname	Hinds
Job Title	Deputy Director Children’s Social Care
Email Address	Alison.hinds@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone Number	-
Service	Children’s
Project Title	Children’s Residential Review (TBC)
The Idea / Project including where this is originating from	<p>Originating from Children’s Service</p> <p>A review of Residential Care in Wolverhampton has been drafted by the Children’s Commissioning Team and has sought to take an overview of how CWC meets its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places available where Children and Young People in Care need residential placements.</p> <p>This internal review comes at a time of national concern from central government about the provision of residential care. The Children’s Commissioner has expressed concern about the growth of private providers, which led to the children’s social care review chair asking the Competition and Markets Authority to investigate the market for children in care placements. This led to an investigation of how a lack of availability and increasing costs could be leading to the needs of children in care not being met; does profit come at expense of quality in the children’s social care market</p>

	<p>and what impact does this have on our ability to meet the needs of our Children and Young People in Care?</p> <p>Wolverhampton has access to a mixed economy of provision in procuring residential placements including internal provision, the Regional Flexible Contracting Arrangement (FCA) through the West Midlands Placements Portal, block contracts and spot purchase where necessary.</p> <p>A recent data exercise, carried out as part of the review of the effectiveness of the FCA, showed that the largest percentage of placements purchased are framework (52%) with 41% spot, 3% block and 4% internal.</p> <p>The data collected suggests that the big providers see no disadvantage in not being part of the FCA. This taken with the fact that 39% of providers reported that they only use the West Midlands Placements Portal to offer placements with 10% completely off portal, leaving just over 50% accessing the portal occasionally to make offers suggest that we be looking for a different approach to procuring residential placements. This is in contrast with the anecdotal evidence that around 85% of fostering placements are framework based through the portal.</p> <p>During 2020 to 2023, sufficiency will be required to provide suitable placements for children in care in the right place at the right time. The Council will continue to increase internal fostering capacity to ensure majority of children in foster care will be placed with internal foster carers. Generally, dependency on the external market of fostering, children’s home and supported accommodation would continue to reduce.</p> <p>Whilst the dependency on placing children in care with external providers is expected to reduce, placement sufficiency for the following cohorts of children must be considered in the Council’s Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy 2021-2024.</p> <p>Children in Care with complex needs and children in care with complex needs but not health needs will be the main cohorts of children in residential care.</p>
<p>What will this project deliver?</p>	<p>The project will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new restorative practice, multi-agency Children’s Home for children and young people with complex needs (without health needs) as part of the overall priorities set out in the Sufficiency Strategy

<p>Please outline the project aims</p>	<p>To offer suitable, sufficient, and sustainable children’s residential provision that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meets demand 2. Promotes the safety of children and young people offers them the best quality support whilst in a placement and, 3. Most importantly, puts children at the centre of its design and delivery.
<p>What would happen if the project did not commence?</p>	<p>Recommendations from the Children’s Residential commissioning review ‘Home from home’ need to be implemented regardless of whether they are delivered within a project framework or not. This is to ensure that CWC are meeting their statutory duties and that children remain safe and are offered appropriate support in the most financially viable way. If this work did not commence using a project framework, the recommendations would take much longer to implement having only service capacity to drive it forward. This would have a knock-on effect to timescales and the service’s ability to make suitable placements for vulnerable children and young people.</p> <p>Without implementing the commissioning recommendations, the service would be forced to inappropriately place children in non-regulated placements that are not designed to offer them appropriate support for their needs or to continue using more costly out of city placements – out of city placements are also known to have a negative impact on outcomes for children as they are further away from their support/community network and school.</p> <p>Without sufficient residential provision on offer for target cohorts, children will continue to experience multiple placement breakdowns negatively impacting their stability and limiting the opportunities to improve individual outcomes without secure and appropriate residential support.</p>
<p>Please say who will benefit and why – be specific, try and profile your end users and use equalities data where available</p>	<p>The target cohort for this provision will be the main beneficiaries of this project. About that cohort, currently we only have data on age, gender and ethnicity. We do know though that this cohort of children is small in numbers so the challenge during this project will be if data we have or get access to will be meaningful and representative to inform decision making.</p> <p>As part of the project the team will continue to commit to exploring whether any particular profile of CYPiC are disproportionality affected by any changes in provision whilst acknowledging that the individual needs of this cohort of CYP might fall outside of the Equalities Act</p>

	<p>protected characteristics (ie Adverse Childhood Experience, previous placements etc) and this will need to be considered as a priority when designing the operating model for this service. This needs to link to the equalities workplan for children’s services and is reinforced in the review document – ‘residential staff need to have the right qualifications but also their understanding of and empathy with the individual and cultural needs of children (including food, self-care and religious observation)’</p>				
<p>Are you aware of any barriers to delivery?</p>	<p>Financial – the level organisational support financially to ensure the right provision (possible capital and revenue).</p> <p>Operational – is there a skills gap in this area? There is potentially a lack of suitably qualified experienced staff to support children in care with complex need</p> <p>Options on physical location and environment – unsure at this point if there is sufficient choice within council assets or stock available from housing providers to ensure that a suitable residential home can be identified</p>				
<p>What outcome from the Council Plan will this support?</p>  <p>CWC Our Council Plan 2019-2024.pdf</p>	<p>Children and young people get the best possible start in life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for a great start in life • Education that fulfils potential • Strengthening families where children and young people are at risk 				
<p>What primary outcomes from the TCSP Mandate will this support?</p>  <p>TCSP Refresh-Mandate-Oct</p>	<p>Increased number of children remaining in safe and stable homes, particularly those at higher risk</p> <p>Improved opportunities for target CYP cohorts (for example young offenders, care leavers, children with SEND and Looked After Children)</p> <p>Increased resilience and emotional wellbeing amongst children, young people and families</p>				
<p>Please outline <i>how</i> this will support the Council Plan and TCSP outcomes</p>	<p>By taking a robust project approach to address gaps in residential provision with the ultimate aim of protecting the welfare of our most vulnerable children and improving their individual outcomes.</p>				
<p>How will the co-production ladder be considered during the Lifecycle of this project?</p>  <p>Co-production Ladder.docx</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="651 1805 874 1839">Step</th> <th data-bbox="874 1805 1382 1839">How?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="651 1839 874 2007">Co-production</td> <td data-bbox="874 1839 1382 2007">There are huge opportunities within this project to co-produce with children, young people and families. As a service we need to clearly and accurately agree the parameters for</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Step	How?	Co-production	There are huge opportunities within this project to co-produce with children, young people and families. As a service we need to clearly and accurately agree the parameters for
Step	How?				
Co-production	There are huge opportunities within this project to co-produce with children, young people and families. As a service we need to clearly and accurately agree the parameters for				

		this provision then work with service users on what provision could look like and how it will operate within those parameters.
	Co-design	There will also be elements of co-design within this project looking across the market, possibly working with partners and providers on the best possible provision
	Engagement	There will also be element of engagement gathering views and testimony on what has worked and what could have been done better with previous provision
	Consultation	-
	Educating	-
	Informing	-
	Coercion	<i>This should not be an approach used in TCSP projects</i>
Are you aware of any risks to delivery? (Legal, Reputational, Political etc.)		<p>Risk of exit plans for children and young people in the current provision not being executed properly, particularly before any setting improvements are implemented</p> <p>Risk around not meeting statutory duties/corporate parenting responsibilities</p> <p>Risk of continuing to offer placements that do not meet need</p> <p>Risk around poor inspection outcomes for the wider service due to children being in unregulated provision</p> <p>Risk around not having the finance to deliver the recommendations from the commissioning review</p> <p>Risk of not having the right provision to meet future demand</p> <p>There is a risk that we might not recruit staff with the specialist skills required for this type of provision</p>
In your opinion does the idea have a commercial opportunity attached to it? (please seek advice from Commercial Team)		No
If yes, please detail		-
Is there budget available to cover the full duration of the project? Yes/No		Dependent on options appraisal (possible diversion of external placement budget and possible de-commissioning of other similar services into this project)

If yes to the above, please specify if this is capital or revenue funded	Unknown at this point
How much will the project cost?	Unknown at this point
Please state whether funding will be sourced externally or internally	Unknown at this point (to be explored as part of options appraisal) however, the full costs of this project will need to be met by CWC regardless of the delivery model as part of our statutory duty. These costs might be partially mitigated by a funding application to DfE as part of a £19.5 million capital funding programme. CWC is confident it meets the criteria for these funding applications (innovation and residential provision for children with complex needs) but the outcome will not be known until November.
Will this project support MTFS savings (through the delivery of associated benefits) Yes/No	Unknown at this point – financial modelling will need to be part of the project to better understand the cost avoidance and cost saving potential. It is important to note that the main driver is improved outcomes for CYP.
What savings could be made in delivering this project?	Unknown at this point – as above, likely cost savings and avoidance if CWC has more control over the residential placements on offer.
What conversations have taken place with Finance regarding budget/funding?	None at this point
What resources will be required to successfully deliver this project?	Recommended a full time PM. There is no capacity within the current transformation team so a short-term contractor is likely.
Proposed project start date	
Proposed project end date	TBA
Next Steps to progress	Review recommendations considered at children's leadership and further project scoping to be completed. Consideration at TCSP and submission at PAG with a move to options and feasibility gateway.
Additional Information	 July 2021 Residential Review.pdf

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel 2 February 2022
--	--

Report title	Virtual School Head Annual Report 2021	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Beverley Momenabadi Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families	
Originating service	Inclusion and Attendance	
Accountable employee	Darren Martindale Head of Service	
	Tel	01902 556951
	Email	darren.martindale@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Children and Young People in Care Management Team	22 December 2021
	Education and Children's Leadership Team	7 January 2022
	Inclusion and Attendance Management Team	5 January 2022

Recommendation:

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

1. Comment on the draft Virtual School Head Annual Report 2021 prior to receiving Cabinet approval.

Report title	Virtual School Head Annual Report 2021	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Beverley Momenabadi Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All wards	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families	
Originating service	Inclusion and Attendance	
Accountable employee	Darren Martindale Service Manager Tel 01902 556951 Email darren.martindale@wolverhampton.gov.uk	
Report has been considered by	Children and Young People in Care Management Team	22 December 2021
	Education and Children's Leadership Team	7 January 2022
	Inclusion and Attendance Management Team	5 January 2022
	Cabinet Member Education and Skills	18 January 2022
	Cabinet Member Children and Young People	18 January 2022

Recommendation for action:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Virtual School Head Annual Report 2021.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to receive the Virtual School Head Annual Report 2021.

2.0 Background

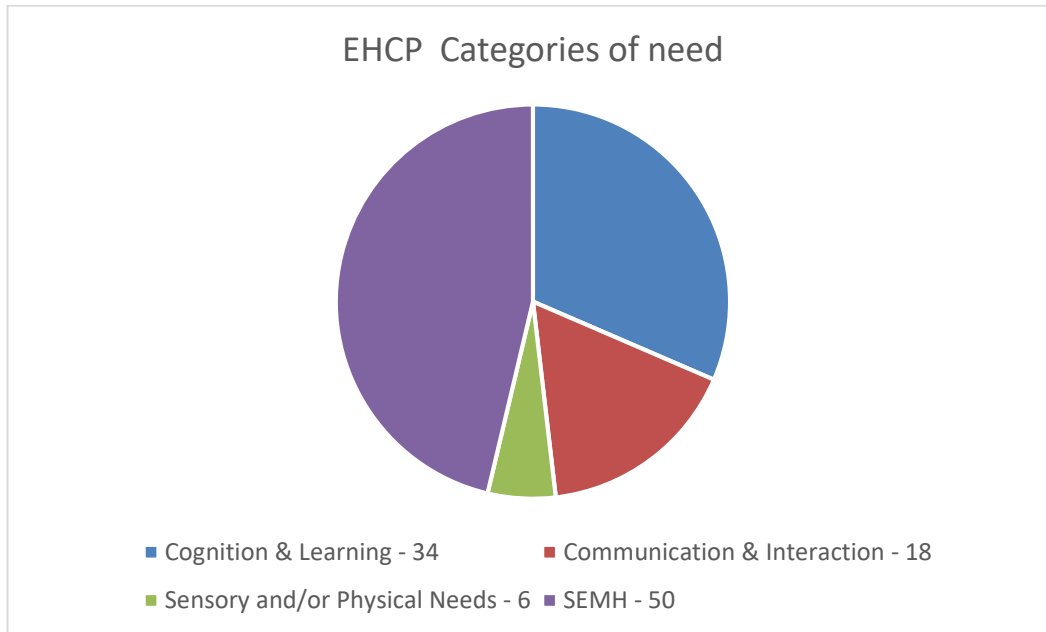
2.1 To inform Corporate Parenting Board of the educational progress and achievements of our Children and Young People in Care, and previously in care, the steps that the local authority has taken to support those achievements, and priorities for future work.

3.0 Cohort Information

3.1 At autumn term 2021:

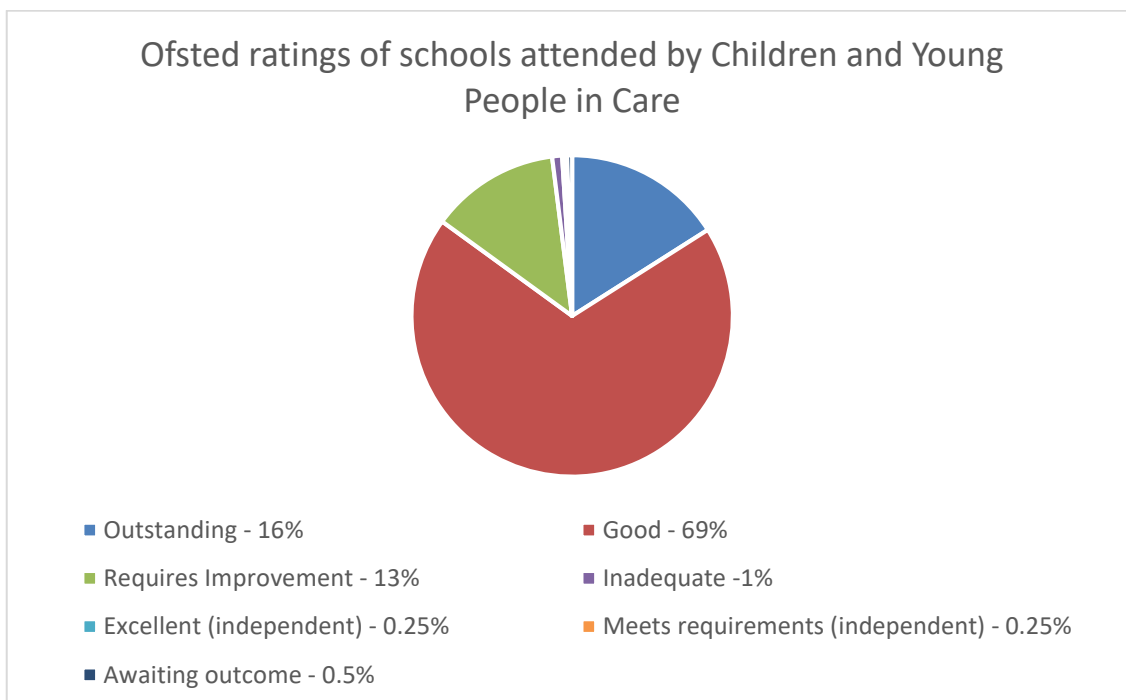
• Total pupils (Reception – Year 11)	394
• Placed in Wolverhampton	199
• Placed out of City	195
• Primary phase	147
• Secondary phase	247
• Attending Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)	10
• Attending Special Schools	66
• Attending other alternative provision	3
• Secure Accommodation	1
• Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)	108
• SEND support	104
• Boys	224
• Girls	170
• Total ethnic groups	14
• Non-White British	38%

3.2 Among the children and young people in care with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulty is by far the most prevalent category of need, accounting for 50% of this cohort (6% higher than 2020). The prevalence of each category of need is outlined in the chart below.



4.0 School Ofsted Ratings

4.1 Statutory guidance states that Children and Young People in Care should attend schools that are rated as either or Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.¹ At November 2019, 85% of children and young people in care attend a school which is rated as good or better by Ofsted, which is a 1% higher than 2019. The ratings are summarised in the chart below:



¹ [Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

5.0 Supporting learning and achievement

5.1 Wolverhampton's Virtual School team are committed to improving educational outcomes for children and young people in care, and previously in care, in accordance with the council's statutory duties in this regard.² We achieve this through a combination of direct, advisory, and strategic work with children, schools, social workers, carers and other partners.

5.2 The team promotes the educational achievement of children and young people in care in a variety of ways. Key areas, in line with statutory guidance, include:

- Regular meetings with Designated Teachers in schools
- Supporting and improving the Personal Educational Planning process
- Tracking attendance, exclusions, attainment, and progress
- Providing direct learning support to pupils
- Providing advice and training, together with robust challenge and support to schools and social care
- Interventions and wider activities to promote learning and raise aspirations

5.3 During the spring term 2021, while schools were partially closed due to the COVID19 pandemic, the virtual school team provided ongoing support both to children and young people in care, as we had during the summer 2020 lockdown period. Attendance was monitored and supported for children who had been identified by their social workers as needing to attend school, and further support provided those who were accessing remote learning at home.

5.4 This support included utilising Pupil Premium+ proactively and flexibly to address any barriers or gaps in learning, maximising attendance at PEP meetings and ensuring that the pupils' voice was included (some children preferred the 'virtual' meeting format conducted via MS Teams), helping to strengthen home-school communication and being a constant source of advice and support for Designated Teachers, as well as advice for carers in how to support education at home.

5.5 Compliments for the support offered by the Virtual School team from schools and other partners in 2020-2021 have included:

- "We all want the best for X and likewise your support and team have been incredible during this time" – Head Teacher of a special school
- "I thought the ARC conference today was excellent" – Head Teacher of a primary school
- I have had a wonderful experience working with X.... I just wanted her to be recognised, for her hard work of going the extra mile to help our young people. In our

² [Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

busy and pressured environment at times we fail to acknowledge one another, and I felt honoured to work with X – social worker.

5.6 In addition, the VSH works closely with the Education, Employment and Training (EET) Co-ordinator, further education settings and other colleagues in Skills and Employability teams to promote the EET of children and young people in care at post-16 and care leavers. The support offered to this cohort includes:

- Designated officers in local colleges and a Virtual School 16+ partnership agreement in place
- Dedicated Connexions Advisor to ensure quality IAG
- Strong support from Young People’s Advisors, working alongside Job Centre Plus Work Coaches
- EET Coordinator and EET Apprentice deliver direct support to CAYPIC/care leavers, new additional EET worker currently being recruited
- Weekly EET drop-in service for young people
- Close links with partnership with Black County Impact, Talent Match & Department of Work and Pensions with designated officers in each service
- Monthly EET panels to agree plans and support for young people who are NEET
- Bespoke work experience opportunities and five ring fenced apprenticeship opportunities
- Partnership working with the Care Leaver Covenant
- For young people in Higher Education (HE) - support with UCAS, personal statements, SFE, offered twice-yearly visits by EET Coordinator and dedicated HE PEP. CWC is a member of the NNECL HE forum Ongoing support while at university and offers post graduate employment support. Wolves at work also offer post-graduation support to our care leavers.

6.0 Raising Aspirations – Aspire2Uni

6.1 Aspire2Uni (A2U) is an innovative partnership project between Wolverhampton University and four ‘virtual schools’ for children and young people in care around the Black Country – Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall and Staffordshire. A2U is a long-term, intensive, progressive programme designed to raise the aspirations and support the achievement of children in care. Research shows that children and young people in care and care leavers do not regard Higher Education (HE) as a natural course and will often be looked after by adults who have little experience of HE themselves, or indeed an understanding of the value of HE or further training.

6.2 Higher education and training be a critical step to enhanced life opportunity, wellbeing, and economic independence. In this context, Aspire2Uni has two underpinning goals:

- To raise aspirations (and increase knowledge)
- To break down barriers, and improve progression, to Higher Education

6.3 The programme supports children at secondary stage and beyond, who reach the expected attainment in core subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 or have the potential to reach that level but perhaps underachieve. It completed its sixth year in 2021. At the end of the 2020-2021 academic year, there were 33 children from Wolverhampton on the programme. 21 of these were at Key Stage 3, 10 were at Key Stage 4 and 2 were in year 12. The VSH provides strategic oversight of the project from Wolverhampton's perspective, while one of the Virtual School Support Officers acts as an operational lead

6.4 There are three elements to the programme:

- a. **Outreach** - a series of university visits and other events, designed to raise aspirations, break down barriers and inform progression to higher education. The COVID19 pandemic has presented challenges in this regard, but a programme of largely 'virtual' or online events have been offered in response to the pandemic.
- b. **Mentoring** - a dedicated mentor is allocated to the young person and works with either once per week or once per fortnight. Group mentoring sessions are also utilised, for example, for some older students who have been accessing A2U mentoring for a long time and are ready to move on to a different form of support. Though mentoring was historically delivered in the home, during the COVID19 pandemic it has been taking place largely via a secure online mentoring platform called Brightside. While online mentoring is helpful for some young people and certain situations, many of the participants benefit from face-to-face mentoring and participation in mentoring and other events has reduced during the pandemic. The A2U team are working hard on returning pupil engagement to the previous high levels, however.

Several mentors have been with the programme since the outset, have graduated the University and are now working as mentors in various schools and organisations. One is employed as an Education Support Officer by Wolverhampton Virtual School.

- c. **Work Experience and Enrichment** - Working with local businesses, arranges high quality, bespoke work placements and group visits to local employers such as Jaguar Land Rover. In addition, the project offers enrichment experiences such as visits to the theatre or outward-bound experiences, to broaden students' horizons and build their confidence.

6.5 The table below illustrates the percentage of A2U participants from Wolverhampton who are at age-related expectation core subjects in each year group. The percentages are high, even given the fact that pupils with SEND usually do not participate in the project.

Cohort	English	Maths	English & Maths
Year 8 at age-related expectation	100%	86%	86%
Year 9 at age-related expectation	57%	71%	43%
Year 10 predicted to achieve a grade 4 or above at GCSE	100%	67%	67%
Year 11 Achieved Grade 4 or above at GCSE	83%	83%	83%
Year 11 achieved Grade 5 or above at GCSE	50%	67%	33%

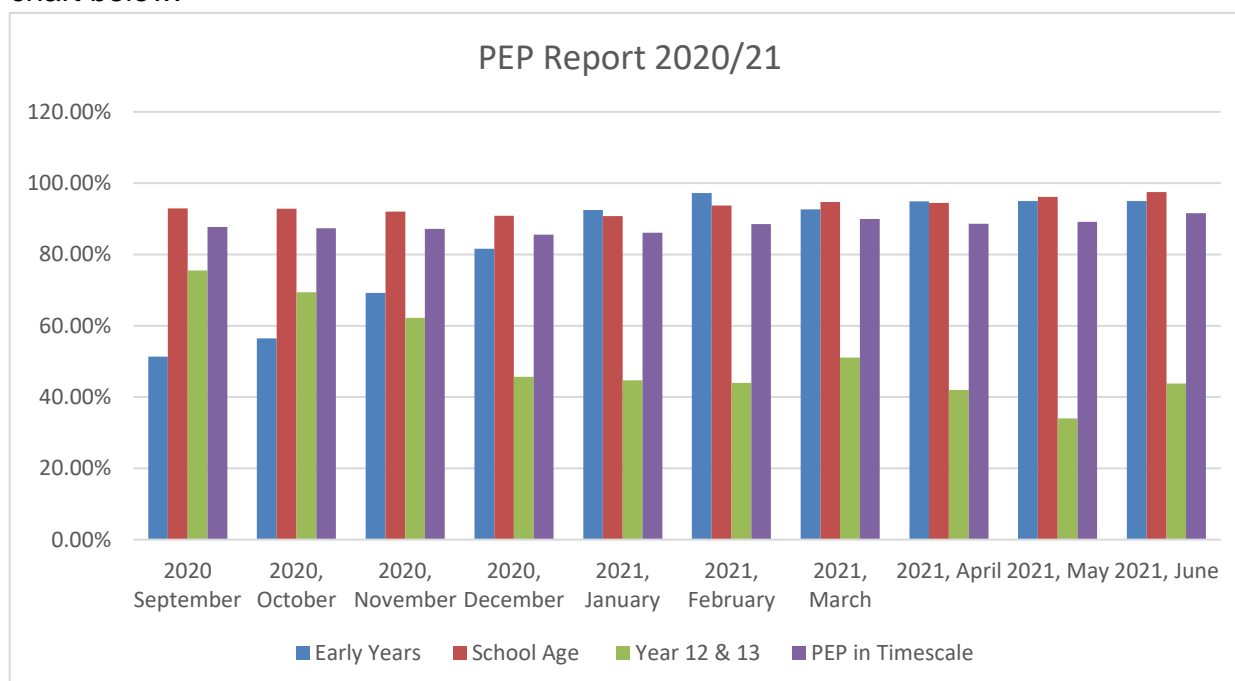
6.6 A2U was nominated for the Children in Care award at the 2021 Children & Young People Now awards, for a submission that was made on behalf of Wolverhampton Virtual School and participants from Wolverhampton.

7.0 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

7.1 It is a statutory requirement of local authorities to ensure that all children and young people in care have a quality, up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP). At the end of June 2021, 92% of the cohort had a PEP completed within statutory timescales. A further breakdown of PEP completion rates revealed:

- 95% of children in early years had an up-to-date PEP
- 98% of school-aged children had an up-to-date PEP
- 44% of young people in care in years 12 and 13 had an up-to-date PEP

7.2 A monthly breakdown of PEP completion rates for all three measures is illustrated in the chart below.



- 7.3 The low completion rate for post-16 PEPs has since been addressed (it was partly due to recording issues on the Eclipse system) and, though it is still lower than for the rest of the cohort, it has increased significantly.
- 7.4 The Virtual School Team complete audits of PEPs on a termly basis, focussing specifically on two key areas: (1) whether the individualised learning targets contained in the PEP are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-related) and (2) whether the Pupil Premium Plus is being effectively utilised for the pupil, as recorded in the PEP.
- 7.5 Of the 235 Personal Education Plan that were audited in the summer term 2021:
- 84% had SMART targets (3% higher than summer 2020)
 - 79% demonstrated appropriate and effective use of Pupil Premium Plus (2% higher than 2020)
- 7.6 The Virtual School team report, anecdotally, that PEP quality has improved since the form has been fully electronic and part of the Eclipse data management system. All important information - for example prior attendance, attainment, and progress data - is included as a mandatory field, helping to ensure that the plan contained a complete and holistic picture of the pupil's educational progress and achievement, strengths and needs. In addition, the team regularly provide information, advice and training to schools and social workers on ensuring good PEP quality.

8.0 Pupil Premium Plus

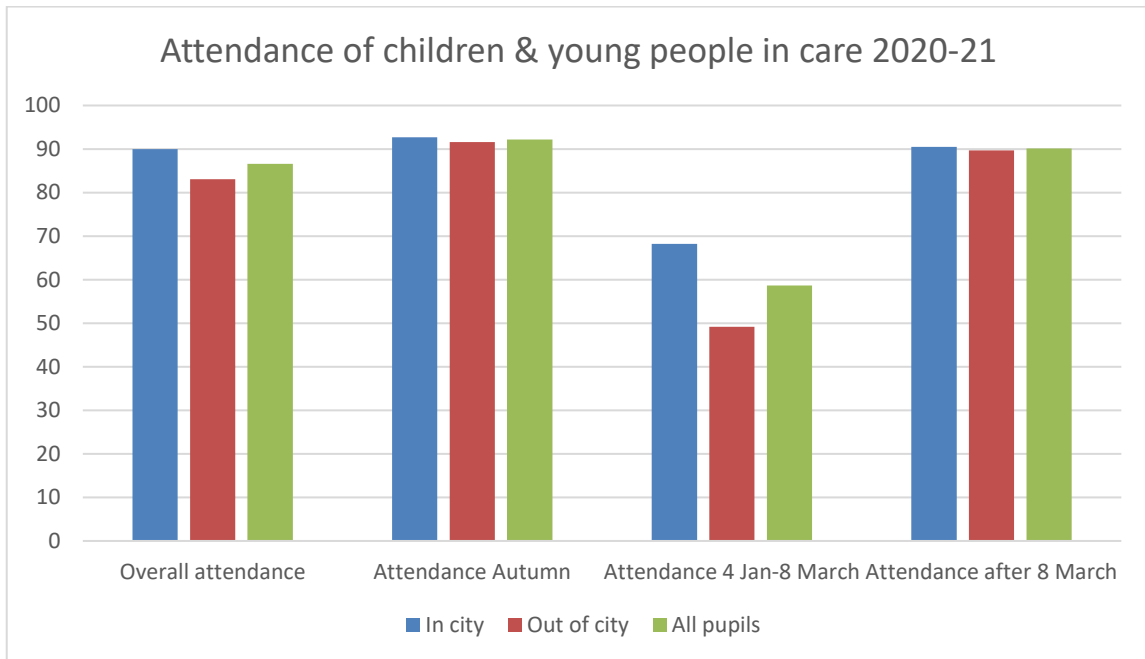
- 8.1 The Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is the main form of financial support for local authorities to promote the education of children in care, in accordance with their statutory duty in this regard (DfE 2014, updated 2018). The PP+ is allocated to local authorities at a rate of £2345 per pupil, per annum, and is managed by the Virtual Head.
- 8.2 Most of the grant is allocated to schools, to support the individualised learning targets of their pupils in care. This is monitored through the PEP process and by the Virtual School Team, in their scrutiny of PEPs and continual work with schools and social workers. £1700 has been allocated to schools for each child and young person in care, in termly instalments, in 2020-2021.
- 8.3 The remainder is utilised on a range of projects, interventions, and resources to target support where it is most needed, and to support the strategic priorities of the Virtual School. These include Aspire2Uni, Beanstalk Volunteer Reading Help, Welfare Call (see 3.7) and continuous professional development for Designated Teachers. The grant also funds the staffing of the Virtual School Team, other than the Virtual School Head's post.
- 8.4 Following changes introduced under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, an additional, smaller grant was allocated to local authorities to support the extension of the VSH's role to provide information and advice around children who have left care via an

adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangements order. £30,000 has been allocated to Wolverhampton for this purpose in 2020-2021. This funding is utilised to support the work of the virtual school generally, including advice and training around the needs of this wider cohort, rather than utilised to fund (for example) a dedicated post. Some PPG-funded resources, such as Britannica School online learning, have been made available to adopters and the take-up of this has been very good.

9.0 Attendance

- 9.1 The Virtual School team monitors the school attendance of all of Wolverhampton's children and young people in care by scrutinising PEPs and half-termly attendance reports and ensure that any emerging attendance issues are addressed without delay by working closely with designated teachers, education welfare officers, social workers, and carers. Attendance monitoring is also supported by daily telephone calls to all out-of-City schools by 'Welfare Call', a service funded by Pupil Premium Plus, which provides regular reports and helps to ensure that children and young people in care who are educated outside Wolverhampton (and are therefore potentially more vulnerable) benefit from even closer monitoring than those in Wolverhampton schools.
- 9.2 The importance of good school attendance is highlighted in training and supervision for carers, and in the relevant council policies. Carers are expected and supported to talk to children about how they feel about school, particularly if they have recently started at a new school, and raise any concerns with school staff, social care and/or the virtual school immediately. Where there are issues, if appropriate, the PEP will be reviewed urgently. An Educational Psychologist (EP), Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and/or other appropriate professionals will be consulted and involved to ensure a robust, multi-disciplinary response.
- 9.3 The small number of children and young people in care on modified timetables are monitored closely by the Virtual School Team, who help to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate offer of full-time education. If a modified timetable or attendance at an alternative education provision becomes necessary for an individual pupil, the team ensure that provision is regularly reviewed and remains appropriate to the child's strengths and needs, with appropriate progression plans in place.
- 9.4 Attendance is generally high for the cohort. However, COVID19 has inevitably had an impact, though children and young people in care and other vulnerable pupils, were closely monitored and supported throughout both partial lockdown periods, either to help them to engage with online learning, or to cope with the changing demands in school. In the cases of the minority of pupils in care who were not attending school during the January-March 'lockdown' period, the decision as to whether attendance should be expected or not was made by social workers in discussions with carers and with support from the Virtual School Team. Further help, advice and resources were offered to teachers, carers and pupils during and after pupils fully returned to school, supporting them with the challenges of transition.

9.5 The chart below illustrates how attendance was affected by COVID19 by showing the overall attendance for the whole of academic year, alongside attendance during the partial closure of school between January and March 2021, and attendance levels before and after that period. Attendance was slightly higher for pupils in Wolverhampton schools than for the out-of-City cohort, which reflects the generally higher levels of vulnerability of the latter cohort and therefore the greater likelihood of them needing to self-isolate for certain periods. Attendance dropped slightly after 8 March, though it improved throughout the spring and summer and remained high for most pupils.



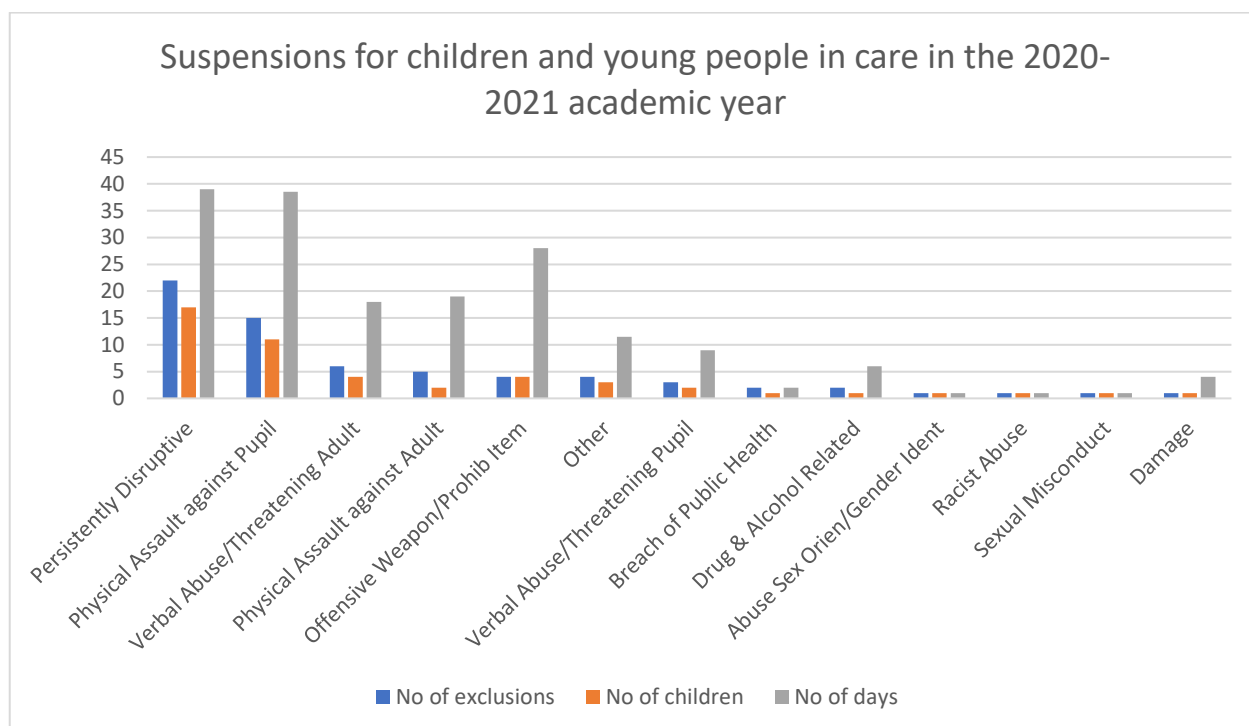
9.6 An analysis of persistent absence (pupils with less than 90% attendance) shows that this became higher after schools reopened on 8 March, however, as highlighted by the table below which compares persistent absence between those two periods.

Cohort	Autumn term 2020	8 March 2020 – end of term 2021
In City	13%	19%
OOC	14%	24%
All pupils	13%	22%

9.7 This is an unacceptable level of persistent absence, though it has undoubtedly been affected by challenges related to COVID19. The Virtual School team are ensuring a particularly keen focus on attendance and persistent absence in 2021-2022, and continue to support pupils, schools, social workers, and carers to promote good school attendance while ensuring that vulnerable pupils and carers are kept safe.

10. Inclusion

- 10.1 There were no permanent exclusions for Wolverhampton children and young people in care in 2020-21. Permanent exclusions are extremely rare for Wolverhampton children and young people in care – one in 2019-2020, none in 2018-2019, one in 2017-2018, two in 2016-2017 and one in 2015-2016. This is a notable outcome (statistically, children in care are far more likely to be excluded than their peers) which reflects the concentrated work of the Virtual School in conjunction with schools, social care, and other key partners, in preventing exclusions, promoting inclusive practice, and ensuring that the right support is in place for children and young people in care.
- 10.2 A total of 67 suspensions (previously known as fixed term exclusions) were issued to Wolverhampton children and young people in care in 2019-2020. 36 of these were in Wolverhampton schools and 31 in schools outside of Wolverhampton. 49 pupils received one or more suspensions. Out-of-City pupils lost more days due to suspensions, however, so had longer periods of suspension on average - 102 days were lost due to suspension for out-of-City pupils, compared to 76 days for pupils in Wolverhampton schools.
- 10.3 The overall figure of 67 suspensions is 13 more than in 2019-2020, but 2019-2020 figures were affected by the partial closure of schools during the summer term and the limited low numbers of pupils in care who were attending during that period. It also maintains the significant reduction of suspensions compared to previous years (there were 163 suspensions in 2018-2019, for example).
- 10.4 The table below summarises the reasons for suspensions. Persistent disruptive behaviour is the most common reason, in line with all pupils, though it closely followed by physical assault against a pupil. The latter has increased, as a percentage of suspensions, which could indicate increasing difficulties around children's mental health and wellbeing and challenges related to COVID19. While it has been reported and understood by colleagues within Wolverhampton schools, social care and the Virtual School team, that many of our children and young people in care benefitted from the 'lockdown' periods, giving them more time to cement relationships with carers and spend time as part of a family, this will remain an area of increased focus in our work with young people, designated teachers, carers and social care.



11. School Transition and Stability

- 11.1 Research shows that children and young people in care who changed school in Years 10 or 11 scored over five grades less than those who did not.³ The Virtual School works closely with social workers, schools, and carers to maintain existing school placements, wherever possible and appropriate. If a change of school is the best option, then the team helps to support a successful transition for those pupils through joined-up working with schools and other key partners.
- 11.2 Social workers should consult the Virtual School Head prior to any change of school for a pupil in care, so that advice can be given as to the suitability of any potential school placement. This requirement is highlighted in PEP training, as well as in Wolverhampton’s Education Policy for Children and Young People in Care and our Model School Policy, which is in the process of being updated to incorporate the recent extension to the VSH role to include all children with a social worker⁴. The team provide support for children and young people in care if they do have to move schools, ensuring a successful transition through 1:1 support, in-class support and close partnership working with all key agencies.

³ http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenKeyMessages_Nov2015.pdf

⁴ [Virtual school head role extension to children with a social worker - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

11.3 The transition from primary to secondary school, for example, can be particularly challenging for many children and young people in care. The Virtual School team ensure that all are supported with a successful transition through meetings with year 6 pupils and their teachers, and follow-up meetings in their new secondary school before and after secondary induction sessions. We also help to ensure that children are given their preferred choice of secondary school and offer advice on the most appropriate schools choice. Out-of-City pupils are given additional information and advice by a dedicated Education Support Officer.

12. GCSE Attainment

12.1 The following outcomes relate to young people that the Department for Education class as 'eligible', i.e., they had been in care for 12 months or more at 31 March 2021. 2020 and 2019 outcomes are also included for comparison

12.2 The table below outlines the percentage of pupils in this cohort who achieved grade 4 and above in core subjects at GCSE in 2021.

Cohort (number)	English	Maths	Eng & maths	Eng & maths 2020	Eng & maths 2019
In-City (17)	35%	35%	29%	29%	6%
Out of City (37)	32%	35%	30%	20%	22%
All pupils (54)	35%	35%	30%	25%	16%

12.3 The table below outlines the percentage of pupils in this cohort who achieved grade 5 and above in core subjects at GCSE in 2021.

Cohort (number)	English	Maths	Eng & maths	Eng & maths 2020	Eng & maths 2019
In-City (17)	18%	35%	18%	17%	6%
Out of City (37)	27%	22%	16%	0%	22%
All pupils (54)	24%	26%	17%	9%	16%

12.4 Achievement at GCSE for our children and young people in care has risen significantly in recent years. The 2021 figure of 30% achieving grade four and above is the highest that Wolverhampton has achieved since 2014 for Wolverhampton in 2014. The percentage of pupils achieving grade 5 has also risen in 2021 and is higher than the percentage that achieved grade four in 2019.

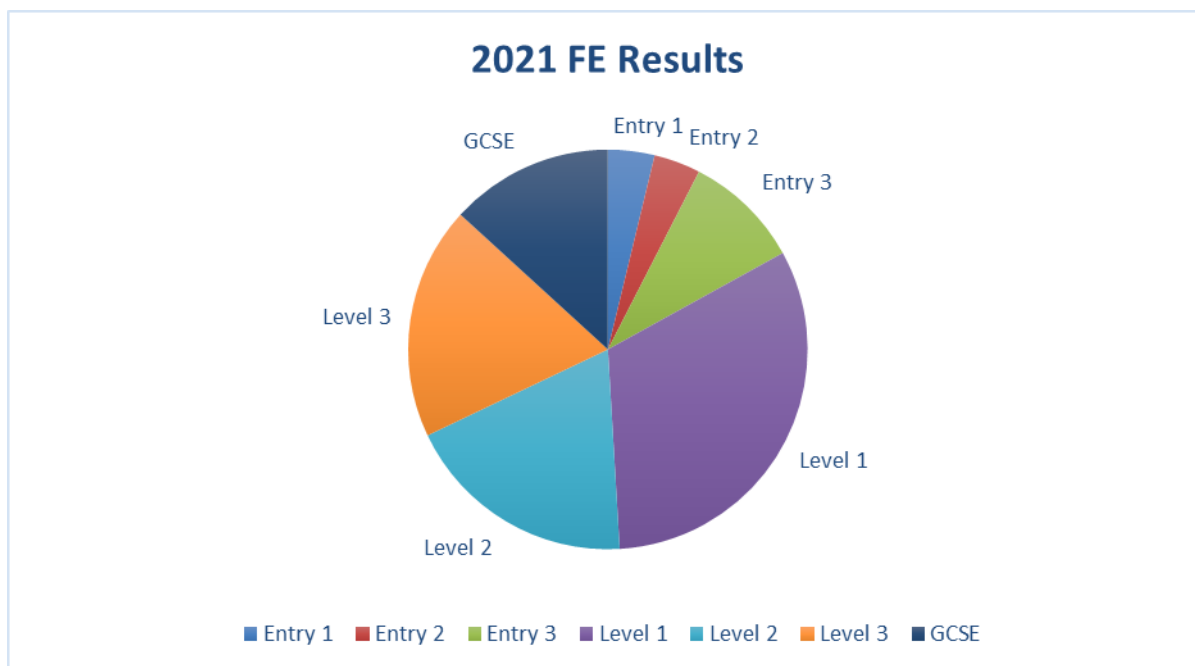
12.5 It is likely that improved outcomes in 2021 and 2020 have been supported by schools adopting more flexible approaches to assessment, as a response to pupils missing schooling due to the COVID19 pandemic. The strong and consistent support that pupils received before, during and after the partial closure of schools in 2020 and 2021, however, is also likely to have contributed to improved results.

12.6 It is also notable that 74% of the cohort had an identified special educational need. 41% had an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) while 33% were at SEN support level -

higher than average for children and young people in care. 20% attended special schools.

13. Post-16 Achievement

- 13.1 98% of children and young people in care in year 11 progressed into education, employment and training (EET) in autumn 2021; our highest ever percentage for year 11 progression.
- 13.2 Of the 85 young people in year 12 and 13 in 2021, 40 achieved one or more qualifications, 20 progressed on to the next year/level of study and two failed their courses. Of the remaining 23 young people, 16 were not in education, employment or training (NEET), one was not available to the labour market (NALM) and six were employed.
- 13.3 Between the 40 young people who were in further education (FE) and achieved one or more qualifications:
- Nine achieved entry level qualifications
 - 16 achieved Level One qualifications
 - Eight achieved Level Two qualifications
 - Seven achieved Level Three qualifications ('A' level or equivalent)
 - Seven achieved GCSEs
 - Seven started a university course
- 13.4 The type and level of qualifications achieved is illustrated in the chart below.



- 13.5 It is noticeable, however, that female students achieved a significantly higher percentage of Level Three qualifications – 33%, compared to 9% of male students – while 63% of male students achieved Level One and Two (GCSE equivalent) compared to 33% of females. A higher percentage of male students also achieve Level One and Two (the lowest level of qualification), though similar proportions achieved entry Three level certification. Girls tend to achieve somewhat higher than boys at statutory school age, as a percentage of children and young people in care. The above data represents a continuation and widening of that imbalance, however. This will be an area of focus for the Virtual School Head and colleagues in social care and further education providers in 2021-2022 and beyond.
- 13.6 Wolverhampton’s care leavers continue to achieve well in **higher education (HE)**. Three young people achieved degree-level qualifications in 2021. Two of these graduated with first class honours and one achieved an alternative level 5 qualification.
- 13.7 Wolverhampton currently have 31 care leavers in higher education. As a percentage of the cohort, this is well above the generally accepted national average of 6%.

14. Participation

- 14.1 Wolverhampton has a very strong and well-established Children in Care Council (CiCC) which benefits from close links with the Youth Council, and with elected members via the Corporate Parenting Board. The CiCC is actively involved in Participation at a regional and national level, enabling our children and young people in care to act as a real force for change and the improvement of services. This report is shared and discussed with the CiCC as well as with Corporate Parenting Board.
- 14.2 Work has been ongoing to strengthen young people’s contribution their PEPs, to ensure the plan is properly informed by their views and is meaningful to them. During the partial

closure of schools, many PEP meetings were held online via Microsoft Teams and it was felt that this enabled a fuller contribution from some young people who enjoyed the online format more than face-to-face meetings in school. Other tools, such as more child-friendly versions of the section of the PEP form which captures the young person's contribution, tailored to different ages and ability levels, have also been trialled with some success. As a result, Designated Teachers are advised on a range of flexible approaches to completing PEPs, in order to maximise pupils' engagement.

15. Strategic and Advisory Development

- 15.1 The Virtual School Head's role includes strengthening the awareness of key professionals around the needs of children and young people in care, building strong working partnerships and developing policy and procedure in this area. This involves a combination of advisory and strategic work with a range of agencies.
- 15.2 In 2020-2021, the following training sessions were delivered by the Virtual School Team:
- Two sessions on the early years PEP for social workers
 - Three sessions on the post-16 electronic PEP for social workers
 - Two session on supporting education for carers
 - One training event on the role of the Designated Teacher
 - Three termly Designated Teacher forum meetings
 - Two sessions on attachment / trauma for Designated Teachers
 - Funded places for Designated Teachers on the Attachment Research Community (ARC) annual conference, and membership of ARC
- 15.3 The Virtual School team also provide information and advice in relation to supporting the education of children and young people who have left care via an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order receive additional support with their education, as set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This duty is covered in Designated Teachers training and further training is made available to schools. The Virtual School team regularly respond to requests for advice and information regarding the education of children previously in care, from schools, adoptive parents / special guardians and social care, particularly with regard to the use of the Pupil Premium Plus for this cohort.
- 15.4 A Virtual School Stakeholder Group was initiated in the summer term 2021, chaired by the VSH and involving representatives from schools and key local authority partners. The group helps to provide scrutiny and oversight of the virtual school's activities, including those of its key partners and stakeholders, and to develop and drive forward the virtual school's attainment improvement plan and strategic priorities.
- 15.5 The Virtual School team have continued to promote effective joined-up working between teams and partners services that support the education of vulnerable children. The VSH's wider role as a service manager for vulnerable learners, including attendance, EHE and elective home education (EHE), has continued to help facilitate better collaborative working and the appropriate sharing of information. School exclusions for all pupils have

continued to fall, while the engagement of electively home educating parents has improved to over 90% engagement, despite significant rises in EHE numbers after the first 'lockdown' due to COVID19.

- 15.6 In June 2020 the DfE announced funding and published non-statutory guidance to extend the role of the Virtual School Head to all children with a social worker or who have ever had a social worker, so that more vulnerable children in every local authority can benefit from the support and leadership of a VSH.⁵ This extended role, incorporating children on children in need and child protection plans, includes enhancing partnerships between social care and education settings, highlighting the barriers that young people in this cohort can face, and providing advice on effective, evidence-based approaches to narrowing the achievement gap. Work is underway in response to this new duty, including the recruitment of a new Inclusion and Attendance Manager which will enable the Virtual Head to focus purely on virtual school activities and properly incorporate this wider responsibility, and a dedicated School Improvement Officer.

16. Conclusion

- 16.1 2021 has been another unusual and challenging year for all. The Virtual School Team, alongside schools and other partners, has worked very hard to support our children and young people in care, despite the additional challenges that have been presented by the COVID19 pandemic, helping to find new ways to engage with young people and ensure continuity of support.
- 16.2 Once again, there is much to celebrate regarding the educational achievement of the children in our care. A very small percentage of Children and Young People in Care are attending schools which are rated as requiring improvement or inadequate by Ofsted. Temporary exclusions continue to decrease and there were no permanent exclusions for pupils in care in 2020-2021. Attainment has improved significantly at Key Stage 4 for the third year running, with our best-ever GCSE results, and notable successes at post-16 including a high number of care leavers attending and achieving at university. Personal educational planning is generally strong, with the introduction of the Eclipse electronic PEP continuing to support improving quality. Our schools and other partners have a good understanding of their corporate parenting responsibilities. The positive impact of the Virtual School Team's interventions on educational stability, as well as so-called 'soft outcomes', such as children's confidence, self-esteem and attitude to learning, is also reflected in positive feedback from schools, carers and social care.
- 16.3 At the same time, however, there are always areas for development. There are issues around school attendance for some pupils, though this is a minority and COVID-19 has clearly presented additional challenges in this area despite the strong support provided. PEP quality, though good overall, could still improve further and completion rates of post-16 PEPs still needs to be improved. It has not been possible to report on attainment and progress at early years and primary phase in 2020, or on attainment 8 / progress 8, and

⁵ [Virtual school head role extension to children with a social worker - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

these areas will be prioritised going forward. The Virtual Head is becoming more actively involved with the regional network and National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH), but there is still a need to develop this further to ensure that Wolverhampton stays abreast of new developments and research, as we continue to strive to improve the life chances of children and young people in care and previously in care.

17. Financial implications

- 17.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
[TS/04012022/U].

18. Legal implications

- 18.1 The Local Authority's statutory responsibilities are set out in the body of the report.
- 18.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.
[TC/21122021/D]

19. Equalities implications

- 19.1 An equalities analysis will be undertaken if required, in partnership with the Equalities and Diversities Team. As the work that underpins this strategy is to overcome any inequality, the analysis is aspirational and will need to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the work undertaken.

20. All other Implications

- 20.1 There are no other implications, including health & wellbeing or COVID-19 implications.

This page is intentionally left blank

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

2 February 2022

Report title	Annual Report on Schools' Education Performance	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Dr Mike Hardacre Education, Skills and Work	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families	
Originating service	Education Excellence	
Accountable employee(s)	Phil Leivers	Head of Education Excellence
	Tel	01902 552538
	Email	Phil.Leivers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Team	13 January 2022
	Cabinet Member Briefing (CYPF)	18 January 2022

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

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

1. Review and comment upon the performance of schools and academies during the academic year 2020-2021.
2. Review and comment on the support provided to schools by the Education Excellence service

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a summary of school performance during the academic year 2020-2021 and outline the support provided by the Education Excellence service.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The performance of schools during 2020-21 has to be seen against the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the measures applied. Schools opened fully in September 2020 and remained open for the term against a background of increasing Covid cases. From January 2021 schools were only open to children of key workers and those considered vulnerable. The majority of students were educated at home accessing remote learning. Schools reopened fully in March 2021 and remained open until the end of the Summer term.
- 2.2 The Department for Education suspended all public examinations and assessments for the academic year, replacing GCSE and A level examinations with teacher assessed grades.
- 2.3 Ofsted suspended its regular cycle of inspections for the year, replacing them with monitoring inspections of remote learning and provision for student welfare. Safeguarding inspections were maintained if needed because of any concerns raised.

3.0 School Performance

3.1 Primary Performance Data

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department for Education has cancelled the 2019/20, 2020/2021 national curriculum assessments and associated data collections. There have been no published primary school performance tables.

3.2 Secondary Performance Data

Key Stage 4

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Summer exam series was cancelled in both 2020 and 2021, and alternative processes were set up to award grades. In both 2019/20 and 2020/21 attainment shows increases compared to 2018/19, higher than would be expected in a typical year. This likely reflects the changes to the way GCSE grades were awarded rather than improvements in student performance. This means the 2019/20 and 2020/21 data should not be directly compared to attainment data from previous years for the purposes of measuring change in student performance. No individual school test or exam data has been published for 2020 and 2021.

3.21 Average Attainment 8 score per pupil

	Average Attainment 8 Score per pupil		Difference
	2020	2021	
England	48.00	48.90	0.9
Wolverhampton	49.20	50.00	0.8
West Midlands Average	49.00	49.50	0.5

In 2020/2021 the Attainment 8 score per pupil is 50.0 which is above both regional and national and ranks the city 87 nationally.

Girls performed well with an Attainment 8 Average Point Score (APS) of 53.8 compared to 46.3 for boys.

Pupils receiving SEN Support had a score per pupil of 37.2 which is above the national of 36.7 and above the regional of 35.9 and ranks the City 57th nationally. Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have an average score of 11.7.

Disadvantaged pupils had a score of 42.2 which is above both national and regional for this group of pupils. This ranks the City 36th nationally in quartile band A.

Attainment 8 is a way of measuring how well children do in key stage 4.

The 8 subjects which make up Attainment 8 include English and maths. Out of the remaining 6 subjects:

- 3 must come from qualifications that count towards the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), like sciences, language and history
- 3 qualifications can be either GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or technical awards.

3.22 Percentage of pupils achieving 9-5 pass in English and Maths

	% of Pupils with 9 - 5 pass in both English and Maths		Difference
	2020	2021	
England	46.3	48.4	2.1
Wolverhampton	44.5	47.3	2.8
West Midlands Average	46.7	48.7	2.0

In 2020/2021 the proportion of pupils in the city achieving a strong (Grades 9-5) pass in English and Maths is 47.3% which is below the national and regional measure and ranks Wolverhampton 115 nationally. 53% of girls achieved this measure compared to 42% of boys.

3.23 English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

The EBacc is a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers. The EBacc is:

- English language and literature
- maths
- the sciences
- geography or history
- a language

	% of pupils entering the EBacc	
	2020	2021
England	36.4	35.6
Wolverhampton	34.0	29.5
West Midlands Average	37.6	35.7

In 2020/2021 the % of pupils entering the EBacc is 29.5 and ranks the City 122nd nationally.

	Average EBacc APS score per pupil		Difference
	2020	2021	
England	4.17	4.24	0.1
Wolverhampton	4.13	4.16	0.0
West Midlands Average	4.23	4.27	0.0

In 2020/2021 the average EBacc APS score per pupil is 4.16 and ranks the City 113th nationally.

3.3 Key Stage 5

	A Level APS per Entry		
	2020	2021	Difference
England - All state funded students	38.42	40.40	2.0
England - All students	39.51	41.60	2.1
Wolverhampton	35.78	38.48	2.7
West Midlands	37.27	39.41	2.1

The APS per A level entry has increased this year to 38.48 and is below the national and regional figure and ranks Wolverhampton 122nd nationally.

This report is PUBLIC
NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

	Tech level APS per Entry		
	2020	2021	Difference
England - All state funded students	29.76	31.74	2.0
England - All students	29.77	31.76	2.0
Wolverhampton	27.55	31.57	4.0
West Midlands	29.89	31.70	1.8

The APS per Technical level entry has increased this year to 31.57 and is only marginally below the national and regional figure. This ranks the City 73rd nationally.

	Applied general APS per Entry		
	2020	2021	Difference
England - All state funded students	31.21	32.76	1.5
England - All students	31.25	32.82	1.6
Wolverhampton	34.96	33.40	-1.6
West Midlands	32.41	33.44	1.0

The APS per entry for Applied general is 33.40 this year and is in line with the regional average and above national. This ranks Wolverhampton 61st nationally.

	% achieving grades AAB or better at A level at least 2 facilitating subjects		
	2020	2021	Difference
England - All state funded students	21.19	25.35	4.2
England - All students	24.20	28.60	4.4
Wolverhampton	19.50	25.80	6.3
West Midlands	20.30	24.70	4.4

This measure has increased in 2021 to 25.80% placing the City above both regional and national measures. This ranks Wolverhampton 59th nationally.

Further investigation is needed, in collaboration with the Skills Team in the Regeneration Directorate, to explore the destinations of A Level students and relate to the Wolves at Work 18-24 initiative.

3.4 Ofsted Judgements

Currently 87% of schools in Wolverhampton were judged by Ofsted to be Good or better. This indicates a 17% increase since 2014, putting Wolverhampton schools above the West Midlands average of 84% and in line with national. This is an excellent position for schools within the authority and shows that most of our pupils are receiving a good education daily. A summary of Ofsted judgements of Wolverhampton schools is shown in the table below.

Overall Ofsted Judgement as at January 2022

109 schools currently with an Ofsted Judgement	Jan 2022
2 Schools judged to be Inadequate *	2%
12 Schools judged to be Require Improvement	11%
77 Schools judged Good	71%
18 Schools judged Outstanding	17%
95 Schools Judged Good or Outstanding	87%

*The 2 schools that are judged Inadequate have now closed as they have joined a multi academy trust and have not yet been inspected since their conversion.

Overall Ofsted Judgement as at end of November 2021

109 schools currently with an Ofsted Judgement	30 Nov 2021
3 Schools judged to be Inadequate	3%
12 Schools judged to be Require Improvement	11%
76 Schools judged Good	70%
18 Schools judged Outstanding	17%
94 Schools Judged Good or Outstanding	86%

Out of the 12 schools deemed to Require Improvement, four were judged Good for the effectiveness of their leadership and management and one was judged Good for their early years' provision.

Overall Ofsted Judgements by school type	30 Nov 2021
Nursery Schools judged either Good or Outstanding	100%
PRUs Schools judged either Good or Outstanding	100%
Special Schools judged either Good or Outstanding	75%
Primary, Infant & Junior Schools judged either Good or Outstanding	90%
Secondary Schools judged either Good or Outstanding	70%
All types judged either Good or Outstanding	87%

Source: Ofsted Management information report

3.5 Local Primary performance

Local data from schools engaging with support on assessing learning gaps has suggested that, as with the picture nationally, children (because of Covid 19 and lockdowns) have fallen further back in mathematics than reading. On an average based on the Wolverhampton assessment, children are three months further behind in mathematics than reading. With regard to reading, based on a KS2 SATS paper a significant proportion of schools did in June 2021, end of KS2 results in reading were similar (if in fact slightly better) than results in the last KS2 assessment for 2019. Reading for younger children has though fallen back.

3.6 The strategies Wolverhampton has used to support schools include:

- 3.61 Local assessment (base, mid and endline of all primary year groups) to enable schools to accurately identify gaps in learning for all year groups and progress against those gaps (no other local authority in the West Midlands, from our local intelligence, provided this).
- 3.62 Central and bespoke Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions in settings to support the teaching of these gaps; in particular, the use of pre-teach and overlearn strategies and the development with schools of a more efficient curriculum to enable schools to focus more effectively on areas where there were gaps in learning.
- 3.63 Targeted support to vulnerable schools which data was showing there was a greater loss in learning.

3.7 Education Excellence Strategy 2021-2024

A revision of the School Improvement Strategy was undertaken during 2020-21 working with schools and settings collaboratively to produce the Education Excellence Strategy which was launched September 2021.

The aim of the Strategy was to maintain and build upon the effective working relationships with schools and 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. This was achieved by implementing a robust and effective challenge and support programme to all schools and settings across the City, through a staged and differentiated approach based upon each setting's individual position with a view to hold them fully to account for education improvement and inclusion.

CYPF Scrutiny Panel endorsed this Strategy June 2021.

Since September 2021 all maintained schools have had an Autumn Conversation with the School Improvement team to review previous performance and identify improvement targets for this academic year. Highlights from these conversations include:

- Schools and leaders have been working on curriculum development to ensure 'intent, implementation and impact' references are suitably understood by all and embedded

- Schools are reviewing and modifying their offer, taking into account pupils' needs and how Covid-19 has impacted upon attainment and progress
- Many schools are understanding of the progression model and the need to make explicit a knowledge rich curriculum which is built upon over time, which is applicable to all subjects and is mapped from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) right through to sixth form
- Provision in early reading has high status across all settings, including secondary where necessary, and basic skills in maths are also prioritised
- Subject leadership remains a focus for many schools, including the return of quality assurance activity to determine if the intent is being implemented and to inform school improvement activity
- Provision for SEND and Pupil Premium remains a high priority and on-going support and activity from the Local Authority is enabling pupils' needs to be more readily met
- The use of additional monies is being strategically used to enable pupils to catch up and keep up
- Equalities is more routinely referenced (following a focus for the Core Visit in Summer 2021) resulting in a significant shift in leaders' thinking, ensuring resources and curriculum activity reflects the diversity of their unique school community; this had also led to improvements in 'cultural capital'
- Some pupils have needed additional support to settle and return to working with larger groups, and leaders have been swift to allocate support
- Attendance is improving and returning to typical levels, where this is not the case, there is a tenacity to improve
- PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) is in place with evidence of consultation with parents, although responses have been low; some are repeating this now school activity has returned to more typical levels
- Schools are aware of latest Ofsted sexual harassment / sexual violence report from July 2021 and routinely report instances through local safeguarding channels. Leaders are making explicit what is and isn't acceptable, so instigating a 'reset' and preparing pupils for everyday life
- EYFS adaptations to meet the new requirements are progressing well
- Subject leadership development is extensive, shown through input from across the Education Excellence team

- Governors demonstrate a proactivity and are developing their knowledge of the inspection framework through training and activity with leaders in school
- Recruitment of governors remains a challenge, but schools make use of support from the Governance Co-ordinator
- SEND provision has an increasingly high status, shown through the uptake of support offered through the LA SENCo induction activity, peer reviews, networks and through SEND provision being routinely referenced in our work with schools, but there is still more to do.

3.8 Support for Early Years

During 2020 -2021 support was given to the 25 schools who chose to partake as an Early Adopter new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework. This supported EYFS leaders in the implementation of the new framework to ensure high quality teaching and learning and assessment. As a consequence, there was increased collaboration with EYFS leaders across the city to consistently implement the new framework.

A significant proportion of Early Adopter schools have reduced workload in terms of assessment and are ensuring purposeful evidence gathering, allowing more time to support children's needs through a variety of different methods, including co-play.

Participating schools are aware of the need to support children's play through an enabling environment and a balanced approach to child-led and adult-led learning opportunities.

Many Early Adopter schools are working to devise personalised curriculum plans that are relatable and relevant to the individual school's cultural capital and identified needs.

The feedback from the Early Adopter schools has been shared with all Early Years provisions and on-going support is being provided this year to ensure the smooth introduction of the revised EYFS framework.

3.9 Support for Inclusion

To support the Culture of Belonging programme Education Excellence has developed Whole School SEND Reviews in 2020 -21. This was to work with NASEN in introducing SEND Reviews across mainstream schools in Wolverhampton. This is an offer for all schools in staged phases, including maintained, academies, free schools and independent.

Training was received from the West Midlands NASEN (National Association for Special Educational Needs) Team in March 2021 for potential reviewers, including School Improvement Advisors, special and mainstream school headteachers. The programme has been split into various phases. Following the planning phase, 13 schools took part in Phase 1 which included volunteer schools and those who received a grade 3 or 4 in their last OFSTED. Phase 2 is begun in the Autumn 2021 term, targeting schools in the imminent OFSTED window and schools with resource bases.

Phase 1 has provided an overview of strengths, areas of development, patterns and themes across our mainstream schools and provision for SEND. These have been shared across LA departments, including Inclusion and Empowerment (specialist teachers, Education Psychologists etc). The findings and on-going reviews have shaped training offers to schools, including headteacher, governor and SENCOs. Reviewed schools have individual reports following the review, which feeds into their overall school development plan. A follow up is taking place 12 months after the individual review. Engagement from schools is high with additional schools outside of the named planned phases, requesting reviews from the local authority.

4.0 Priorities for Education Excellence Service 2021-2022

- 4.1 working with schools and academies across the city ensuring more children achieve national expectations across all phases of education, therefore advancing equality of opportunity.
- 4.2 working with schools, academies and PVI's across the city increasing the proportion of children attending Good or Outstanding educational provision.
- 4.3 working with schools and academies across the city to close gaps which exist for children in vulnerable groups, therefore advancing equality of opportunity.
- 4.4 working with schools and academies across the city to improve the performance of SEND pupils in mainstream and special schools advancing equality of opportunity promoting higher attainment.
- 4.5 ensuring effective oversight of governance, including appointment of governors, auditing of provision and, support for senior school staff recruitment.
- 4.6 delivering a CPD offer which is high quality and appropriate in relation to: Assessment and moderation, English, and maths provision, Early Career Teachers (ECTs), Governors and Early Year providers.
- 4.7 promoting Early Years quality and sufficiency of provision to increase take up for 2 year olds, improving Ofsted outcomes in Early Year settings to at least national averages ensuring school readiness.

5.0 Reasons for Decision

- 5.1 Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel are asked to note the continuing improvement in school and setting performance and endorse the Education Excellence approach to further support and challenge.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The DfE published in January 2022 *Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded*. This will remove the grant over the course of Financial Year 2022-

23, and (2) include provision in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations for Financial Year 2022-23 which would allow councils to de-delegate for all school improvement expenditure, including all core school improvement activities, from maintained schools' budget shares. The grant will be ended with effect from the start of Financial Year 2023-24, phased so that it would be reduced to 50% of the current amount on a per school basis in Financial Year 2022-23 to give councils and maintained schools time to adjust to these new arrangements. To ensure that councils remain adequately funded to exercise their statutory intervention powers councils have the power in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations to fund all school improvement activities, including core school improvement activities, via de-delegation of funds from maintained schools' budget shares, with the agreement of their local Schools' Forum or the Secretary of State.

6.2 The implication for Wolverhampton Council is that the amount of the Grant will reduce by approximately £0.08 million in 2022-2023 and then by a full reduction of approximately £0.16 million in 2023-2024.

6.3 In order to continue the services to schools currently funded by the Grant, the Council would need to raise an additional £0.08 million in 2022-2023 by raising the de-delegation amount by 68% from £9.28 to £15.56 per pupil and then by a similar percentage increase in 2023-2024 to cover the cost.

Finance code [TS/14012022/K]

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. (TC/12012022A)

8 Equalities implications

8.1 The performance of groups of pupils identified with protected characteristics is routinely monitored at termly school improvement adviser meetings with school leaders.

9 Appendices

Education Excellence Strategy 2021-24

This page is intentionally left blank

Education Excellence Strategy (EES) 2021-2024



Page 95

Contents

Foreword	3
The City of Wolverhampton, Pride Values	4
Introduction	5
Statutory Context	6
Shared Principles	7
City of Wolverhampton Council's judgement of school effectiveness	8
Accountability Summary	18
Annex 1 - Support Categories for Wolverhampton Schools	19
Annex 2 - Categories, time allocation and activity	26
Annex 3 - Autumn conversation / annual conversation for early years settings	31
Annex 4 - Team Around the School / Setting	32
Annex 5 - TAS Dashboard example	34
Annex 6 - Headteacher Induction	35

Foreword



Page 97

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 and inclusion in partnership with schools and settings.

Phil Leivers

(Head of Education Excellence Service)



The City of Wolverhampton, Pride Values

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

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 and inclusion.
- Ensure safeguarding is accorded with the highest priority in all Wolverhampton education settings.

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.

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.



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 Childminders:**

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; childminders, 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 Childminders:

- 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 Officers and the Early Years Childcare and Development Officer 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 Advisor 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 childminders, 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.

4.9 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.

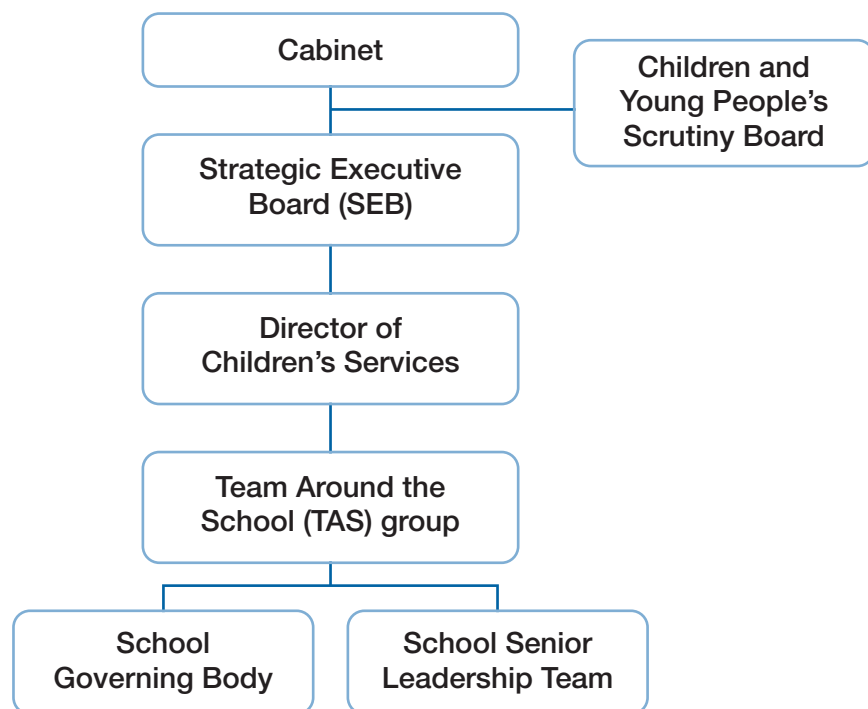
d) Developing local authority knowledge and understanding of governing bodies to ensure the provision of appropriate and effective support

- 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.



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.



Page 112



Annex 1

Support Categories for Wolverhampton Schools

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	

New Category	Proposed Support Status	Ofsted Reference	LA Reference	Leadership and Management	Governance	EYFS Business Ref	NEW Allocated days of support	NEW Key Activity
PVI / Childminders A – providing a good or better education	LOW SUPPORT	Judged outstanding, good or 'met' at the last Ofsted inspection. Securely good in all areas including all welfare requirements	Work with the early years team demonstrates that the setting's curriculum intentions are met and are 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.	Effectiveness of leadership and management is proven and strong. All key documentation is in place and safeguarding practices are robust. 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.	NA	Well established business, sustainability and sufficiency plans are in place; clear understanding of funding; LA terms and conditions adhered to; Occupancy levels are above 80%.	4 days per year from the wider Early Years team	Support visits and yearly review focusing on teaching and/or learning and welfare requirements.
SCHOOLS AS – providing a good or better education AS = <i>A+support</i>	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
PVI / Childminders AS – providing a good or better education AS = <i>A+support</i>	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	

New Category	Proposed Support Status	Ofsted Reference	LA Reference	Leadership and Management	Governance	EYFS Business Ref	NEW Allocated days of support	NEW Key Activity
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 vulnerability at the next inspection as shown through the school's work with the LA / School Improvement Advisor or school performance data OR	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	
PVI / Childminders B1 – level of education provided requires improvement	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 terms 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.

New Category	Proposed Support Status	Ofsted Reference	LA Reference	Leadership and Management	Governance	EYFS Business Ref	NEW Allocated days of support	NEW Key Activity
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 performance data OR	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. <i>Eg:</i> <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 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. 	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

New Category	Proposed Support Status	Ofsted Reference	LA Reference	Leadership and Management	Governance	EYFS Business Ref	NEW Allocated days of support	NEW Key Activity
PVI / Childminders B2 – level of education provided requires improvement.	MEDIUM SUPPORT	Setting or childminder has been judged as 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.	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. Welfare requirements are being met but the safeguarding audit has highlighted areas for improvement. Correct documentation is not consistently in place. Quality of education is not good and does not meet the needs of all children.	Provision to support children’s personal development is not good. 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. Provision for all children is not consistently good. 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.		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.

New Category	Proposed Support Status	Ofsted Reference	LA Reference	Leadership and Management	Governance	EYFS Business Ref	NEW Allocated days of support	NEW Key Activity
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 there is insufficient capacity to improve outcomes OR	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>Eg:</i> <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. 	School Governance is RAG-rated red by the LA and there is little evidence of capacity to improve. There are unfilled vacancies on the governing board and a lack of skills are contributing to ineffective governance		19 days per year	

New Category	Proposed Support Status	Ofsted Reference	LA Reference	Leadership and Management	Governance	EYFS Business Ref	NEW Allocated days of support	NEW Key Activity
PVI / Childminders C – level of education provided has serious weaknesses or is in special measures	INTENSIVE / HIGH SUPPORT	<p>Safeguarding is ineffective.</p> <p>Breaches of EYFS requirements have a significant impact on the safety and well-being and/or the learning and development of children.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Children are not well prepared for school or the next stage of their learning, particularly those who are in receipt of additional funding.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Practitioners have a poor understanding of the areas of learning they teach and the way in which young children learn.</p> <p>Strategies for engaging parents are weak and parents do not know what their child is learning or how they can help them improve.</p> <p>Mandatory training is not undertaken.</p> <p>Breaches of the statutory requirements have a significant impact on children's learning and development.</p>	NA	<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>	12.5 days per years	<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 (AFS) 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

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	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
Childminder	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	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
Childminder	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 x 3 = 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
Childminder	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 x 3 = 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 x 3 = 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
Childminder	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 x 3 = 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

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)
PVI	Up to 14 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
Childminder	Up to 14 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)
- Senior Advisor for Early Years (Chair)
- School Improvement Advisors
- 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 Advisor, Senior Advisor 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)
- Senior Adviser for Early Years (Chair for EYFS settings)
- School Improvement Advisor
- 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

Page 128

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 & 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 Exclusion	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?
18/09/2019	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.

You can get this information in large print, braille, audio
or in another language by calling 01902 551155

wolverhampton.gov.uk 01902 551155

  WolverhamptonToday  Wolverhampton_Today  @WolvesCouncil

City of Wolverhampton Council, Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

CYPF visit to the Way 14.9.21

Agenda Item No: 10

Cllr Wendy Dalton

Cllr Gillian Wildman

Cllr Adam Collinge

Carla Priddon CEO The Way

<https://www.thewayyouthzone.org/policies-procedures/behaviour-policy/>

<https://www.thewayyouthzone.org/policies-procedures/safeguarding-policy/>

1. Carla briefed the panel members about the support offered to children and young people during the pandemic. The Way offered 200 WIFI dongles devices to allow people to connect to the internet during lockdown. The contracts were given for three months and could also be topped up.
2. The Way offered face-to-face support to young people in a crisis during lockdown. The Way also offered welfare support to young people needing help. The Way has been opened since Sept 2019 following guidance at the time about 'bubbles'.
3. The numbers of young people attending the centre has reduced – email sent to Carla to ask for details of numbers before and after lockdown.
4. The service operates a bus collection service stopped during lockdown as could not meet the social and was not viable. The bus service operates a pick-up and return service Mon to Friday.
5. The Way is operating a normal range of services since lockdown restrictions ended earlier in the year. The service has about 1500 active members who have been at least twice a week.
6. The panel queried the support offered to young people and how they can access mental health support services and if the numbers had been lower than expected. Carla confirmed that people can self-refer themselves to the service and support is offered to young people aged 8-15 and up to age 21 years for young people with a disability. Carla commented on the mentoring scheme and described the process for matching young people – 95% of young people are matched to a mentor.
7. The panel queried the training and skills among The Way to support young people and if consideration given to offering them specific training on counselling. Carla explained that there is a specialist referral service for young people. The panel agreed with the importance of young people getting the right advice.
8. The panel discussed the issue of safeguarding and the process for reporting concerns.
9. Carla advised that most young people attending in 8 -12 years, not many young people aged over 18 attends, there is a gap in attendance among the 13-14 age range. The service is working on encouraging more young people to attend.

10. The panel commented on reports from parents who were reluctant to allow their children to attend because of the concerns about bullying, gangs from specific wards dominating the use of facility, and the poor behaviour of young people attending. There was also the issue of young people not wanting to attend because of the perceived poor reputation of the service. Carla commented about changes made to improve behaviour of young people who attend The Way. A green, amber and red behaviour scheme has been introduced which has led to improved behaviour among young people. The panel reported on specific incidents involving a fight at the centre, a child staying overnight in the building and a young person bringing a knife into the building.

The panel suggested promoting awareness to parents and young people about the new behaviour policy.

Carla challenged the rumour about a young person getting into the roof space – the building is checked at end of every day, there are security sensors in the building to detect movement, there are also two locked doors which would have to be opened in order to get access to the roof.

Carla advised that there is no charge to young people using the mini-bus and that more pick up stops have been added

Cllr Dalton spoke about a local scheme offering refurbished laptops and agreed to share details.

11. Carla advised that the service was given a grant of £250,000 to support its services during the pandemic. The Way does not have funds to offer grants to local groups. The panel discussed the promotion of The Way at local venues and suggested increasing opportunities for outreach work. The Way down your way – was suggested by Cllr Dalton as promotional slogan for working with local groups.
12. The group discussed the promotion of local activities – Cllr Wildman spoke about the visit from Olympic medallist to a boxing centre in Bilston. The suggestion was made about promoting local activities on the Councillor weekly updates that could help support local activities and help raise awareness about the offer from The Way and challenge myths. The panel discussed the opportunity for more collaborative work between The Way and local community groups.
13. The panel suggested updating The Way website to make parents and young people aware of the behaviour policy.
14. The panel discussed the issue of reports among parents of bullying and a knife being found on the centre. Carla explained the role of youth workers in challenging poor behaviour and range of activities offered to create a safe environment. The panel suggested that the promotion among parents about the qualifications held by youth workers would be helpful and the option on the website for parents to ask questions or to raise concerns about the centre.
15. The panel suggested creating a calendar of events which local councillors could help to promote and also future activities – encourage Cllrs to sign up to email alerts about events and also add details of their events.

16. The panel discussed the idea of partnership working with The Way and local community groups. Carla talked about the offer to the local communities to use the facilities available at The Way.
17. The panel were taken on a tour of The Way to see the different activities offered to young people.

This page is intentionally left blank

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP BY POSTCODE

WV1

49

WV2

58

WV3

100

WV4

65

WV5

16

WV6

60

WV8

16

WV9

14

WV10

126

WV11

47

WV12

14

WV13

26

WV14

47

OTHER POSTCODE AREAS

DY

22

WS

21

TF

7

Page 135

ST

3

B

14

This page is intentionally left blank



Scrutiny Work Programme (draft)
Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny
Panel 2021-2022

Contents	Page Number
Scrutiny – New Approach	3
Work Programme considerations	4
Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel draft work programme	5
Scrutiny Panel Remit & Functions	8
General Role of the Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Panels	9
Appendix A: Roles – Chair, SEB Lead and Scrutiny Officer	10

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
-------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------------

Date of Meeting	Agenda Publication	Item Description	Lead Report Author	Council Plan Priority	Notes
14 July 2021	6 July 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2. Education Excellence Strategy (pre-decision scrutiny) 3. Children and Young People's Social Work Self-Evaluation 	Jenny Rogers Brenda Wile and Phil Leivers Alison Hinds	Children and young people get the best possible start in life	
14.9.21		Panel member visit to The Way			
October 8 2021		Panel member visit to Green Park School to look at SEND provision			

13 October 2021	5 October 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback on the outcomes and lessons learnt from the Yo! Summer Festival programme 2. SEND Update 3. Transforming Children Services programme, vision and annual report 2021 	<p>Andrew Wolverson</p> <p>Brenda Wile/Helen Bakewell/ Sarah Baker – Voice of Parents</p> <p>Emma Cleary</p>		Report to include details on work done to prepare for the inspection of service and headlines from inspection
6.1.22	21.12.21	SEND Inspection Outcome – pre decision scrutiny	Emma Bennett/Brenda Wile		
2 February 2022	25 January 2022	Spotlight on Education <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virtual School Head Annual Report 2021 2. Annual Report on Schools' Education Performance 3. Children's Residential Provision Review – pre-decision scrutiny 4. Member visit to The Way – update 	<p>Darren Martindale</p> <p>Phil Leivers</p> <p>Rachel King/Steven Larking</p> <p>Councillor Collinge</p>		

24 March 2022	16 March 2022	<p>Spotlight on Safeguarding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation of MASH 24 2. Supporting our vulnerable young people at risk of exploitation 3. Children's Health Check survey - Social Work and wider workforce 	<p>Alison Hinds</p> <p>Rachel King /Sandra Ashton Jones</p> <p>Jennifer Rogers</p>		
---------------	---------------	--	--	--	--

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



Scrutiny Work Programme (draft)
Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny
Panel 2021-2022

Contents	Page Number
Scrutiny – New Approach	3
Work Programme considerations	4
Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel draft work programme	5
Scrutiny Panel Remit & Functions	8
General Role of the Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Panels	9
Appendix A: Roles – Chair, SEB Lead and Scrutiny Officer	10

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
-------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------------

Date of Meeting	Agenda Publication	Item Description	Lead Report Author	Council Plan Priority	Notes
14 July 2021	6 July 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2. Education Excellence Strategy (pre-decision scrutiny) 3. Children and Young People's Social Work Self-Evaluation 	Jenny Rogers Brenda Wile and Phil Leivers Alison Hinds	Children and young people get the best possible start in life	
14.9.21		Panel member visit to The Way			
October 8 2021		Panel member visit to Green Park School to look at SEND provision			

13 October 2021	5 October 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback on the outcomes and lessons learnt from the Yo! Summer Festival programme 2. SEND Update 3. Transforming Children Services programme, vision and annual report 2021 	<p>Andrew Wolverson</p> <p>Brenda Wile/Helen Bakewell/ Sarah Baker – Voice of Parents</p> <p>Emma Cleary</p>		Report to include details on work done to prepare for the inspection of service and headlines from inspection
6.1.22	21.12.21	SEND Inspection Outcome – pre decision scrutiny	Emma Bennett/Brenda Wile		
2 February 2022	25 January 2022	<p>Spotlight on Education</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virtual School – progress report 2. Educational Performance Report 3. Social Workers in Schools: Evaluation Report 4. Member visit to The Way – update 	<p>Darren Martindale</p> <p>Phil Leivers</p> <p>Louise Anderson</p> <p>Councillor Collinge</p>		

24 March 2022	16 March 2022	<p>Spotlight on Safeguarding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation of MASH 24 2. Supporting our vulnerable adolescents at risk of exploitation – including an update on Power2 Team 3. Report on the work of the Exploitation HUB 4. Social Work Health Check 	<p>Alison Hinds</p> <p>Alison Hinds</p> <p>Rachel King</p> <p>Jennifer Rogers</p>		
---------------	---------------	---	---	--	--

1. Children's Residential Provision - pre decision scrutiny - tbc

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