

Time 5.30 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Oversight

Venue Committee Room 3 - 3rd Floor - Civic Centre

Membership

Chair Cllr Chris Burden (Lab)
Vice Chair Cllr Barbara McGarrity (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Ciaran Brackenridge
Cllr Jenny Cockayne
Cllr Lovinyer Daley
Cllr Sally Green
Cllr Jeszemma Howl
Cllr Iqra Tahir

Conservative

Cllr Paul Appleby

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

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

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for absence |
| 2 | Declarations of interest |
| 3 | Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 (Pages 3 - 8)
[To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 as a correct record.] |
| 4 | Matters arising
[To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023.] |
| 5 | Care Leaver Survey Review 2023 (Pages 9 - 26)
[To receive outcomes and feedback from the Care Leaver Survey Review 2023.] |
| 6 | The Reach Leaving Care Local Offer Review 2023 (Pages 27 - 36)
[To receive The Reach Leaving Care Local Offer Review 2023.] |
| 7 | Children in Care Survey 2023 (Pages 37 - 56)
[To receive the outcome of the Children in Care Survey 2023.] |
| 8 | Performance Monitoring Information (Pages 57 - 64)
[To receive the Performance Monitoring Information Report.] |
| 9 | Exclusion of the Press and Public
[That in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.] |

PART 2 - ITEMS NOT OPEN TO THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

- | | |
|----|---|
| 10 | Councillor Visits to Establishments - Schedule of Visits
[To receive verbal feedback on any visits to establishments undertaken by Councillors since the last meeting.] |
|----|---|

Attendance

Chair Cllr Chris Burden (Lab)
Vice Chair Cllr Barbara Mc Garrity QN (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Jenny Cockayne Cllr Lovinyer Daley Cllr Jeszemma Howl

Conservative

Cllr Paul Appleby

In Attendance

Hannah Bradley	Corporate Parenting Officer
Becky Grainger	Designated Nurse for CYPIC, Black Country ICB
Dr Wendy Harrison-Frazer	CAMHS
Sarah Hartill	Service Manager of Safeguarding and Exploitation
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer
Kulwinder Kaur	Royal Wolverhampton Trust (attending as an Observer)
Darren Martindale	Virtual School Head
Dr Stephanie Simon	Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust
Jazmine Walker	Head of Service Children and Young People in Care

Corporate Parenting Board also welcomed one Foster Parent.

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the Corporate Parenting Board: Councillor Ciaran Brackenridge, Councillor Sally Green and Councillor Iqra Tahir.

2 Declarations of interest

Councillor Barbara McGarrity QN declared a non-pecuniary interest as she is a Private Counsellor.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters arising

There were no other matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 Schedule of outstanding matters

Hannah Bradley, Corporate Parenting Officer presented the report on current progress on matters previously considered by the Board. It was highlighted that the Health Annual Report and meeting agenda had been ordered accordingly to give priority to the CAMHS report, with a focus on waiting times.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Outstanding Matters be received.

6 Health Services for Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC) Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Wendy Harrison – Frazer, Consultant Psychologist from CAMHS; Rebecca Grainger: Designated Nurse for Children and Young People in Care, Black Country ICB and Dr Stephanie Simon, Royal Wolverhampton Trust jointly presented the Health Services for Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC) Annual Report 2022 – 2023 and highlighted key points. The report provided a summary of the key areas of development and outcomes achieved by local health service providers during the identified time frame, whilst also identifying the priorities for the next reporting period.

As had been requested at the previous meeting, the presentation began with the Children and Young People in Care CAMHS section of the report with a focus on referral waiting times. Wait times were outlined as around seven weeks for first appointment, around three weeks from the initial appointment to the second and the average for initial referral to second appointment around 12 weeks. It was reported that at the time of the meeting, around four children were awaiting referral.

In response to a query raised around the number of out of city children, it was noted that many children from Wolverhampton who had been placed elsewhere were being seen in the area they were currently residing in. Assurances were offered that Wolverhampton Commissioning would look to step in if nothing could be found in the vicinity where the child or young people were placed. It was noted around a third of cases were Wolverhampton children.

In respect of waiting times, it was noted that Wolverhampton compared favourably to the national average. It was confirmed that the second appointment was classed as the allocation to treatment and not the start of treatment itself.

It was noted that sufficient notice was not often given when receiving a child from out of City; data and information was requested in advance however it was a national issue. Assurances were offered that no child would be left without any care.

The Foster Parent present noted that the waiting times for therapy were not a quick fix however the support they had experienced from a foster parent perspective had made a huge difference to their family.

In response to a query around how long a child would need to wait for an allocation, it was noted it would depend on the type of therapy required and availability and two weeks was the average wait time as of the time of the meeting.

The report was commended and it was acknowledged there was still work to be done however all was moving in a positive direction.

Resolved:

That the Health Services for Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC) Annual Report 2022 – 2023 be received.

7 **Virtual School Head Annual Report 2023**

Darren Martindale, Virtual School Head presented the Virtual School Head Annual Report 2023 and highlighted salient points. The report provided an overview of educational outcomes of Wolverhampton's children and young people in care and care leavers from September 2022-July 2023, and how these have been supported by the Council, schools and other key partners. It also highlighted notable successes as well as future priorities and areas for development.

The work undertaken to support young people in these outcomes was recognised and it was noted that despite the successes, efforts would not be relaxed in order to maintain and improve upon them.

It was acknowledged by Members that the outcomes were very positive considering the trauma some children and young people in care must have experienced and noted that stability and consistency were of key importance.

It was clarified that in cases where a child remained in a school where Ofsted ratings were less than Good or Outstanding, it was usually only because the rating had changed since they had begun to attend and it would only cause upheaval to move them from where they were settled or because the setting itself had a good reputation for inclusion.

The work undertaken was commended by the Chair for the difference made to the lives of children and young people in care.

Resolved:

That the Virtual School Head Annual Report 2023 be received.

8 **Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service 2022-2023**

Sarah Hartill, Safeguarding Team Manager presented the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service 2022-2023 and highlighted key points. The report provided Corporate Parenting Board with a statutory overview of the activity of the service, the impact for children and recommendations for service improvement that will enhance young people's experiences.

Members noted that the examples showing officers going over and above to creatively find ways to engage and build a rapport with children and young people in care was outstanding.

Resolved:

That the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service 2022-2023 be received.

9 **Performance Monitoring Information**

Jazmine Walker, Head of Children and Young People in Care presented the Performance Monitoring Information report and highlighted salient points. The report provided analytics on performance in a number of areas relating to children and young people in care.

In respect of missing episodes, it was queried where children and young people would typically go. It was noted this was often unauthorised sleepovers, although any behaviour which could be considered risky or linked with exploitation would be monitored by colleagues in the Exploitation Hub.

A query was raised around whether 10 working days was a realistic target for updated care plans. It was noted that this was a national standard and generally felt within the service that this was the right target to strive for.

Resolved:

That the Performance Monitoring Report be received.

10 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved:

That in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

11 **Councillor Visits to Establishments - Schedule of Visits**

Hannah Bradley, Corporate Parenting Officer reported that dates were now being scheduled up to March 2024. It was noted that Councillor Iqra Tahir had visited Upper Pendeford Farm and, although not present to provide an update, she had fed back that she had found it a positive experience. Councillors were encouraged to get in touch to visit or book a return visit if they wished.

Resolved:

That Councillors get in touch should they wish to visit Upper Pendeford Farm.

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Report title	Care Leaver Survey Review 2023	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Christopher Burden Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All wards	
Accountable director	Alison Hinds, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Children and Young People	
Accountable employees	Laura Wood Email:	Service Manager - CYPIC Laura.Wood@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Samantha Grainger Email:	Team Manager – REACH Leaving Care Samantha.Grainger@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Gemma Northern Email:	Team Manager – REACH Leaving Care Gemma.Northern@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Hannah Bradley Email:	Corporate Parenting Officer Hannah.Bradley@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Care Leavers' Forum	13 December 2023
	Children and Young People in Care Team	20 December 2023
	Managers Meeting	
	Children's Social Care Leadership Meeting	21 December 2023

Recommendation for action:

Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Care Leaver Survey Review 2023

Recommendation for noting:

Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note:

1. The review process undertaken of the Care Leaver Annual Survey results for 2023 and the highlighted areas for development.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Corporate Parenting Board on the Care Leavers Survey 2023 results and findings.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The key purpose of the Reach Leaving Care Team is to improve the life chances and achieve the best possible outcomes for young people who are aged 16 years and above. The team provides a wide range of services and opportunities to assist young people with their transition into adult life.
- 2.2 Young people within the service are asked to complete an annual leaving care survey with the aim of evaluating the quality and impact of current service provision. The data was collated using a Microsoft Forms questionnaire. The information will continue to inform the priorities of the service and actions around any short falls.

3.0 Findings and Summary


- 3.1 42% of the active care leaver population (394) within the city of Wolverhampton answered the care leaver survey, this totalled 165 young people, this is an increase of 25 respondents on last year's survey. The statistics within this report will only capture a percentage of young people currently open to the team who chose to respond to the survey.
- 3.2 Therefore, the analysis of the collected data will be limited to the cohort who participated within the survey. In addition is to be noted that not all respondents answered all questions asked to them, as such percentage answers for each question will be based on number of respondents per question rather than the total cohort number of 165.

4.0 Age

1. How old are you?

[More Details](#)

 Insights

 16-18	44
 19-20	57
 21-24	64



- 4.1 Of the 165 participants all responded to this question, on the whole the 19-24 age range accounted for 76% of all responses.

As per previous years the statistics are likely to reflect the reduced contact that our Young Person Advisors have with the upper age range of young people and the smaller cohort of young people we support, ages 16 and 17.

5.0 Gender

2. What is your gender

[More Details](#)

Male	83
Female	74
Non-binary	3
Prefer not to say	5
Other	0



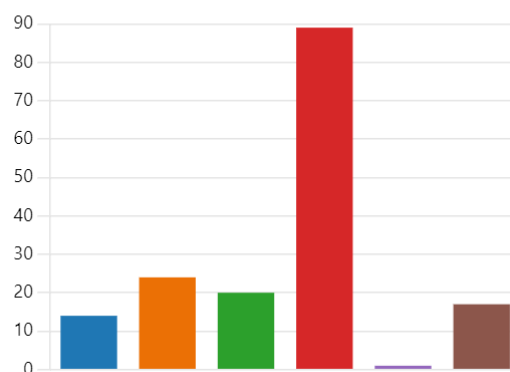
5.1 All 165 participants responded to this question. In total 83 males responded to this year's survey, a total of 50% of this year's responses identified as males, with 74 (45%) young people identifying as female.

6.0 Ethnicity

3. What is your ethnicity?

[More Details](#)

Asian or Asian British: Indian, Pa...	14
Black, Black British, African: Any ...	24
Mixed or Multi Ethnic groups : ...	20
White : English/Scottish/Irish/ N...	89
White -Gypsy/Traveller/Roma	1
Other ethnic groups: Arab etc.	17



6.1 Of the 160 participants all responded to this question. 89 respondents (54%) a slight decrease of 5% on last year's responses, reported themselves as White English/Scottish/Irish/Northern Irish.

6.2 A total of 24 respondents (15%) reported themselves as Black, Black British, African, Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background, which has remained the same as last

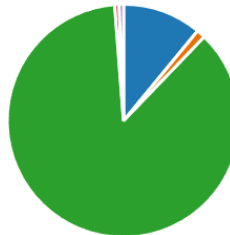
year’s response rate. Other ethnic groups accounted for 17 responses (10%), an increase 2% on last year.

7.0 Care Leaver Status

4. What is your Care Leaver status?

[More Details](#)

- I am under 18 and I am in care (... 18
- I am under 18 and I have left car... 2
- I am over 18. I am Former Relev... 142
- I am in custody and was previou... 1
- I am in custody and was not in c... 1



7.1 Of the 165 respondents, 164 young people answered this question. Of the responses received 138 (87%) stated they were former relevant, an increase of 1% on last year. In total 18 young people (11%) reported they were under 18 and still in care, an increase of 1% on last year.

7.2 This year an additional two statuses, relating to custody were added to the question to enable those young people within custody settings to feel fully included within the survey.

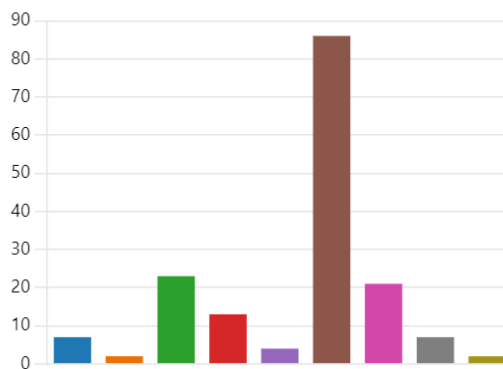
8.0 Living Arrangements

5. Where do you live?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

- Foster Home 7
- Residential Home 2
- Supported Accommodation 23
- Reach flat 13
- Semi Supported Accommodatio... 4
- Own tenancy 86
- Living with parents/relatives 21
- Staying Put 7
- In Custody 2

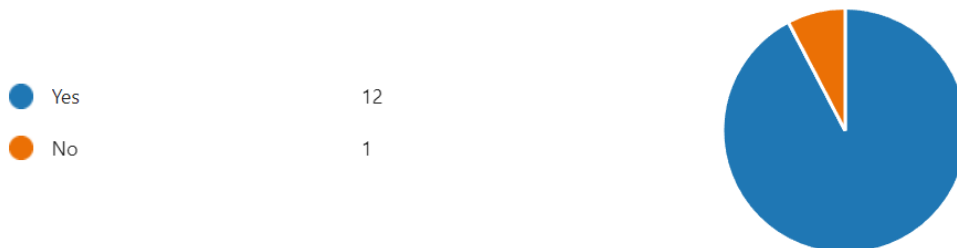


8.1 Of the 165 young people all responded to this question. Overwhelmingly 86 young people (52%) reported they are living in their own tenancy, an increase of 4% on last year. In addition 13 young people (8%) reported they are living in a REACH Flat, an increase of 5% on last year.

9.0 Housing Support

6. In your REACH flat do you have a good relationship with your housing support worker?

[More Details](#)



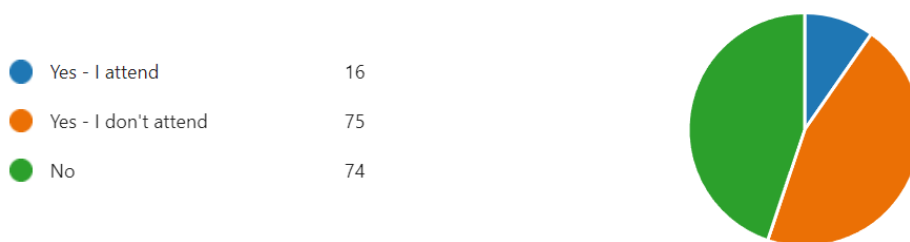
9.1 Of the 13 young people who answered they lived in a REACH flat, 13 responded to this question. A total of 12 young people (96%) felt they had a good relationship with their housing support worker.

10.0 Care Leavers' Forum

7. Are you aware of the Care Leavers Independent Collective (CLIC) ?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)



10.1 Of 165 respondents all replied to this question. A total of 75 young people (45%) reported they are aware of CLIC, but they do not attend, a further 74 (44.5%) young people reported they were not aware of CLIC, an increase of 8% on last year.

10.2 A total of 16 (10%) young people reported they have attended a CLIC session a decrease of 2% on last year.

8. Do you find attending valuable?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	14
● No	4
● Sometimes	8



10.3 Of 165 respondents, 26 responded to this question., It is to be noted the some of those from question 7 who said they were aware of CLIC but did not attend now did answer this question, suggesting they may have attended in the past.

10.4 Of 26 respondents, 14 young people (54%) reported they found attended CLIC valuable, an increase of 24% on last year. Only 4 young people (15%) reported they did not find attending valuable, a decrease of 27% on last years figure. This can suggest that more young people are finding attending CLIC valuable and having their voice heard.

9. Have you met or do you know of any of The Coproduction and Youth Engagement Team? (Andrew, Anton etc)

[More Details](#)

● Yes	36
● No	129



10.5 This was a new question added to the Care Leaver Survey as such there is no comparable data from previous years.

10.6 Of 165 respondents all responded to this question. 129 young people (78%) reported they were unaware of the Coproduction Team and who they were. However, the positive response to CLIC and young people being aware of the forum does suggest that young people are having interactions with the forum and are aware of some of the activities the Participation Team supports even if they aren't directly aware of specific staff members.

10.7 Following on from this the Participation and Youth engagement team have recently recruited additional staff (December 2023) to fill in vacancies which will support further engagement with Care Experienced young people and will also attend REACH Team events.

11.0 Care Leaver Activities

10. Have you ever attended REACH drop in service? (Thursdays 1pm-6pm Oasis Hub)

[More Details](#)

● Yes	83
● No	80
● Currently in custody	2



11.1 Since the last survey the REACH drop-in service has developed and launched a year long timetable of activities hosted at the hub.

11.2 Of 165 young people all responded to this question. 50% reported they had attended the drop in, an increase of 13% on last year, showing a positive growth in awareness of the Reach drop-in service and the monthly special evening activities that take place.

11. If no, what has put you off attending?

0
Responses

Latest Responses

11.3 No young person chose to respond to this question.

12. How did you find the REACH drop in service?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Poor	2
● Good	50
● Excellent	25
● Not relevant to me	6
● Other	2

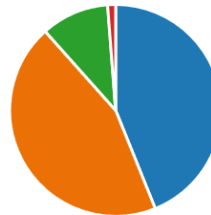


11.4 Out of 165, 85 young people responded to this question. Overall, 75 young people reported REACH drop-in service as good or excellent, giving a percentage rating of 88%.

11.5 13. Have you received information about Care Leaver events? (EG: Care Leavers Week, I Awards , Parties etc)

[More Details](#)

● Yes - I have attended	72
● Yes - I haven't attended	73
● No	17
● No I am in custody	2



Out of 165 young people 164 to this question. A total of 145 young people were aware of events hosted at the Hub, a total of 88% an increase 3% on last year.

11.6 Of the 165 respondents, 72 (44%) reported they have attended events hosted by the REACH team.

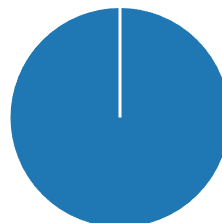
12.0 Relationships

14. Do you have a good relationship with your Young Persons Advisor (YPA)?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes	165
● No	0



12.1 Of the 165 respondents, all responded that they have a good relationship with their YPA this is an increase of 1% on last year.

13.0 Planning for Independence

15. Do you take part in your pathway review?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes	143
● No	6
● Sometimes	15



13.1 Of 165 young people, 164 responded to this question. A total of 143 (87%) reported they were fully participating in their pathway review, an increase of 2% on last year. An additional 15 (10%) saying they sometimes take part, a slight decrease of 2% on last year.

13.2 Taking into account both of these responses a total of 158 (96%) young people are taking part in their pathway plan review in some way, a same percentage point as last year.

16. Do you feel you left Foster/Residential care when you were ready?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes	113
● No	19
● I have not left Foster Care/ Resi...	17
● I was never in Foster Care/Resid...	15



13.3 Out of 165 participants, 164 responded to this question. A total of 113 (69%) felt they left Foster Parents / Children's Home when they were ready, a decrease of 5% on last year.

13.4 A further 19 (12%) reported they did not leave their Foster Parents when ready, a decrease of 5% on last year.

17. Did you feel supported to live independently if you wish to do so?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	139
● No	8



13.5 Of the 165 participants, 147 responded to this question. Of all responses 139 (95%) reported they felt supported to live independently, a slight decrease of 3% on last year.

18. Do you feel supported to live independently in the future?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)



13.6 Of 165 participants, 164 responded to this question. A total of 157 (96%) reported they felt supported to live independently in the future, the same percentage point as last year. Showing that young people consistently feel supported to live independently in the future with support of their YPA and the wider REACH Team.

14.0 Your Home and Health

19. Do you feel safe where you live?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)



14.1 Of 165 participants, 164 responded to this question. A total of 158 (96%) young people reported they felt safe where they live, an increase of 10% on last year.

14.2 Of the 6 who responded no, five responses were unrecordable with one requesting additional support from YPA.

20. If you don't feel safe please leave your name and contact details. Someone will be in touch to help you.

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

8

Responses

Latest Responses

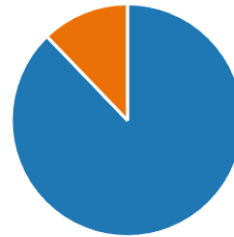
14.3 Of the eight responses received for this question, only one was registerable. This information has been passed to the YPA allocated to the specific young person for further update and support.

21. Does your the place where you live have everything in it that you need?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes	144
● No	20



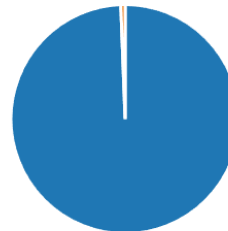
14.4 Of 165 respondents, 164 responded to this question. 144 (88%) young people felt the place they live had everything in it they needed, a slight decrease of 5% on last year.

22. Do you feel your health and wellbeing is supported?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes	163
● No	1



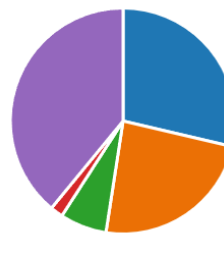
14.5 Of 165 participants surveyed, 164 responded, 99% of young people reported their health and wellbeing was being activity supported which was an increase of 5% on last year.

15.0 Education, Training and Employment (EET)

23. Are you in Employment, Education or Training?

[More Details](#)

● Education (full or part time)	47
● Employment (full or part time)	39
● Training	11
● Apprenticeship	3
● No	64

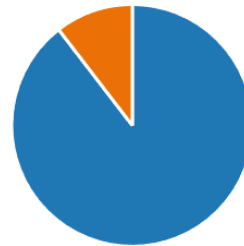


15.1 Out of 165 potential participants, 164 responded. 100 (60%) young people stated they were in either Education, Employment or Training including Apprenticeships, the same reported figure as last year. This could suggest the settled nature of our young people in terms of their EET provision.

24. Are you getting the right support to get into Education, Employment and Training?

[More Details](#)

15.2



A total of 90% said they were getting the right support they needed to access EET. This positive percentage could be seen as a direct relation to the targeted work undertaken by the EET Coordinator and EET Advisor alongside the REACH team.

25. What other support would you like to help you access Education, Employment or Training?

[More Details](#)

Insights

6

Responses

Latest Responses

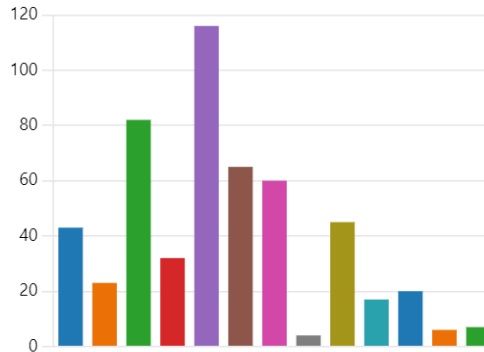
15.3 Of the 67 respondents to question 24, six responded to this question. Of those respondents five reported they were registered disabled and unable to access EET. One response was illegible and unable to be registered.

16.0 Local Offer

26. What have you accessed from the Wolverhampton Local Offer for Care Leavers?

[More Details](#)

● Heath Passport	43
● Ask Jan	23
● WV Active membership	82
● Grand Mentor support	32
● Education, Employment and Trai...	116
● Council Tax exception	65
● Band 1 priority for housing	60
● Custody Support Offer	4
● Free prescriptions	45
● Rent support for working Care L...	17
● House Project	20
● I wasn't aware of the Local Offer	6
● Other	7



- 16.1 Of the 165 respondents, all responded to this question. A total of 159 (96%) reported they had accessed something from the offer, a 3% increase on last year. This growth continues to show general awareness around the Local Offer has increased significantly due in part to better communication between YPAs and Young People as well as focused Local Offer Review events.
- 16.2 The most popular offer was Education, Employment and Training support, as well as Council Tax exemption, Band 1 Priority of Housing and access to a WV Active membership which was a similar reflection from the 2022 Survey.
- 16.3 There were lower levels of uptake for Custody Support Offer, however due to the lower cohort numbers able to access this support this is not a true reflection of the valuable support that this service provides.

17.0 Finances

27. Do you feel you are getting what you are entitled to in terms of financial support? (Eg: access to benefits)

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes	153
● No	9



17.1 Of 165 respondents, 162 answered this question. A total of 153 (94%) reported they were accessing the right financial support a slight decrease of 1% on last year. It was noted that nine young people felt they weren't receiving the benefits they were entitled to, this could be due to several factors including disagreements with Department of Work and Pensions in relation to their assessment of entitlements.

28. Do you feel supported in budgeting and managing your money?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Yes	155
No	6



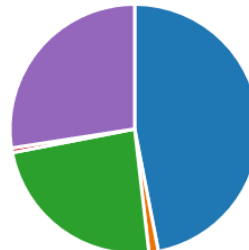
17.2 Of 165 respondents, 161 answered this question. 96% of young people reported they felt supported with money management and budgeting, a same percentage response as 2002 survey.

18.0 The REACH Team and YPA Access

29. Do you still want a Young Persons Advisor when you turn 21?

[More Details](#)

Yes	77
No	2
Not sure	39
I'm over 21 and do not want a Y...	1
I'm over 21 and have a YPA	45



18.1 Of the 165 participants, 164 responded to this question. A total of 77 (47%) reported they would still like a YPA when they turn 21. A further 39 (24%) said they were unsure at this time.

18.2 In addition, it was noted that a further 45 (27%) young people still have access to their YPA, This shows a positive trend in young people's interactions with their YPA and giving serious consideration to continuing with support post 21 Only 1 (1%) young person outright stated they do not access YPA service after.

19.0 Rating of Leaving Care Service Overall

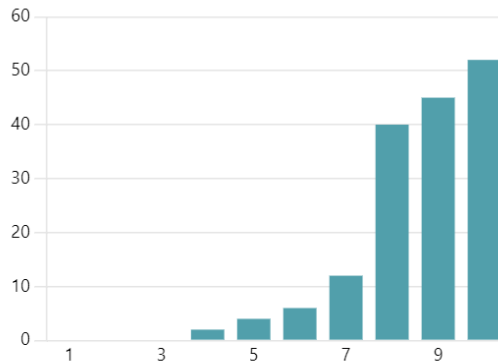
19.1 Of 165 participants, 161 responded to this question. Overall, 149 (90%) rated their REACH leaving care team as a rating of seven or above a slight decrease of 2% on last year.

30. Please rate the REACH Team out of 10 (1 being poor and 10 being excellent)

[More Details](#)

 Insights

8.65
Average Rating



20.0 Summary

20.1 Strengths highlighted by the survey include:

- Survey responses increased by 25 on last year.
- 100% of Care Leavers reported that they have a good relationship with their Young Persons Advisor a 1% increase on last year.
- A total of 143 (87%) reported they were fully participating in their pathway review: an increase of 2% on last year.
- 96% of those surveyed were aware and had accessed something from the Local Offer, an increase of 2% on last year.
- 99% of Care Leavers reported that they feel supported with their health and wellbeing; an increase of 5% on last year.
- 96% of young people stated they felt supported to live independently in the future.
- 90% of young people scored the Reach Leaving care team a seven out of 10 or over for overall service. This continues to show that young people are happy with the support they receive.
- 96% of young people feel that they were getting the right support around money management and finances.
- 96% of young people who live in a REACH flat felt they had a good relationship with their housing support worker.
- 50% of young people reported they had attended the Thursday REACH drop in, an increase of 13% on last year, showing a positive growth in awareness of the Reach drop-in service and the monthly special evening activities that take place.
- A total of 145 young people were aware of events hosted at the Hub, a total of 88% an increase 3% on last year.
- 100 (60%) young people stated they were in either Education, Employment or Training including Apprenticeships, the same reported figure as last year. This could suggest the settled nature of our young people in terms of their EET provision.

- A total of 158 (96%) young people reported they felt safe where they live, an increase of 10% on last year.

20.2 Areas for improvement highlighted by the survey include:

- 72 (44.5%) young people reported they were not aware of CLIC, an increase of 8% on last year.
- 144 (88%) young people felt the place they live had everything in it they needed, a slight decrease of 5% on last year.
- Young People living within a children's home setting made up less than 2% of the total survey response rate. Work to ensure those living within a children's home setting post 17 needs to take place.
- Additionally, only two responses were received from those living within a custody setting, further work needs to take place with those in custody to ensure their voices are heard. Those in custody do have access to a specific survey which they are able to complete given the restrictions applied within those environments, however we need to ensure these are being completed by as many of our young people as possible and communicated with the prisons they reside in.
- Social Workers, Young Persons Advisors, Foster parents and Children's home Staff to be reminded again of the relevance of young people participating in the survey to support the continuous efforts made to improve service delivery.

21.0 Conclusions

- 21.1 The annual survey is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the service, therefore social workers, young person's advisors including foster parents and children's home staff need to be proactive in encouraging all young people to complete the survey. Following changes to the survey, continued reminders from Young Person's Advisors, sessions to complete the survey during Care Leavers Week and the use of a prize draw incentive participation with the survey increased this year, with an additional 25 respondents.
- 21.2 Following last year's survey rigorous efforts were put in place to ensure Team Managers were raising the survey and its completion with all staff during supervisions, this has produced positive results. It was evident from the results that there had been an increase in awareness of the support services, groups, and activities on offer for care leavers, including a greater awareness of the CLIC.
- 21.3 The development of the Reach Café weekly drop in also appears to have help to raise participation and inform care leavers of the Local Offer and the activities on offer to them. Following the Local Offer Review, CLIC sessions will now be moved to a Thursday evening to coincide with the REACH drop-in sessions, enabling Participation Team to be visible at the sessions and to encourage new members to attend.
- 21.4 Further work needs to take place to ensure the voices of our young people living within a children's home setting and those in custody are clearly heard. Social Workers and YPA's

are to be reminded of the importance of sharing the survey with care homes and support settings to ensure a higher rate of completion by this cohort of young people.

21.5 The development of a specific survey that meets custody requirements has been a step in the right direction for 2023, however with the further development of the custody offer in 2024 it is hoped more young people in a custody setting will actively take part in the survey next year.

21.6 In all 2023 has continued to be a year of growing successes for the REACH Team and for our Care Leavers. The continuation of the regular drop-in service with EET, Health and Housing support has been the catalyst to a year of positive growth around the services offered to our care experienced young people. The encouraging feedback received from the Local Offer Review and Care Leavers Week highlighted the positive impact the REACH Team have had on not only the young people they work with but also the services they deliver.

22.0 Financial implications

22.1 Any costs associated with developments and additions made to the REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers, following the Care Leaver Annual Survey consultation will be contained within the overall budget for 2023-2024 for the Children and Young People in Care Service.

22.2 Other Services within City of Wolverhampton Council and external partner organisations are working in partnership with the Children and Young People in Care Service to support the REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers. Any costs incurred by other Services within City of Wolverhampton Council and external partner organisations will be contained within their existing approved budgets for 2023-2024.

[JG/02012024/W]

23.0 Legal implications

23.1 The publishing of a Local Offer for Care Leavers is a legal requirement as set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to improve support for looked after children in England and Wales, especially for those leaving care. The Care Leavers Survey annual helps to support the growth and development of the Local Offer, as well as giving you people an additional forum for their views and opinions to be heard regarding the services provided to them.

[SB/02012024/O]

24.0 Equalities implications

24.1 Care leavers are asked to begin their journey into adulthood earlier than most young people. This can make them more vulnerable, isolated and ensure how to ask for help. The REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers aims to mitigate against the challenges faced by care leavers in the community.

24.2 In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the recent motion to recognise Care Experience as a protected characteristic within City of Wolverhampton Council, the Local Authority have a duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers. Care leavers are asked to begin their journey into adulthood earlier than most young people.

24.3 Outcomes for care leavers as a result of their pre-care and in care experience are poorer than their peers. Traumatic experiences before entry into care can cause difficulties, which may affect a child's behaviour, self-esteem, self-regulation, or trust in authority figures. This experience means that nationally compared to the general population care leavers are (DoE, Published 12 August 2019):

- less likely to be in education, employment, or training - over a third of 19-year-old care leavers are not in education, employment, or training
- more likely to be attempting to live independently - some are unable to remain in their placements beyond the age of 18. They are therefore likely to experience compressed and accelerated transitions to independence.
- Impact of childhood trauma means they are more likely to suffer with issue relating to emotional health and well being
- more likely to have a criminal conviction and may have experienced unnecessary criminalisation. Care leavers are estimated to represent between 24% and 27% of the adult prison population.

24.4 The Reach Care Leaver offer sole purpose is to mitigate against the negative impact of being in care and the inequality they can face in society.

25.0 All other Implications

25.1 There are no other implications as a result of this report.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Corporate Parenting Board 11 January 2024
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Report title	The Reach Leaving Care Local Offer Review 2023	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Christopher Burden Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All wards	
Accountable director	Alison Hinds, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Children and Young People	
Accountable employees	Laura Wood Email:	Service Manager - CYPIC Laura.Wood@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Samantha Grainger Email:	Team Manager – REACH Leaving Care Samantha.Grainger@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Hannah Bradley Email:	Corporate Parenting Officer Hannah.Bradley@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Care Leavers' Forum Children and Young People in Care Team Managers Meeting Children's Social Care Leadership Meeting	13 December 2023 20 December 2023 21 December 2023

Recommendation for action:

Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Reach Leaving Care Local Offer Review 2023.

Recommendation for noting:

Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note:

1. The review process undertaken of the Care Leaver Local Offer.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To update Corporate Parenting Board, Senior Leaders and Partner agencies on the review of the Care Leaver Offer.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 It has been 12 months since the REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers has been reviewed. Therefore, a comprehensive review including care experienced young people took place to support the development of the published in the offer. This report updates Senior Leaders and Partner agencies on the review the Care Leaver Offer and seeks partner agencies support to further enhance the offer.
- 2.2 Following the 'Children's Social Care Reform – A Vision for Change' document published in January 2016, the government produced the Children and Social Work Bill which subsequently received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017. Implicit in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, it is the requirement to improve support for children in care in England and Wales especially for those leaving care.
- 2.3 The Act introduced seven corporate parenting principles to which local authorities must have regard. These are:
- To act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of relevant children and young people.
 - To encourage those young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
 - To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those young people.
 - To help those children gain access to and make best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
 - To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people.
 - To have regard to the need for those children and young people to be safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships, education, or work.
 - To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
- 2.4 As of September 2018 all local authorities in England are required to publish a Local Offer for care leavers, providing information about services within the local authority that may assist care leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living. This includes services relating health and wellbeing, relationships, education, training and employment accommodation and participation in society.

3.0 Additions to the Local Offer

- 3.1 Since the previous Local Offer Review in 2022, City of Wolverhampton Council has continued to regularly update and increase its Local Offer in line with the needs and requests of the care experienced young people it supports. Notable additions to the offer in the last twelve months include:

- Access to 12 months rent support for young people who enter their first paid employment
- Creation of a Care Leavers specific Nurse, to help with the transition of Care Leavers from Childrens to Adult services.
- Access to free prescriptions for all Care Leavers from Wolverhampton
- Access for all Care Leavers, regardless of home local authority, to have access to free council tax till the age of 25.
- A weekly baby group hosted at The Oasis Hub by a Community Champion and Young Persons Advisors.

4.0 Local Offer Review 2023

- 4.1 On Wednesday, 25 October 2023, the start of Care Leavers Week 2023 at The Oasis Hub, 20 care experienced young people, an increase of five from last year, attended a workshop to look through aspects of the Local Offer and to establish the strengths and the challenges of accessing the offers available.
- 4.2 A variety of activities were used to collate the views and feedback of the young people involved, including Participation Activities, “Mood Boards”, a “Suggestion Station” and a “Star Chart” activity which also ran for the duration of the week to enable other Young People who we’re unable to attend the event the opportunity to provide feedback on the areas of the Local Offer that meant the most to them.

5.0 Activity One: Participation MentiMeter

- 5.1 Activity One saw young people take part in a variety of activities led by the Participation and Youth Engagement Team, to raise awareness of the Care Leavers Independent Collective Forum Young people were also asked both during the session and across Care Leavers Week to answer the following via a Mentimeter link:

- 1. Do you know who Care Leavers Independent Collective are?**
- 2. What might get you involved in CLIC?**
- 3. Do you know any staff from the Participation and Youth Engagement Team?**

- 5.2 Feedback from the groups who took part in the activities during the Local Offer Review were overly positive. Additional feedback from the Meti Meter noted:

Question One: Do you know who the Care Leavers Independent Collective are?

- 5.3 Of 27 young people that responded they were, overall, mostly aware of CLIC, several respondents were able to name some of the current members of CLIC directly.



Figure one: Responses received for Question One.

Question Two: What might get you involved in CLIC?

- 5.4 Of the 21 respondents most felt that moving the current CLIC meeting to consider with Thursday drop-in sessions at The Oasis Hub might improve attendance. Several also added that making sessions fun and providing food may also increase attendance.



Figure Two: Responses received for Question Two

Question Three: Have you met any staff from the Participation Team?

- 5.5 Of the 27 responses received equal numbers they had and had not met a member of the Participation Team. Several respondents were able to name a team member, however it was noted that some young people named the Corporate Parenting Officer, while the officer does work with CLIC they are not a member of the Participation Team.

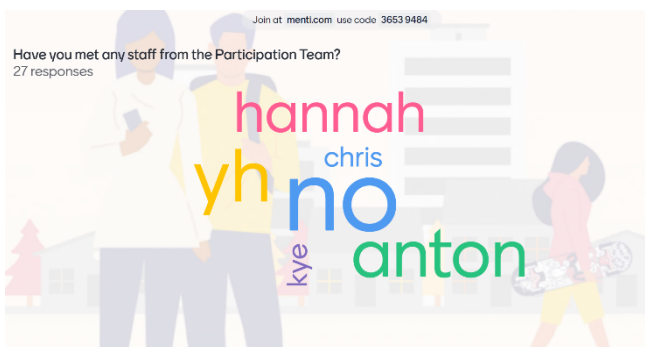


Figure Three: Responses received for Question Three

6.0 Activity Two: Families Working Together

- 6.1 In this activity groups worked directly with members of the Families Working Together (FWT) Team to look at the offer available for Care Leavers and how they could best make this a bespoke service, as previously requested.
- 6.2 Respondents were asked to think of who was important to them in their lives, what people they felt Care Leavers might wish to make contact with and how best for the FTW team to communicate this.
- 6.3 On the whole young people felt that:
- They would like to have a wider offer of support from FWT, to help them trace and locate important individuals to them such as previous Social Workers, Foster Parents, Residential Home staff, Teachers etc.
 - Young people reported that FWT staff would need to ensure, from the initial meeting with a potential link that the person is fully committed to working with them and the young person to maintain a relationship.
 - The first meeting of a FWT staff member and a potential link should provide an update on how the young person is doing, what they have achieved in their life and a personal message from the young person. They would also like to see potential links doing the same and sharing information with the young person about their own lives before an official “meeting”.
 - Young people also felt that some counselling support during reconnection with important individuals would be very important, especially if they reconnection did not go how the young person initially envisaged.
 - Connections with people that young people had never met, such as absent parents should also be taken into consideration.
 - Connections could be made via phone call, email, facetime, letter etc Young People did not feel connections should be “physically seeing someone” only.
 - Young people felt that the offer from FWT needed clearer explanation, including what the steps might look like to access FWT, what support FWT can provide them if they are successful in finding an important person or if they are unable to find them.
 - Young people felt that a pilot with one or two young people, working directly with an FWT worker and their YPA would enable the team to work on a more personalised plan for Care Leavers accessing the service and this should then be reviewed by CLIC and Senior Managers.

7.0 Activity Three: Health Mood Boards

- 7.1 Young people, with the support of Rebecca Grainger, Designated Nurse for CYPIC and Specialist Dentist Team were asked to consider the upcoming Care Leavers Nurse role and using this develop a group “Wants” and “Needs” mood board to reflect what they felt was most important to them in terms of the support the Care Leavers Nurse could provide to them as they transition into adult health services.

7.2 In addition young people met with members of the Specialist Dentist Service to hear about what options might be available to them to help access emergency dentistry services within Wolverhampton.

Needs

7.3 All young people felt that any Care Experienced Nurse should have their “full medical history”, with their consent, so they do not need to repeat themselves when trying to access support and should be a consistent person to better develop relationships with young people. In addition, all young people felt that support from the Nurse needed to be timely and not limited to a specific length of time, as all young peoples’ needs might be different and require longer or shorter periods of contact. They also reported the need for the Nurse to be able to explain the discharge to adult health services some young people encounter when under 18.

7.4 It was also felt that the Nurse needed to be trauma informed, with a level of understanding of how trauma can impact a care experienced young person well into their adult life and beyond. They would also need to help young people tackle the perceived stigma of being care experienced and how this can in some cases, impact access to health services.

Wants

7.5 Across the session, young people reported they would want additional support from the Care Experienced Nurse to access GP appointments, especially longer appointment slots as young people reported this was often very difficult to access. Further to this young people felt the Care Experienced Nurse would have to be informed and able to support with aspects of sexual health, substance misuse and self-harm.

8.0 Activity Four: Star Wall

8.1 Across Care Leavers Week 2023 young people were encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions around the local offer and what they would like to see added or developed. The “Star Wall” asked young people to look at 5 challenges highlighted by them during the previous review and to add their own star to the challenge they still think is important to them today.

8.2 Challenges highlighted were:

Challenge:	Star count
Access to a dentist	13
Access to an optician	8
Access to cooking sessions at The Oasis Hub	4
Learning independence skills earlier in life	4
Reduced or Free Transport across the region	10
Total Responses	39

Figure 3: Star Wall

9.0 Comparison to Regional Care Leaver Offers

9.1 In June 2022 a review of local authority care leaver offers in the West Midlands took place as part of the development of the Regional Care Leaver Offer Blueprint. As part of this review a comparison of the fourteen local authority and their offers was completed, looking at the four key areas of housing, work experience, council tax exemptions and access to free leisure, as outlined below.

Local Authority	Priority for Social Housing	Offers Work Experience	Council Tax Exception (within LA)	Access to Free Leisure
Wolverhampton	YES	YES	YES	YES
Dudley	YES	NO	YES	NO
Birmingham	YES	YES	YES	NO
Sandwell	YES	YES	YES	YES
Walsall	NO	NO	YES	NO
Solihull	YES	YES	YES	YES
Coventry	YES	YES	YES	YES
Telford & Wrekin	NO	NO	YES	YES
Shropshire	YES	YES	YES	YES
Stoke on Trent	YES	YES	YES	YES
Staffordshire	NO	YES	YES	YES
Warwickshire	YES	YES	YES	YES
Worcestershire	YES	NO	YES	NO
Herefordshire	YES	NO	YES	YES

9.2 Of the 14 local authorities to take part only seven including Wolverhampton, were able to demonstrate their local offer met the four key areas outlined by the review.

9.3 Alongside a local authority-led survey, an additional regional survey of care experienced young people took place. The survey received 179 responses and from this the Regional Care Leaver Offer Blueprint outlined the following suggested recommendations for all local offers in the West Midlands:

Health:

- Free prescriptions (up to 25 years)
- Better mental health support
- Free leisure passes

Housing:

- Specific Housing Offer for Care Leavers
- Homelessness protocol in place
- Council Tax exemption up to 25 (in LA)
- Reciprocal arrangement outside of LA for Council; Tax

Finance:

- Discounted utility bills, including wi-fi.

Mentoring:

- Mentoring opportunities up to 25

Education, Employment and Training:

- Ring fenced apprenticeships within LA
- Public Sector opportunities
- Skills and Pre-Employment programmes

Transport:

- Free travel across the West Midlands

9.4 Comparing the City of Wolverhampton's own local offer to the feedback from the Regional Offer it can be noted that Wolverhampton offers many of these support requirements. There were only two areas not included in our current offer:

- Discounted utility bills, including wi-fi.
- Free travel across the West Midlands

9.5 Since the last Local Offer review in 2022 City of Wolverhampton Council have implemented council tax exemption arrangements for Care Leavers regardless of their local authority. This offer is not widespread to the other local regional local authorities as outlined here:

Local Authority	Council Tax arrangement
Birmingham	Exception for care experienced young people to the age of 25 from Birmingham only. They will also support their own young people who live out of city.
Coventry	Exception for care experienced young people to the age of 25 only. Coventry will also support their own young people who live out of city.
Dudley	Exception for any young person so is care experienced up to the age of 25.
Walsall	Exemption for care experienced young people to the age of 25 from Walsall only. They will also support their own young people who live out of city.
Sandwell	Exemption for care experienced young people to the age of 25 from Sandwell only.
Telford and Wrekin	Exception for care experienced young people to the age of 25 from Telford and Wrekin only.

9.6 We recognise that reciprocal council tax arrangements, discounts to utilities and discounted travel will require a regional approach to achieving progress and will continue to work with the Regional Care Leaver Offer workstream to achieve these elements for all care leavers in the West Midlands.

10.0 Development Areas:

10.1 The Local Offer Review event and Care Leavers Week feedback suggested overall that our care experienced young people feel positive about what is currently available to them within the local authority. However, some suggestions for improvement include:

- Better access to Opticians and Dentists in Wolverhampton, however young people felt this was a national crisis and not focused on one area alone.
- REACH Team to work with Specialist Dentist Service to establish if young people would meet the service criteria for emergency dentistry support.
- CLIC meetings to be moved to a Thursday evening to work alongside regular Drop-In sessions at The Oasis Hub
- CLIC meetings to work in conjunction with REACH Team “special evenings” to encourage attendance and “fun” element of CLIC.
- For FWT to pilot a specific offer to Care Leavers looking to make meaningful life links with people other than close family relations, including how connections are made, maintained and grown for young people.
- Care Experienced Nurse to be a regular feature at The Oasis Drop in on Thursday afternoons.
- For the Care Experienced Nurse to be aware of the specific needs of Care Experienced young people, including trauma and attachment.
- Free travel across the West Midlands

11.0 Financial implications

11.1 Any costs associated with developments and additions made to the REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers will be contained within the overall budget for 2023-2024 for the Children and Young People in Care Service.

11.2 Other Services within City of Wolverhampton Council and external partner organisations are working in partnership with the Children and Young People in Care Service to support the REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers. Any costs incurred by other Services within City of Wolverhampton Council and external partner organisations will be contained within their existing approved budgets for 2023-2024.

[JG/22122023/P]

12.0 Legal implications

12.1 The publishing of a Local Offer for Care Leavers is a legal requirement as set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to improve support for looked after children in England and Wales, especially for those leaving care.

[SB/02012024/X]

13.0 Equalities implications

- 13.1 Care leavers are asked to begin their journey into adulthood earlier than most young people. This can make them more vulnerable, isolated and unsure how to ask for help. The REACH Local Offer for Care Leavers aims to mitigate against the challenges faced by care leavers in the community.
- 13.2 In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the recent motion to recognise Care Experience as a protected characteristic within City of Wolverhampton Council, the Local Authority have a duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers. Care leavers are asked to begin their journey into adulthood earlier than most young people.
- 13.3 Outcomes for care leavers as a result of their pre-care and in care experience are poorer than their peers. Traumatic experiences before entry into care can cause difficulties, which may affect a child's behaviour, self-esteem, self-regulation, or trust in authority figures. This experience means that nationally compared to the general population care leavers are (DoE, Published 12 August 2019):
- less likely to be in education, employment, or training - over a third of 19-year-old care leavers are not in education, employment, or training
 - more likely to be attempting to live independently - some are unable to remain in their placements beyond the age of 18. They are therefore likely to experience compressed and accelerated transitions to independence.
 - Impact of childhood trauma means they are more likely to suffer with issues relating to emotional health and well being.
 - more likely to have a criminal conviction and may have experienced unnecessary criminalisation. Care leavers are estimated to represent between 24% and 27% of the adult prison population.
- 13.4 The Reach Care Leaver offer sole purpose is to mitigate against the negative impact of being in care and the inequality they can face in society.

14.0 All other Implications

- 14.1 There are no other implications as a result of this report.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Corporate Parenting Board 11 January 2024
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Report title	Children in Care Survey 2023	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Christopher Burden Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All wards	
Accountable director	Alison Hinds, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Children and Young People	
Accountable employee	Jazmine Walker Email:	Head of Children and Young People in Care jazmine.walker@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Children and Young People in Care Meeting	20 December 2023
	Childrens Social Care Leadership Meeting	21 December 2023

Recommendation for action:

Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Children in Care Survey 2023 report.

Recommendation for noting:

Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note:

1. The findings of the Children in Care Annual Survey for 2023 and the highlighted areas for development.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Corporate Parenting Board on the Children in Care Annual Survey 2023 results and findings.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The City of Wolverhampton is determined to be the best possible Corporate Parents to its children in care. To achieve this, the Council seeks to hear and support where possible and co-produce services with children in their care. The Children in Care Annual Survey is a key annual activity to understanding the wider children in care population's views and experiences and this survey feeds into the work of the Council to support children in its care and provide the best possible services throughout the year.
- 2.2 The full findings from the Children in Care Survey 2023 can be found at Appendix 1 and a summary of the findings is provided below.

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 Strengths highlighted by the survey include:
 - 76 children and young people, 25% of the children in care population (310) aged 5-16 within the city of Wolverhampton, completed the Children in Care Survey 2023. An increase in response rate by 16% from 2022.
 - 64% stated they were aware of the advocacy service.
 - 90% rated their relationship with someone who cares for them at home 8/10 or higher.
 - 75% reported their relationship with their social worker 8/10 or above.
 - The majority of young people attend their reviews and 74% reported they were comfortable with how their child in care reviews are conducted. 55% reported their relationship with their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) as 8/10 or above.
 - Over 92% reported feeling supported with their education by their social worker, adult who cares for them, and their school.
 - 69% reported attending their personal education plans (PEPs) all of the time or sometimes with 87% finding this a useful process.
 - The majority of young people reported feeling supported with their hobbies by the adult who cares for them and their school.
 - Young people are accessing a range of enrichment activities and 53% did not want to be offered anymore activities feeling satisfied with their current level (or suggesting currently this was already high).
 - 64% reported they were aware of the Children in Care Council.

Areas for improvement highlighted by the survey include:

- Only 4% (three young people) reported they lived in a Children's Home compared to 16.1% (five young people) in the previous year. This suggests the voices of children living in a Children's home are not being heard.
- 53% young people reported that they did not feel people treated them differently because they are in care, compared with 15 young people (48%) last year.

- On average young people reported their relationship with their IRO as 6.92/10, down 0.36 from last year.
- Young people felt less supported by their social worker (a decrease of 11.4%) and IRO (a decrease of 15.7%) with their hobbies this year compared to last year.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1 The annual survey is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the service, therefore social workers, foster parents, and children's home staff need to be proactive in encouraging all young people to complete the survey. Following changes to the survey and continued reminders from staff and the use of a prize draw incentive participation with the survey increased this year.

4.2 It was evident from the results that there had been an increase in awareness of the support services, groups, and activities on offer for care leavers, including a greater awareness of the CICC. However, there is more that we can do to achieve our ambitious aims as corporate parents for our children and young people in care and the following recommendations have been made in order to hear and act upon our children in care's voices:

- Continue to strive for increase in response rates; target for next years is 35% (the average from national benchmarking). Including how we can use YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok which are our CIC preferred social media platforms.
- Increase the number of children living in children's homes responding to the survey.
- Continue to promote positive achievement of CYPIC and develop a process to ensure any discrimination is reported and challenged.
- Further work is required to understand why on average young people reported their relationship with their IRO is rated lower than last year.
- Some questions did not provide any additional insight into the lives of CYPIC and some questions did. It is important those that didn't are removed to ensure the survey is concise for children to be willing to complete it and those that are useful are repeated and are used for comparative purposes.

4.3 In all 2023, has continued to be a year of growing successes for the CYPIC Service.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no budget implications arising from this report.
[JG/19122023/R]

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 There are no legal implication arising from this report.
[SB/18122023/A]

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the recent motion to recognise Care Experience as a protected characteristic within City of Wolverhampton Council, the Local Authority have a duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all Children and

Young People in Care and Care Leavers. Care leavers are asked to begin their journey into adulthood earlier than most young people.

8.0 All other Implications

8.1 There are no other implications as a result of this report.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Children in Care Survey 2023 findings.

Children in Care Survey 2023 findings.

Context

The key purpose of the Children in Care Survey is to improve the life chances and achieve the best possible outcomes for children whom the City of Wolverhampton Council is their Corporate Parent.

Children and young people in care ages 5 to 16 years were asked to complete the annual Children in Care survey between 22nd August 2023 to 29th October 2023. The survey is produced with the Children in Care Council. The data was collated using a Microsoft Forms questionnaire. The information will continue to inform the priorities of the service and any areas for improvement.

Findings and Summary

76 children and young people, 25% of the children in care population (310) aged 5-16 within the city of Wolverhampton, completed the Children in Care Survey 2023.

In 2022, 32 young people children and young people completed the survey, a total of 9% of the possible children leaving in care population (349) aged 5-16 at the time. Therefore, we have seen an increase in response rate by 16%.

The responses reported from 2023 represent 25% of the total population and views of those children and young people who chose to respond to the survey. Therefore, the analysis of the collected data will be limited to the cohort who participated within the survey. In addition is to be noted that not all respondents answered all questions asked to them.

Since 2015, the Bright Spots Programme, and between 2015 and 2021, have collected over 10,000 voices of children in care through their “Your Life, Your Care” surveys. 36 local authorities (LAs) in England and six LAs in Wales used the Bright Spots surveys with their children and young people in care. On average the response rate was 35%, but it varied by LA (range 15%-84%) of their eligible children completing the surveys. Therefore, this year’s response rate for Wolverhampton’s CIC survey falls within expected national benchmarking standards.

Age

1. How old are you?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Between 5 - 10 years old	19
● Between 11 - 14 years old	20
● Between 15 - 16 years old	37



All respondents answered this question, the 15-16 age range accounted for 49% of all responses.

Where do you live?

2. Where do you live?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Residential- Children's home	3
Wolverhampton Foster Parent	53
Non Wolverhampton Foster Par...	11
With family members	9
With Parents	0



All respondents answered this question, 53 (70%) reported that they lived with a Wolverhampton Foster Parent. There was increase in the total number of responses this year where children reported they live foster parents; it can be suggested that the Fostering Services have promoted the survey more widely this year which may have led to this increase.

Only 4% (3 young people) reported they lived in a Children's Home compared to 16.1% (5 young people) in the previous year. This suggests the voices of children living in a Children's home are not being heard.

Do you think people treat you differently because you are in care?

3. Do you think people treat you differently because you are in care?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Yes	8
No	34
Sometimes	22



Of the 76 participants, 64 responded to this question. 34 young people (53%) reported that they did not feel people treated them differently because they are in care, compared with 15 young people (48%) last year. This is an increase of 5% however given both sample sizes are small this suggests the amount of discrimination experienced remains relatively the same or has slightly improved.

Do you know what the advocacy service is?

4. Do you know what the advocacy service is?

(A person who speaks on your behalf when you need them to. The Childrens Society Advocates)

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes 49
● No 27



Of the 76 recipients all respondents answered this question, 49 young people (64%) stated they were aware of the advocacy service an increase of 9% from last year.

Do you know how to speak to an advocate?

5. Do you know how to speak to an advocate?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes 39
● No 37



Following on from feedback received from last years survey, a supplementary question to better understand young people's knowledge of how to access an advocate was added to this year's survey.

All respondents answered this question, a near 50/50 split between those who knew and did not know how to access an advocate. This could suggest that while young people are aware of the advocates existence how to access one is not always made clear.

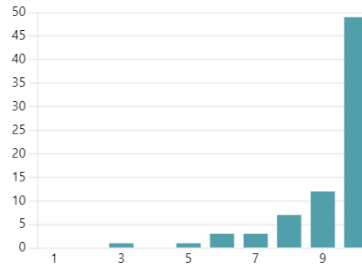
Out of 10, how do you rate your relationships with adults who care for you (in your home)?

6. Out of 10, how would you rate your relationship with the adults who care for you (in your home)?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

9.22
Average Rating



On average, respondents rated the adult who cares for them in their home as a 9.22/10, an increase of 0.29 on last years responses. 68 young people (90%) rated their relationship with someone who cares for them at home 8/10 or higher an increase of 2% from last year.

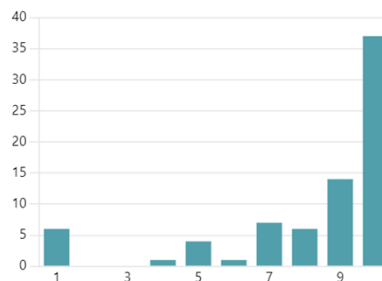
Out of 10, how would you rate your relationship with your Social Worker?

7. Out of 10, how would you rate your relationship with your Social Worker?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

8.28
Average Rating



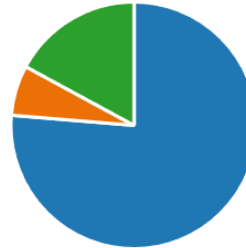
On average, respondents rated their relationship with their social worker as 8.28/10 a slight decrease from 8.70 on last year. 57 young people (75%) reported that they rated their relationship with their social worker 8/10 or above.

Have you been supported to keep in contact with your friends and/or family?

8. Have you been supported to keep in contact with your friends and/or family?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	58
● No	5
● Sometimes	13



58 young people (76%) reported they had been supported to keep in contact with friends and family who are important to them. A decrease of 5% on last year however given both sample sizes are small this suggests this remains relatively the same or has slightly decreased.

How does your school support you?

9. How does your school support you?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

76

Responses

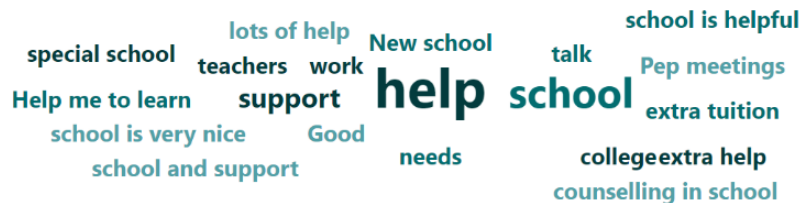
Latest Responses

"They help me with my school work they give me extra support in lessons. "

"I'm at a new school"

"I don't actually know"

18 respondents (24%) answered **help** for this question.



Following feedback from the Virtual School this supplementary question was added for this year. All respondents answered this question, a total of 48% reported positive support from their schools and teachers. 18 young people (24%) that they felt their school “helped them” to learn and supported them. In addition, seven young people (9%) reported they had additional support with tuition for specific subjects such as Maths and English, and 11 young people (15%) reported they were provided with additional mental health support. However, 13 young people (17%) said they were unsure what support they were provided or did not receive any extra support. The remaining 35% of answers were unclear and were unable to be categorised.

Out of 10, how would you rate your relationship with your IRO?

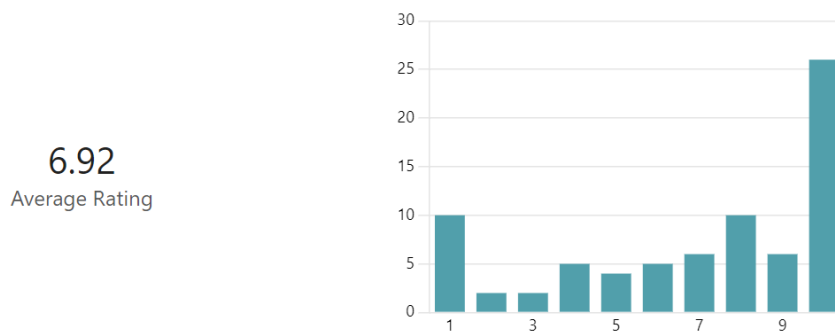
On average young people reported their relationship with their IRO as 6.92/10, down 0.36 from last year.

Of the respondents 42 young people (55%) reported their relationship with their IRO as 8/10 or above. The majority of young people report a good relationship with their IRO however there are a significant group that report lower satisfaction rates with their IRO and the average rating of 6.92 is lower than we would like and has decreased since last year.

10. Out of 10 how would you rate your relationship with your IRO? (Independant Reviewing Officer)

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)



Do you feel supported with your Education by...

11. Do you feel supported with your Education by...

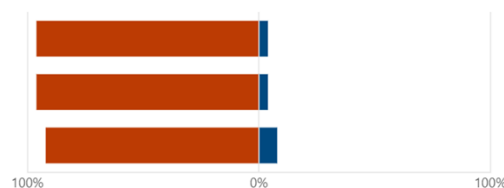
[More Details](#)

■ Yes ■ No

Your Social Worker

Adults that care for you

Your School

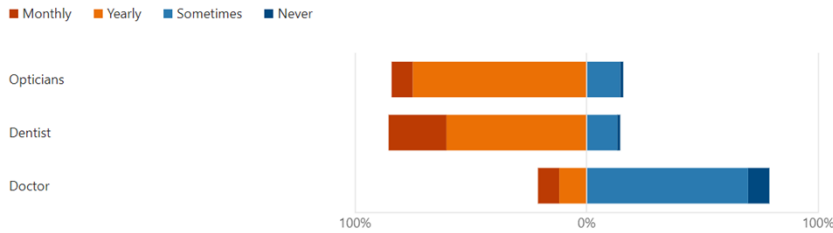


73 respondents answered this question, 96.1% reported they felt positively supported in their education by their social worker. 96.1% of young people felt supported by adults who care for them, an increase of 2.6%. Alongside this 92.1% reported they felt supported by their school, an increase of 2.1% on last year.

How often do you attend the following...

12. How often do you attend the following...

[More Details](#)



At the request of Children in Care Council the following question was added to this year's survey regarding health appointments. Of 76 respondents, 57 young people (75%) attended the opticians yearly and 1 person (1.3%) reporting they had never seen an optician.

19 young people (25%) reported they visited the dentist monthly, 46 young people (60.5%) attending yearly, and only 1 person (1.3%) reporting they had never seen a dentist.

Of 76 respondents, 53 young people (69.7%) reported they visited the doctor sometimes and 7 young people (9.2%) reporting they had never seen a doctor.

Do you attend your PEP meetings?

13. Do you attend your Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	21
● No	24
● Sometimes	31



Out of the 76 respondents, 21 young people (28%) reported they always attend their PEP reviews, a decrease of 12% on last year. A further 31 young people (41%) stated they sometimes attended their PEP meetings, an increase of 8% on last year.

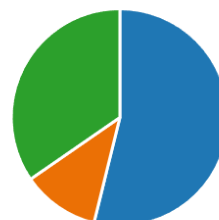
Do you find your PEP helpful in supporting your education?

14. Do you find your PEP helpful in supporting your education?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

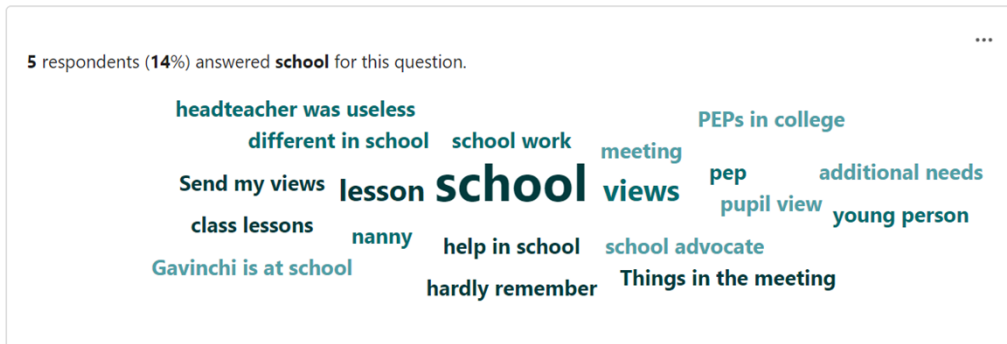
● Yes	28
● No	6
● Sometimes	18



Following feedback from Children in Care Council and Virtual School this question was added as a supplementary question to give further information.

Of the 76 respondents, 52 responded to this question. 28 young people (54%) reported that they felt the PEP was useful in supporting their education, with a further 18 (35%) stating it was sometimes useful with only 6 (12%) reported they did not find the PEP process useful.

If not, why not?



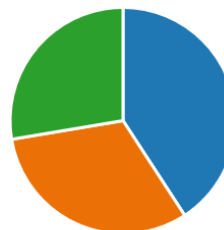
36 respondents chose to answer this question, of those 6 young people (17%) reported they did not want to be singled out and taken from lessons to take part in their PEP meeting.

Do you attend your Child in Care Review?

16. Do you attend your Children in Care Review?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

● Yes	31
● No	24
● Sometimes	21



All respondents answered this question. 31 young people (41%) said they do attend their child in care reviews, an increase of 4% on last year with 24 young people (32%) reported they are not attending at all, a decrease of 1%.

If not, why not?



32 responded to this question.

Of these seven young people (22%) young people said they felt the reviews were too long, five young people (16%) felt the reviews were boring and five young people (16%) also added they felt too shy or the reviews had too many adults involved so they would not like to attend.

An additional 12 young people (38%) young people simply reported they did not want to attend, without further details provided as to why.

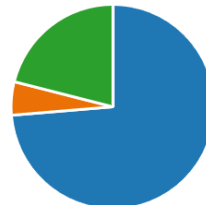
Are you involved and comfortable with how your child in care reviews are done?

18. Are you involved and comfortable with how your child in care reviews are done?

[More Details](#)

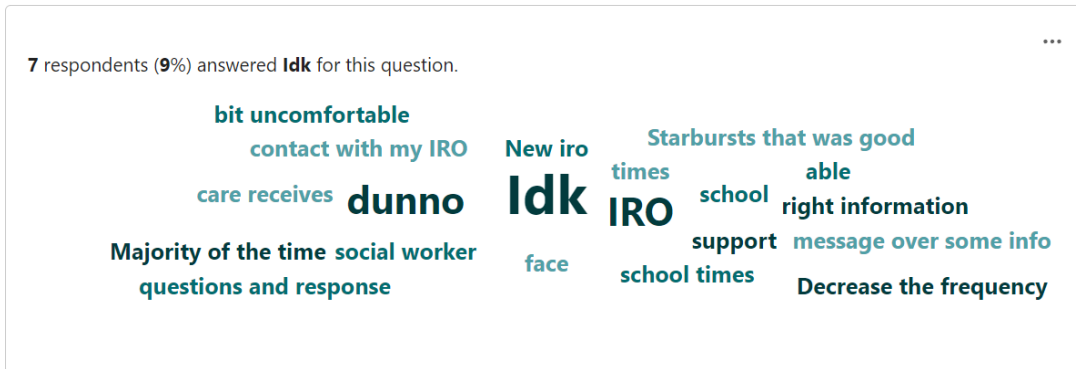
[Insights](#)

● Yes	56
● No	4
● Sometimes	16



All respondents answered this question, 56 young people (74%) reported they were comfortable with how their child in care reviews are conducted, a decrease of 4% on last year. four young people (5%) reported they were not happy with how their reviews were conducted, a slight increase of 1% on last year. Overall, this has remained consistent.

How could your child in care reviews be improved?



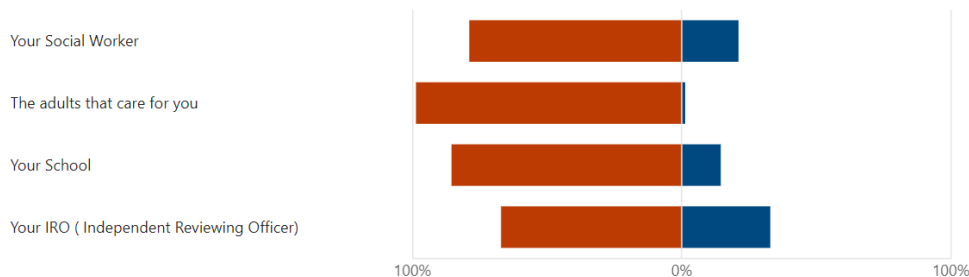
45% of young people reported they didn't know or were unsure as to how to prove the reviews. However, some young people did provide some specific feedback on how reviews could be improved with 3 young people (4%) reported they would like reviews to take place outside of school or outside of school times, 3 young people (4%) asked for more contact with IRO, and a further 3 young people (4%) reported reviews could be confusing and mainly social worker led.

Do you feel supported in your hobbies by...

20. Do you feel supported to do your Hobbies by...

[More Details](#)

■ Yes ■ No



A total of 60 young people (78.9%) reported they felt supported by their Social Worker to complete their hobbies, a decrease of 11.4% on last year.

A further 98.7% of young people reported the adults who care for them at their home support their hobbies and interests an increase of 5.2% on last year.

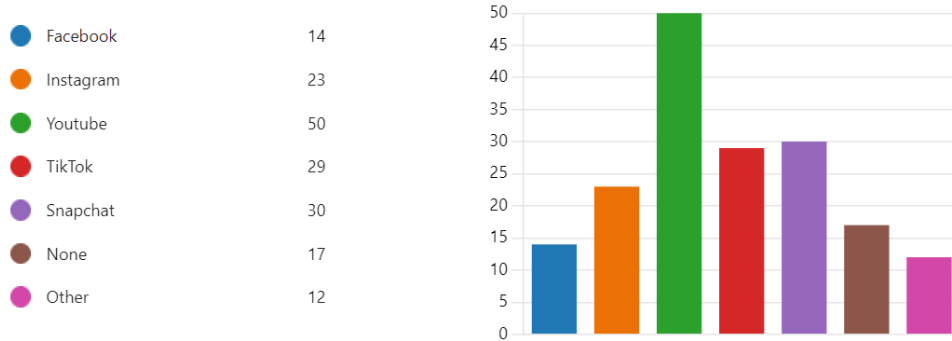
An additional 85.5% of respondents reported they were supported by their school and increase of 11.3% on last year.

61.7% young people reported they also felt supported by their IRO, a decrease of 15.7% on last year.

What social media platform do you use?

21. Which social media platforms do you use?

[More Details](#)



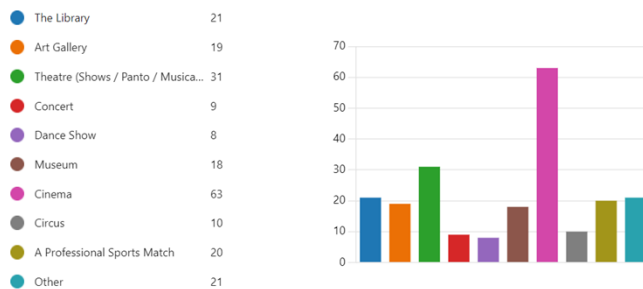
Following feedback from Corporate Parenting Board this was a supplementary question added to this year's survey and as such has no comparative data from previous years. Respondents were able to select more than one option for their answer.

Of the social media platforms listed, 50 young people stated they used YouTube as their regular social media platform of choice. A further 30 used Snapchat with 29 using TikTok.

In the last 12 months I have been to...

22. In the last 12 months I have been to:

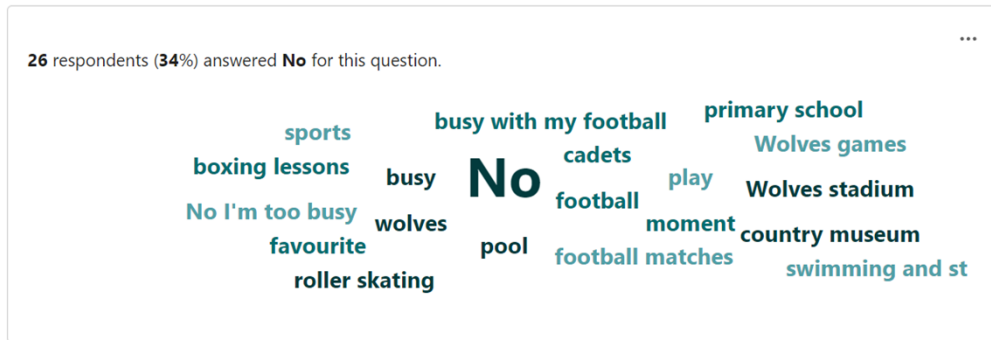
[More Details](#)



Following feedback from Virtual School this was a supplementary question added to this year's survey and as such has no comparative data from previous years. Respondents were also able to select more than one option for their answer.

Of the enrichment activities listed, 63 young people had visited the cinema in the last 12 months, making this the most accessed, followed by attendance at the theatre of 31 young people.

We really want you to get involved in local activities. Are there any activities you would like to experience?



Following feedback from Virtual School this was a supplementary question added to this year’s survey and as such has no comparative data from previous years.

A total of 40 young people (53%) answered no, they didn’t know, or they were already too busy with other activities outside of school.

Number of young people	Activity
8 (11%)	Football/Sports Matches
3 (4%)	Boxing
3 (4%)	Cadets/Cubs
2 (3%)	Swimming
2 (3%)	Snooker/Pool
1 (1%)	Black Country Museum
1 (1%)	Gardening
1 (1%)	Rock Climbing
1 (1%)	Ballroom Dancing
1 (1%)	Zoo
1 (1%)	Go Karting
1 (1%)	Animals
1 (1%)	Soft Play
1 (1%)	Circus
1 (1%)	Athletics
1 (1%)	Roller Skating
1 (1%)	Gymnastics
1 (1%)	Rugby
1 (1%)	Ice Skating
1 (1%)	Karate

Would you like a newsletter to be sent directly to you to let you know what's happening in your world and the opportunities open to you?

24. Would you like a newsletter to be sent directly to you to let you know what's happening in your world and the opportunities open to you? (E.g - Activities, services, projects etc.)

[More Details](#)

- Yes please 38
- No thanks 38



Following feedback from Children in Care Council this question was added for this year and as such has no comparable data.

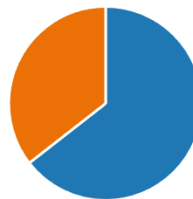
Are you aware of the children in care council?

25. Are you aware of the Children In Care Council?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

- Yes 49
- No 27



Following feedback from Children in Care Council this question was amended and added for this year and as such has no comparable data. Of those 76 respondents a total of 49 (64%) reported they were aware of the Children in Care Council.

Are you aware of the Participation Team who support the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum?

26. Are you aware of the Participation Team who support the Children In Care Council & Care Leavers Forum? (City of Wolverhampton Council)

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

- Yes 25
- No 51



Following feedback from Children in Care Council and CYPIC Managers this question was amended and added for this year and as such has no comparable data. Of those 76 respondents a total of 51 (67%) reported they were not aware of the Participation Team.

Strengths	Areas for development	Recommendations
<p>76 children and young people, 25% of the children in care population (310) aged 5-16 within the city of Wolverhampton, completed the Children in Care Survey 2023. An increase in response rate by 16% from 2022.</p> <p>64% stated they were aware of the advocacy service.</p> <p>90% rated their relationship with someone who cares for them at home 8/10 or higher.</p> <p>75% reported their relationship with their social worker 8/10 or above.</p> <p>The majority of young people attend their reviews and 74% reported they were comfortable with how their child in care reviews are conducted. 55% reported their relationship with their IRO as 8/10 or above.</p> <p>Over 92% reported feeling supported with their education by their social worker, adult who cares for them, and their school</p> <p>69% reported attending their PEPs all of the time or sometimes with 87% finding this a useful process.</p> <p>The majority of young people reported feeling supported with their hobbies by the adult who cares for them and their school.</p> <p>Young people are accessing a range of enrichment activities and 53% did not</p>	<p>Only 4% (3 young people) reported they lived in a Children’s Home compared to 16.1% (5 young people) in the previous year. This suggests the voices of children living in a Children’s home are not being heard.</p> <p>53% young people reported that they did not feel people treated them differently because they are in care, compared with 15 young people (48%) last year.</p> <p>On average young people reported their relationship with their IRO as 6.92/10, down 0.36 from last year.</p> <p>Young people felt less supported by their SW (a decrease of 11.4%) and IRO (a decrease of 15.7%) with their hobbies this year compared to last year.</p>	<p>Continue to strive for increase in response rates; target for next years is 35% (the average from national benchmarking). Including how we can use YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok which are our CIC preferred social media platforms.</p> <p>Increase the number of children living in children’s homes responding to the survey.</p> <p>Continue to promote positive achievement of CYPIC and develop a process to ensure any discrimination is reported and challenged.</p> <p>Further work is required to understand why on average young people reported their relationship with their IRO is rated lower than last year.</p> <p>Some questions did not provide any additional insight into the lives of CYPIC and some questions did. It is important those that didn’t are removed to ensure the survey is concise for children to be willing to complete it and those that are useful are repeated and are used for comparative purposes.</p>

want to be offered anymore activities feeling satisfied with their current level (or suggesting currently this was already high).

64% reported they were aware of the Children in Care Council.

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Corporate Parenting Board

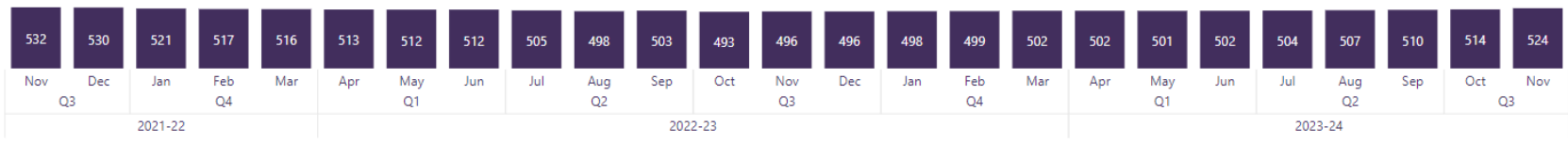
Areas of Focus

11/01/2024

Reporting Period: 01/11/2023 – 30/11/2023

Numbers of Children and Young People In Care

Number of Children and Young People in Care (Month End Snapshots)



Levels of Children and young people in care have been slowly increasing over the past 12 months. November saw the number of CaYPiC peak at 524, the highest number recorded since December 2021.

As of 30/12/2023 there are 518 CAYPIC.

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CaYPiC Admissions and Exits by Month

● CYPiC Admissions (Other) ● CYPiC Admissions (UASC) ● Care ceased for any other reason (including child turned 18) ● CYPiC Exits (All Other Reasons)

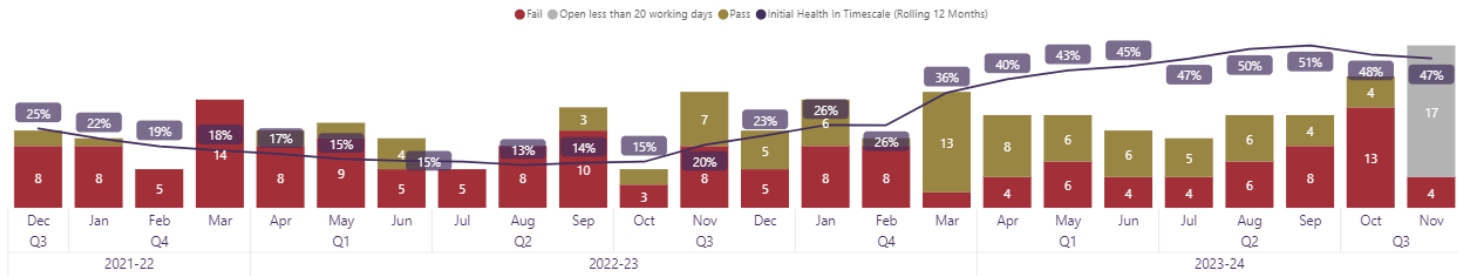


In November, there were 23 children and young people admitted to care; an increase of four compared to the previous month.

Service Comment: We have analysed the cohort in November and are satisfied only those who needed to come into our care did so. Within this cohort: four of those admitted in November were UASC, one sibling group of four entered care, and two children / young people were remanded to secure units / Youth Offender Institutes.

CaYPIC Initial Health Assessments Within 20 Working Days

% of CaYPIC starts within the month with an initial health assessment in 20 working days

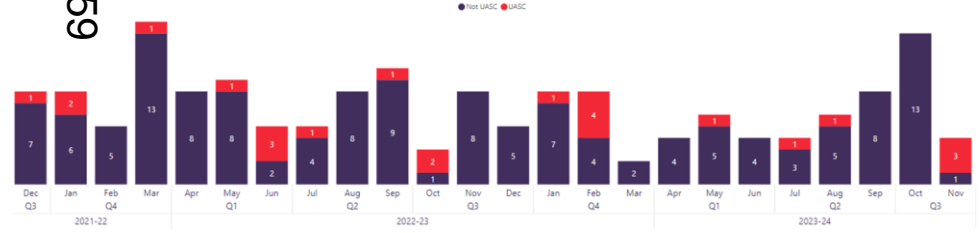


As of 14/12/2023, 12 fails are now recorded for November 2023

The percentage of CaYPIC starts with an Initial Health assessment within 20 working days has decreased to 47% for November. As this measure reflects a rolling 12-month percentage, while it remains significantly higher than 20% recorded in November 2022 there has been an increasing number of fails recorded in the past four months which is now reflected in the rolling 12-month percentage. This has possibly been impacted by the increased number of CYP entering care over the past two months.

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CaYPIC Initial Health Assessment Within 20 Working Day Fails



Three of the initial health assessment fails in November were for UASC. However overall, in 2023/24, UASC only account for 12% of all fails.

Service Comment: The team(s) continue to work hard to ensure the paperwork is completed within 5 days. In the Health Steering Group, it has been identified that the social workers have completed the paperwork, but the appointment was marked as did not attend (DNA) and / or clinic capacity was an issue.

CaYPIC Reviews Health Assessments in Timescale

% of CaYPIC with a review health assessment in timescale (Month End Snapshots)



The overall percentage of CaYPIC with a review health assessment in timescale has decreased to 69.8% with 115 fails from 69.8% with 82 fails for October 2023.

Of the 115 fails none were recorded as 'declined' therefore based on the latest medical date, the average number of days with a Health Assessment overdue is 77 days which has decreased from the average number of days for October (81). There are 36 young people who are aged 16 and above and have not had a health assessment review within the given timeframe. 108 of the 115 fails sit within the CAYPIC Teams.

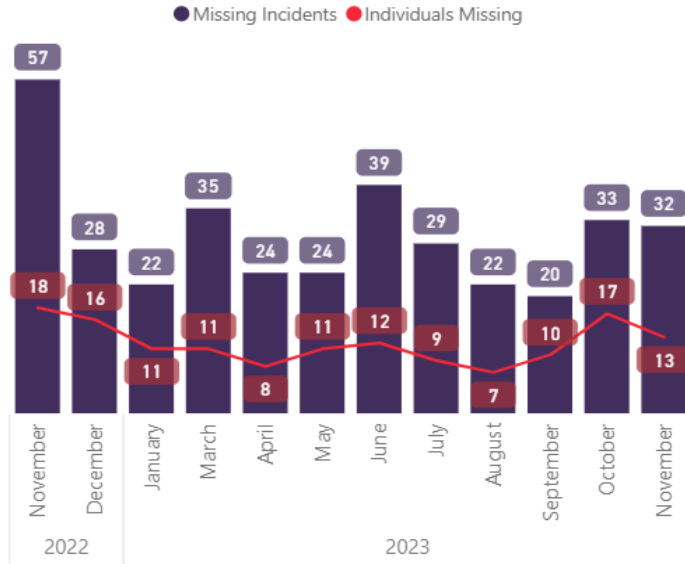
The overall percentage (69.8%) remains below the latest published percentages for West Midlands (86%), statistical neighbours (90.2%) and England (89%).

Percent of children looked after having health checks								
Local Authority, Region and England		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change from previous year
336	Wolverhampton	88.00	93.00	96.00	86.00	90.00	90.00	0.00
984	West Midlands	86.00	88.00	87.00	89.00	86.00	83.00	-3.00
	Statistical Neighbours	89.00	90.60	89.30	89.30	90.20	87.80	-2.40
970	England	88.00	90.00	90.00	91.00	89.00	89.00	0.00

Service Comment: There was an oversight with Business Support updates in November, creating a backlog of information to be uploaded to Eclipse. A full review of Assessments is being conducted to fully understand the position.

Number of CaYPIC missing incidents by month

Number of CaYPIC Missing Incidents by Month



Page 61

Year	2023
Missing From	November
Foster care	19
Other	11
Residential Home	1
School	1
Total	32

Year	2023
Time Missing	November
<24 Hours	9
1 Day	13
2-6 Days	9
7+ Days	1
Total	32

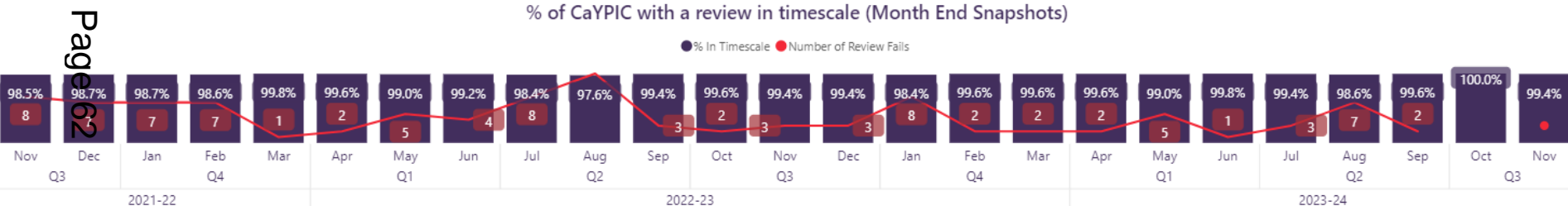
Within the last 12 months the number of missing incidents has been sporadic, reaching as high as 57 incidents with 18 individuals in November 22. In November 2023 there were 32 missing incidents, a decrease of 1 from October and a reduction of 4 individuals to 13. Five of the incidents have been generated by one young person.

Comments (November): The number of missing children and the number of missing episodes has decreased, the team(s) are aware of who the children are and there are actions recorded within the children's care plans to prevent future missing episodes.

CaYPIC Reviews In Timescale

Performance Comment:

The percentage of CaYPIC reviews within timescale has been consistently above 98% for the over 12-months, with 99.4% recorded within timescale in November relating to just three fails recorded. This followed 100% recorded in October with no fails recorded for the first time in over two years, signifying the strong performance in this area.



Service Comment: Performance in this area continues to be strong.

wolverhampton.gov.uk

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