

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Strong Families, Children, and Young People Scrutiny Panel 13 July 2022
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Report title	Children's Service Self-Evaluation 2022-2023	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Beverley Momenabadi	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett	
Originating service	Children's Services	
Accountable employee	Alison Hinds Tel Email	Deputy Director +44 1902 553035 alison.hinds@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board	26/05/22 31/05/22

Recommendation for decision:

The destination meeting is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Children's Service Self Evaluation 2022-2023.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the Self Evaluation (SEF) 2022-2023 in relation to Children's Services in Wolverhampton. This summary includes details of the SEF 2022-23. The full document is attached as Appendix1.

2.0 Background

2.1 The completion of an annual Self Evaluation of Children's Services is a requirement of Ofsted under the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) and is prepared in Wolverhampton at the end of each financial year and then refreshed bi-annually at the end of September. The Self Evaluation for 2022-23 has been completed and shared with SEB and with Ofsted. Included in our SEF are reflections on our achievements in 2021-22 and priority areas for development for 2022-23.

3.0 Achievements in 2021-2022:

- Continued management of overall demand across the social care system meaning the right support is offered to children, young people and their families at the right time and at the earliest opportunity.
- Embedding of Social Worker in Schools pilot project
- Power2 team working with young people up to the age of 25 at risk of exploitation, now a permanently established team
- Embedding of Partnership Missing and Exploitation Hub with strong partnership working arrangements
- Established support offered to families who have no recourse to public funding has resulted in families achieving an immigration outcome earlier and therefore enabled children to achieve a sense of permanence and have access to services earlier when they are given right to remain.
- Reduced reoffending rates for young people remains spectacular, alongside a reduction in custodial sentences and numbers of young people on Remand
- Winner of Children and Young People Now Award 2021 in the Care Leaver category for the impact of the House Project on improved outcomes for young people, and finalist in the Children in Care category for our Aspire2Uni programme
- Expansion of apprenticeships ringfenced for care leavers at City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) and establishment of inclusive apprenticeships within the council to support young people needing additional flexible apprenticeship support
- Improved education outcomes for children in care including increased numbers of young people attending university and graduating with excellent degrees. In Wolverhampton we have 3 times the national average number of care leavers attending university

- Three quarters of children in care are now placed with foster carers approved by CWC with sustained good performance in long and short term placement stability for children in care
- 45 young people live in Staying Put arrangements with their former foster carers
- Successful implementation of Local House Project, 21 young people have now been part of the House Project, with 12 now living independently, a further 4 are now living in accommodation suitable to their needs, and we have 2 in our current cohort planning to move into their own properties
- Opening of a co-production hub, providing a venue for young people to call their own, accommodating the House Project, a drop in for care leavers, The Reach Café, and a base for co-production with children and young people
- Successful implementation of MASH24, our combined MASH EDT service
- Pathway launched to support young parents in need of additional support in early parenthood
- Expansion of the use of Family Group Conferencing to strengthen opportunities for children to live within their families
- Reflective discussions, regular supervisions and management oversight are consistently recorded on children's records (noted by Ofsted)
- Consistently good quality records are kept for children with the voice of children and young people being strong throughout all records, underpinned by strong analytical evidence-based assessments and plans that are SMART and child centred (noted by Ofsted)
- Social workers spend meaningful time with children and build positive relationships. Creative direct work with children enables them to understand their experiences (noted by Ofsted)
- More children are being placed utilising early permanence options working closely with Adoption@Heart, with 44 Adoption Orders granted in the year and most children being adopted by adopters approved by Adoption@Heart

4.0 Areas for development in 2022-2023

- 4.1 The Practice Improvement Plan, Aiming for Excellence, has successfully embedded good consistent practice across Children's Social Care Services, as noted by Ofsted. This methodology will continue to be utilised to enhance practice further, helping us to focus on our evolving practice priorities which are informed by our quality assurance work.

4.2 In addition, across Children and Young People's service we will:

- Embed an integrated offer across Children's and Adult services to enable our families to thrive including development of a single front door
- Continue to embed Restorative Practice across Children's Services, looking particularly at developing restorative approaches to child protection conferences, and extending training to partners, enhancing consistency to our strength based relational approach to practice
- Embed ease of access to a range of services for children and families through the Family Hub offer via Strengthening Family hubs
- Achieve target of 'turning around' 453 families as part of the extended Supporting Families Programme as part of our Strengthening Families approach
- Embed the expansion of the use of Family Group Conferencing to strengthen opportunities for children to live within their families
- Extend the Social workers in Schools project for a further year and review and evaluate to inform future practice models
- Develop a programme of intervention and support to work with parents who have had previous children taken into care, to increase opportunities for any future children to remain cared for by their birth parents
- Strengthen even further the stability of our placements for children and young people in care
- Ensure recruitment and retention of foster carers remains strong; monitor impact of our recruitment campaign, extend the Foster Families United model, and develop the additional benefits offered to foster carers – especially those caring for older and more complex children
- Implement internal residential provision for our most complex young people, increasing placement sufficiency
- Extend our pilot project "Back on Track," diverting young people from criminality as early as possible
- Embed further opportunities for co-production with children and families in the city, particularly for those open to the Strengthening Family service to ensure their views shape our service planning
- Embed the key priorities of our Equalities action plan to ensure delivery of inclusive services that tackle inequalities which some children and young people face

- Further development of social care support to our SEND children through the strategic lead of our Designated Social Care officer (DCSO), now a full-time dedicated post, our SEND champions across Childrens Services and our specialist case worker in IASS
- Improve support and opportunities for all of our most vulnerable young people to be able to access and sustain a range of EET opportunities
- Embed the Culture of Inclusion Programme to support the inclusion and educational engagement of vulnerable learners supported by the extended role of the VSH
- Improve the consistency of the quality of PEPs continuing to support the educational outcomes of our children in care

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no financial implications for this report.

[JG/05072022/V]

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

[SB/05072022/U]

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 The SEF is a summary of the impact of services offered to our children, young people and families in the city. It highlights areas of good practice and areas which we believe need more focussed work. It provides analysis of performance information. This analysis demonstrates the difference we are making to the lives of our diverse children and young people in the city, many of whom face significant disadvantage; thus affording them greater opportunity to grow up in strong families where children can grow up well and achieve their full potential.

8.0 All other Implications

8.1 There are no other implications.

9.0 Schedule of background papers

9.1 there are no background papers.

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1: SEF 2022-2023