

Agenda

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 19 January 2016, 2.00 pm
County Hall, Worcester

All County Councillors are invited to attend and participate

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اردو۔ اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی مشمولات کو سمجھنے سے قاصر ہیں اور کسی ایسے شخص تک آپ کی رسائی نہیں ہے جو آپ کے لئے اس کا ترجمہ کرسکے تو، براہ کرم مدد کے لئے 01905 765765 پر رابطہ کریں۔ (Urdu)

كوردی سۆزانی. ننگیر نۆتوانی تێبگهی له ناوچرێکی نهم بپلگهی و دهستت به ههچ کس نایگات که وهیگێزێتوه بۆت، تکلیه تملظۆن بکه بۆ ژمارهی 01905 765765 و داوای رێنۆینی بکه. (Kurdish)

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸਮਝਣ ਸਮਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਇਸਦਾ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ 01905 765765 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ। (Punjabi)

DISCLOSING INTERESTS

There are now 2 types of interests:
'Disclosable pecuniary interests' and **'other disclosable interests'**

WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3rd party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
 - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
- You must **declare** them at a particular meeting where:
You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have a **pecuniary interest** in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests OR** relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorded' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
 - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 19 January 2016, 2.00 pm, County Hall, Worcester

Membership

Councillors:

Ms L R Duffy (Chairman), Mrs F M Oborski (Vice Chairman), Mr R W Banks, Mr P Denham, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mr I Hopwood and Mr J W R Thomas

Co-opted Church Representatives (for education matters)

Bryan Allbut (Church of England) and Francis Mohan (Roman Catholic)

Parent Governor Representatives (for education matters)

Ms C Richardson (Parent Governor) and Vacancy

Agenda

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	Apologies and Welcome	
2	Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip	
3	Public Participation Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in writing or by e-mail indicating the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case 18 January 2016). Enquiries can be made through the telephone number/e-mail address below.	
4	Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting (previously circulated)	
5	Budget and Performance Monitoring: Children and Families	1 - 22
6	The Educational Attainment of Worcestershire Looked After Children	23 - 32
7	Children with Disabilities - Commissioning Update	33 - 44

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All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website at <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/democratic-services/minutes-and-agenda.aspx>

Date of Issue: Monday, 11 January 2016

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

19 JANUARY 2016

BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Summary

1. As part of the Council's consultation process for the 2016/17 budget proposals, the Director and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children and Families have been invited to discuss:

- latest performance information for 2015/16
- the draft 2016/17 budget.

2015/16 Performance

2. The Director has been asked to give an overview of performance from July to September 2015 (Quarter 2), which is the latest available data. The Directorate's performance data can be accessed on the Council's website [via this link](#) (by selecting 'Children's Services' from the Directorate field), and a copy is attached at Appendix 1.

2016/17 Budget Proposals

3. Following the scrutiny panels' round of budget discussions during November 2015, the Budget Member Challenge Group has requested that panels revisit and agree their comments on the Future Fit savings proposals taking into account [the information discussed by Cabinet at its meeting on 17 December 2015](#) (hard copy circulated to Members of the Panel).

4. The final settlement information received from the Government, late December is still being worked through.

5. The conclusion of the Budget Member Challenge exercise, incorporating the views of individual scrutiny panels, will inform the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board, which will be meeting on 28 January to consider what comments will be passed to Cabinet.

Equality and Diversity Implications

6. The Council's Equality and Diversity Manager contributed to the Panel's earlier discussion in November 2015, of the proposed 2016/17 budget.

Purpose of the meeting

7. The Panel is asked to:
 - discuss and agree any comments which the Chairman will report back to the Budget Member Challenge Group
 - discuss the latest performance information and agree any comments to raise with the Cabinet Member(s)
 - agree any further information required or potential areas of scrutiny.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 - Balanced scorecard – Quarter 2 2015/16

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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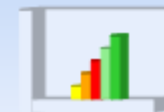
Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agendas and Minutes of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on [18 November 2015](#)
- Agenda and Minutes of Cabinet on [17 December 2015](#)

Minutes and Agendas for all County Council meetings are available [here](#).

Worcestershire County Council Balanced Scorecard



Children's Services

Quarter 2 2015/16

To view more information for a particular indicator, please click the indicator name.

[Return to summary page](#)

Targets relate to 2015/16 financial year, unless otherwise stated.

Key to Direction of travel



Deteriorating



No change




Improving








Not applicable


Area of Focus



Area of Focus	Performance Indicator	Target	Latest Performance		Direction of Travel	Data Period	Comments
Children & Families	Decrease in the percentage of permanent exclusions in primary schools from: 0.03 in 2013/14 to 0.01 in 2014/15.	0.01%	0.05%	RED		2014/15 Academic Year	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of permanent exclusions in primary schools has increased by 0.02% from 0.03% in 2013/14 to 0.05% in 2014/15 academic year. Provisional data from ONE.</p> <p>Activity: Schools are under increasing pressure</p>



							under the new Ofsted requirements to demonstrate excellent behaviour from children in their schools and are less likely to tolerate behavioural issues. The current national Exclusions Guidance and increase in the number of academies means that there is less opportunity for LA challenge. The Independent Review of Exclusions process has changed the focus of the LA to examining and making judgements about the process schools have followed, rather than appropriate support for a child experiencing behavioural difficulties. Our focus now has begun to concentrate on the issue of reintegration following permanent exclusion.
Children & Families	Decrease in the percentage of permanent exclusions in secondary schools from: 0.11% in 2014/15 to 0.10% in 2014/15.	0.10%	0.20%	RED		2014/15 Academic Year	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of exclusions in secondary schools has increased by 0.06% from 0.11% in 2013/14 to 0.17% in 2014/15 academic year Provisional data from ONE.</p> <p>Activity: Schools are under increasing pressure under the new Ofsted requirements to demonstrate excellent behaviour from children in their schools and are less likely to tolerate behavioural issues. The current national Exclusions Guidance and increase in the number of academies means that there is less opportunity for LA challenge. The Independent Review of Exclusions process has changed the focus of the LA to examining and making judgements about the process schools have followed, rather than appropriate support for a child experiencing behavioural difficulties. Our focus now has begun to concentrate on the issue of reintegration following</p>



							permanent exclusion.
Children & Families	A decrease in the number of children with a CPP for 18 months or more from 13 at 31/03/2015 to 10 in 2015/16	10	17	RED		as at 30/09/2015	<p>Data Commentary: The number of children on a child protection plan for 18 months or more has increased by 3 from 14 at 30/06/15 to 17 at 30/09/15. This is a direct result of activity through the Back to Basics Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Activity: The new model of Child Protection Conferencing is being developed and will include a definitive step up to LAC /step down to CIN at the 3rd Child Protection Conference (9 months) to ensure children do not drift through the child protection system. Auditing of all children subject to CPP for 12 – 18 months will be undertaken to ensure that children have the right plan and that the intervention is right for them and having a positive impact.</p>
Children & Families	Percentage of NEET's unknown	10.0%	52.3%	RED		as at 30/09/2015	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of NEET's unknown has increased by 46.0% from 6.3% at 30/06/15 to 52.3% at the 30/09/15. The NEET figure in September is adversely affected every year by the transition of young people between education provision at this time. This arises annually due to the movement of young people in education and learning at the start of the academic year in September and the lag in information from schools and colleges that temporarily skews the data prior to re-establishing their destinations.</p> <p>Activity: This re-adjustment occurs during Q3 and it is expected that this will return to the</p>


							previously achieved level of circa 5.0%
Children & Families	Children placed outside LA boundary 20+ miles from where they used to live to be 12% or less	12%	9.5%	GREEN		Q2 2015/16	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of children placed outside the LA boundary 20+ miles from where they used to live has decreased by 3.9% from 13.4% in Q1 to 9.5% in Q2. Although we have had a general increase in LAC numbers we have still been able to reduce the percentage of children placed outside LA boundary 20+ miles from where they use to live.</p> <p>Activity: A reduction due to development of in-house supported living provision for 16+ has helped improve this indicator and we anticipate this will also show an improvement going forward.</p>
Children & Families	The percentage of LAC adopted as a proportion of children looked after for 6 months to remain at 14.5% in 2015/16.	14.5%	4.9%	N/A		As at 30/09/2015	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of LAC adopted as a proportion of children looked after for 6 months has increased by 1.4% from 3.5% in Q1 year to date to 4.9% Q2 year to date. This indicator is RAG-rated at the end of the year as the percentage is cumulative over time. Performance is improving but timely Permanency Planning has been identified as a key service priority, and changes will be made over the next few months to improve the effectiveness of the permanency planning process.</p> <p>Activity:</p>
Children & Families	Percentage of children subject to a child protection plan	15.80%	12.7%	GREEN		as at 30/09/2015	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of children on a 2nd or subsequent child protection plan has reduced by 9.3% from 22.0% in Q1 to</p>



	for the 2nd or subsequent time in line with the national average						12.7% in Q2. This is directly linked to the Back to Basics Improvement Plan and the increased scrutiny of application of threshold between the Team Manager and the Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service. Activity: The new model for Child Protection Conferencing is being developed and will ensure that the cessation of a CP plan is robustly tested.
Children & Families	Decrease in persistent absence in primary schools from 2.4% in 2013/14 to 2.1% in 2014/15.	2.1%	3.0%	RED		2014/15 Academic Year	Data Commentary: The percentage of pupils that were persistently absent in primary schools has increased by 0.8% from 2.4% in 2013/14 academic year to 3.0% in 2014/15 academic year (5 half terms). This is identified from provisional data from the ONE system and will be ratified later in the year via national census data. Activity: The Phase 2 of the Stronger Families program retains a focus on improving school attendance. Early Help is being re-focused under the Prevention & Intervention Strategy which will join up the interventions of all stakeholders to improve Early Intervention and subsequently school attendance. The Education Welfare and Education Investigation services have now transferred to Babcock Prime as part of the Learning & Achievement commissioning project and will deliver the outcomes from enforcement action for non-attendance and develop the support available for schools to purchase to raise attendance levels and reduce the numbers of persistent absentees.



Children & Families	A decrease in 16-18 year olds who are NEET	4.0%	4.8%	RED		as at 30/09/2015	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of NEET has increased by 1.0% from 3.8% at the 30/06/2015 to 4.8% at the 30/09/15. The NEET figure in September is adversely affected every year by the transition of young people between education provision at this time. This arises annually due to the movement of young people in education and learning at the start of the academic year in September and the lag in information from schools and colleges that temporarily skews the data prior to re-establishing their destinations.</p> <p>Activity: The September increase this year is significantly lower than in the previous year, where the figure was 8.1%. This indicator is expected to return to c. 4.0% during Q3 as activity is focussed on quickly identifying young people who do not start on their planned courses and finding suitable alternatives, whilst continuing to work with those young people already in the NEET group.</p>
Children & Families	Decrease in persistent absence in secondary schools to remain at 5.0% in 2014/15.	5.0%	5.4%	RED		2014/15 Academic Year	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of pupils that were persistently absent in secondary schools has increased by 0.4% from 5.0% in 2013/14 to 5.4% in 2014/15 academic year (5 half terms). This is identified from provisional data from the ONE system and will be ratified later in the year via national census data.</p> <p>Activity: The Phase 2 of the Stronger Families program retains a focus on improving school attendance. Early Help is being re-</p>



							focused under the Prevention & Intervention Strategy which will join up the interventions of all stakeholders to improve Early Intervention and subsequently school attendance. The Education Welfare and Education Investigation services have now transferred to Babcock Prime as part of the Learning & Achievement commissioning project and will deliver the outcomes from enforcement action for non-attendance and develop the support available for schools to purchase to raise attendance levels and reduce the numbers of persistent absentees.
Children & Families	An increase in the % of Care Leavers that are EET from 38.2% in 2014/15 to 52% in 2015/16.	52%	35.4%	RED		Q2 2015/16	<p>Data Commentary: There has been a slight increase in the percentage of care leavers that are EET by 0.2% from 35.2% in Q1 2015/16 to 35.4% in Q2 2015/16.</p> <p>Activity: We are exploring the development of apprenticeship opportunities. A meeting between the Department for Work and Pensions and the Post 16 Engagement Team will focus on supporting NEET care leavers in Redditch.</p>
Children & Families	An increase in the percentage of pupils who achieved a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage	60.0%	66.8%	GREEN		2014/15 Academic Year	<p>Data Commentary: There has been an increase in the percentage of pupils who achieve a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage by 8.8% from 58.0% in 2013/14 to 66.8% in 2014/15. The 2014/15 outcomes reflect the fact that schools are now more confident in their understanding and application of the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). The quality of moderation is also high. All ELGs are now at least in line with those seen nationally and the gap between</p>



						the performance of the lowest 20% and the rest of the pupils has reduced significantly. The focus on writing has had a positive impact on outcomes. Activity: Actions to support the quality of provision within schools and settings will continue to focus specifically on reading, writing and numeracy.
Children & Families	An increase in the proportion of children making expected rates of progress from KS2 to KS4 - English	73.5%	71.0%	RED		2014/15 Academic Year Data Commentary: The proportion of children making expected rates of progress from KS2 to KS4 in English has decreased by 0.5% from 71.5% in 2013/14 to 71.0% in 2014/15. The data currently available is provisional and does not include all schools' results. There is currently no national data available for comparison. Activity: Schools are now focusing on the new attainment 8 and progress 8 measures which will become the new standard from 2015/16.
Children & Families	An increase in the proportion of children making expected rates of progress from KS2 to KS4 - maths	73.5%	72%	RED		2014/15 Academic Year Data Commentary: The proportion of children making expected rates of progress from KS2 to KS4 in maths has increased by 2% from 70.0% in 2013/14 to 72.0% in 2014/15. The data currently available is provisional and does not include all schools' results. There is currently no national data available for comparison. Activity: Schools are now focusing on the new attainment 8 and progress 8 measures which will become the new standard from 2015/16.


Children & Families	An increase in children being adopted within 18 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family to 75% in 2015/16.	75.0%	80.0%	GREEN		Q2 2015/16	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of children being adopted within 18 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family has increased by 10.0% from 70.0% Q1 year to date to 80.0% Q2 year to date. Performance continues to be strong and is continuing to improve. The ALB target is for less than 548 days, but Worcestershire is currently achieving moves on average in less than 380 days. Adoption Orders for a legacy cohort sibling group will be made this month (October), which will skew the data slightly next quarter.</p> <p>Activity:</p>
Children & Families	% achieving at least 3 A levels at A* - E	78.0%	72.7%	RED		2014/15 Academic Year	<p>Data Commentary: There has been a decrease in the percentage achieving at least 3 A levels at A* - E by 4.2% from 76.9% in 2013/14 to 72.7% in 2014/15. The data currently available is unvalidated and, based on historical information, is likely to change significantly between August and the publication of final results.</p> <p>Activity:</p>
Children & Families	Reduce the attainment gap between Looked After Children attaining 5 A* to C at GCSE including English and Maths or equivalent	In line with the national figure.	45.0%	NO STATUS		2014/15 Academic Year	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage gap between looked after children and their peers achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE Inc. English and Maths has decreased by 0.4% from 45.6% in 2013/14 to 45.0% in 2014/15.</p> <p>Activity: The attainment gap has reduced slightly and provisional results for summer 2015 indicate a marginal increase in LAC achieving 5AC(EM) despite the on-going</p>



							changes to DfE methodology. Through the PEP process schools were supported and challenged to ensure the appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus and that interventions were put in place to raise attainment.
Children & Families	% of Referrals to Social Care that had an EHA in the last 12 months	Monitor	12.6%	NO STATUS		Q2 2015/16	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of referrals to social care that had an Early Help Assessment in the last 12 months has increased by 2.3% from 10.3% in Q1 to 12.6% in Q2.</p> <p>Activity: This indicator is moving in the right direction and reflects the work to support earlier referral to support services including Early Help.</p>
Children & Families	A decrease in the % of 16-17 year olds presenting as homeless	Monitor	23.9%	NO STATUS		2014/15	<p>Data Commentary: The Homeless Intervention Team are working in close partnership with Pathway workers in the 6 districts and undertaking joint homeless assessments. This is a very positive development re: strengthening families, but also for the YP as they only have to tell their story once and some very creative support has been identified to prevent the number of homeless 16 and 17 year olds becoming looked after (e.g. signposting mediation with families). The Edge of Care service which is being further developed this summer will offer a more immediate rapid response to all age groups offering a variety of support to support children and young adults with their families. The Homeless Intervention Team will be part of this service with a new manager having been just appointed to this role.</p> <p>Activity:</p>

Children & Families	A decrease in the referral rates per 10,000	261.8	380.1 per 10,000	RED		Q2 2015/16 Data Commentary: Referral rates have decreased by 44.2 per 10,000 from 424.3 in Q1 to 380.1 per 10,000 in Q2. Activity: We are Continuing to work with partners around thresholds and development of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to better triage and identify the most appropriate service to meet the child and family's needs.
Children & Families	Worcestershire in line with the national average for the number of children with a child protection plan per 10,000	42.1 per 10,000	42.5 per 10,000	RED		as at 30/09/15 Data Commentary: The rate per 10,000 of children on a child protection plan has increased by 3.3 per 10,000 from 39.2 per 10,000 at 30/06/15 to 42.5 per 10,000 at 30/09/15. This is a direct result of the activity within the Back to Basics Improvement Plan. It was expected that as safeguarding practice improves there would be a short term increase in the number of ICPC's and children subject to a CPP. A new Conference Model is being embedded and audit activity is being undertaken to ensure that appropriate application / challenge of threshold is evident at ICPC. Activity: These children will be subject to robust review within the new Conference Model to ensure that the plan is having a positive impact for the child and that this is clearly measured and evidenced. This will ensure that children move through the child protection system and have the right plan.

Children & Families	The proportion of LAC per 10,000 to be no more than 60 per 10,000	60 per 10,000	62.6 per 10,000	RED		30/09/2015	<p>Data Commentary: The rate per 10,000 of looked after children has increased by 2.3 from 60.3 per 10,000 as at 30/06/15 to 62.6 per 10,000 at 30/09/15. The Statistical Neighbours rate per 10,000 is 45.8 as at 31/03/15. The increase in the number of children on a CP plan has had an impact on the number of LAC, particularly the increase in the number of small children and babies in high risk situations. High number of referrals to Social Care in Q1 led to an increase in the number of children becoming LAC. We have also had a number of children transferring in from other authorities and a recent spike in UASC.</p> <p>Activity: The Edge of Care Service has been developed as part of an earlier support intervention to allow children to remain with their families. Support has been strengthened for children returning home where it is safe to do so through a reunification programme. A preventative housing pathway has been implemented in response to young people who present as homeless. There is continued development of best practice around long term care planning and development of the scope of the Family Front Door as part of strengthening the Early Help offer at the point of need as opposed to point of crisis. This work will include providing advice and support to partners where needed.</p>
Children & Families	An increase in the percentage of care leavers in	90%	76.8%	RED		Q2 2015/16	<p>Data Commentary: There has been an decrease of 2.3% in the percentage of care leavers in suitable</p>





	suitable accommodation from 71.2% in 2014/15 to 90% or above in 2015/16.						accommodation from 79.1% in Q1 2015/16 to 76.8% in Q2 2015/16. There has been an increase in the number of care leavers' becoming street homeless, due to evictions from Foyer/Social Housing. There have also been a number of Care Leavers' sent to prison, which is deemed unsuitable accommodation. Activity: Closer partnership working with the 6 housing districts and earlier referral to housing panel to enable more planning time for the Young People moving on should help increase the numbers being placed in suitable accommodation.
Children & Families	A decrease in the achievement gap between Looked After Children achieving level 4 at Key Stage 2 in Reading, Writing and Maths	In line with the national figure.	34.0%	NO STATUS		2014/15 Academic Year	Data Commentary: The attainment gap between looked after children and their peers achieving level 4 at key stage 2 has decreased by 1.1% from 35.1% in 2013/14 to 34.0% in 2014/15. Activity: The attainment gap has reduced slightly and provisional results indicate an increase in looked after pupils achieving Level 4 and Level 5 across reading, writing and maths and making expected progress in those subjects. The Pupil Premium Plus funding was used to support academic interventions in school. Virtual School teachers used Personal Education Plans to support and challenge schools.
Children & Families	Percentage of pupils at Key Stage 2 who reach level 4 or above in Reading, Writing	78%	76.2%	RED		2014/15 Academic Year	Data Commentary: The percentage of pupils achieving level 4+ in at KS2 in reading writing and maths has decreased by 0.8% from 77% in 2013/14 to 76.2% in 2014/15. KS2 results within the 2-tier system are almost identical

	and Maths						to those seen nationally. Within the 3-tier system they have shown a small decrease from 2013/14. Activity: There is close scrutiny of results in the 3-tier sector and there will be a focus on raising awareness of outcomes across all first schools as well as middle schools. This will include awareness activities relating to the new KS2 SATs. Transition practices have been reviewed and effective activities identified via case studies. This is likely to be a focus of a specific project during 2015/16.
Children & Families	A closing of the attainment gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their peers achieving level 4 at Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and maths	26%	26%	GREEN		2014/15 Academic Year	Data Commentary: The gap between those pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving level 4 at key stage 2 in reading writing and maths has decreased by 1.0% from 27.0% in 2013/14 to 26.0% in 2014/15. Activity: The achievement of pupils eligible for pupil premium has been a focus of work over the last 12 months including a conference supported by the DfE's National Pupil Premium Champion which was attended by ~70% of all Worcestershire schools. There is now an established network of Pupil Premium Leads within the County. The impact of the Assessment for All project also demonstrates a positive effect on the outcomes for the most disadvantaged. This area will continue to be a key priority during 2015/16.


Children & Families	A closing of the attainment gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their peers achieving 5 or more A*-C including English and maths at GCSE	30.0%	36%	RED		2014/15 Academic Year	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals including English and Maths has increased by 2.0% from 34.0% in 2013/14 to 36.0% in 2014/15. The data currently available is provisional and does not include all schools' results. There is currently no national data available for comparison.</p> <p>Activity: Schools are now focusing on the new attainment 8 and progress 8 measures which will become the new standard from 2015/16.</p>
Children & Families	Percentage of pupils who achieve 5 A*-C at GCSE including English and Maths or equivalent attainment for latest academic year	61%	60%	N/A		2014/15 Academic Year	<p>Data Commentary: The percentage of pupils achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE inc. English and Maths has increased by 1.5% from 58.5% in 2013/14 to 60.0% in 2014/15. The data currently available is provisional and does not include results from all schools. There is currently no national data available for comparison.</p> <p>Activity: Schools are now focusing on the new attainment 8 and progress 8 measures which will become the new standard from 2015/16.</p>




Financial perspective

	Performance Indicator	Target	Latest Performance	Direction of Travel	Data Period	Comments
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	Capital Scheme outturn within +/- 5% of budget	£27,026,000	£26,991,000	N/A		Q2 2015/16	Data Commentary: Activity:
	DSG - Expected budget position at end of financial year - Forecast Outturn (April to March) (Revenue)	£221,681,946	£221,078,269	GREEN		Q2 2015/16	Data Commentary: Uncommitted High Needs budgets expected to be utilised in 2016/17 Activity:
	Expected budget position at end of financial year - Forecast Outturn (April to March) (Revenue)	£76,752,001	£83,173,307	RED		Q2 2015/16	Data Commentary: Social Care placements and related care costs plus delay in achieving SEN transport FF savings. Activity:
	Financial savings achieved (Future Fit)	£2,103,000 (15/16)	Of the target £1,833,000 has been delivered to date and £270,000 is on-target.	GREEN		Q2 2015/16	Data Commentary: Of the 15/16 target of £2.1m - £1.8m (87%) has been delivered, £0.3m (13%) nothing is rated amber or red risk Activity: Over the quarter red risks have not changed, and amber risks have decreased by £0.2m.




Internal business perspective

	Performance Indicator	Target	Latest Performance		Direction of Travel	Data Period	Comments
	Attendance Rate	100%	96.70%	AMBER		Q2 Cumulative 2015/16	Data Commentary: Percentage of total working time attended (not lost due to sickness absence) during the period Activity:


	Sickness Rates	7.00	4.58 / 0.36(Predicted YE 9.16 / 0.73)	RED		Q2 Cumulative 2015/16	Data Commentary: Average days sick per person [FTE] / Average episodes per person during the period (Year-end predicted outturns shown in brackets based on cumulative performance to date) Activity:
	Employees - Actual FTE (Full Time Equivalents)	984.59	922.85	GREEN		Q2 2015/16	Data Commentary: Number of FTE employees as at 30th September 2015 (target and RAG rating based on budgeted establishment FTE derived from 2015/16 Budget Book) Activity:
	Agency spend	Downward Travel	£999,280.00 (37,124.00 hours)	N/A		Q2 2015/16	Data Commentary: Cost of agency staff during the period (respective agency usage in hours shown in brackets). Activity:






Customer perspective

Performance Indicator	Target	Latest Performance	Direction of Travel	Data Period	Comments
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	Statutory Children's Social Care Complaints: % of complaints received that were fully or partially upheld	N/A	40%	NO STATUS		Q2 2015/16	Data Commentary: Activity:
	Statutory Children's Social Care Complaints: Number fully or partially upheld	N/A	33	NO STATUS		Q2 2015/16	Data Commentary: Activity:
	Statutory Children's Social Care Complaints: Number of complaints received	N/A	81	NO STATUS		Q2 2015/16	Data Commentary: Activity:

Learning and growth perspective

	Performance Indicator	Target	Latest Performance	Direction of Travel	Data Period	Comments	
	% Staff Appraisals completed (SRDs)	100%	55.19%	RED		March 2015 to September 2015	Data Commentary: Percentage of staff appraisals (SRDs) where Part A (Objectives) for 2015/16 is completed (excludes staff who have been absent for the whole period and reliefs/casuals/sessionals). Activity:

	Staff Viewpoint response rate	N/A	31%	N/A		2014/15	Data Commentary: This is the second year that the staff survey has been distributed to all staff, and 31% of staff in ChS completed the survey, an improvement from 22% in 2013. It is important that staff respond to the survey as it provides excellent insight into views across the organisation and feedback on issues such as leadership, performance, engagement and wellbeing, and current climate and change. Activity:
	Staff who feel strongly that decision making is too slow	N/A	44%	N/A		2014/15	Data Commentary: 44% of respondents to the staff survey in ChS think that decision making within the county council is too slow. Activity:
	Staff who feel that the County Council has a clear vision for the future	N/A	63%	N/A		2014/15	Data Commentary: 63% of staff in the Children's Services Directorate feel that the Council has a clear vision for the future. Activity:
	Staff who feel that their manager keeps them informed	N/A	76%	N/A		2014/15	Data Commentary: 76% of staff in the Children's Services Directorate feel that their manager keeps them informed. Activity:
	Staff who feel valued for their contribution to the County Council	N/A	28%	N/A		2014/15	Data Commentary: 28% of staff within the Children's Services Directorate report that they feel valued for their contribution to the County Council. However, 34% of staff in Children's Services report that they do not feel valued

							for their contribution. Activity:
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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 19 JANUARY 2016

THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF WORCESTERSHIRE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Summary

1. This report provides data on the educational progress of looked after children in care to Worcestershire County Council who have been in care for at least 12 months with comparison data between their peers, with looked after children in statistical neighbours and nationally.
2. It also provides data on all looked after children in Worcestershire schools which includes those looked after children from other local authorities.
3. It also provides a detailed description of the role of the Virtual Headteacher.

Background

4. Nationally looked after children are an underachieving group. Closing the gap between the attainment of looked after children and all young people remains a high priority nationally and locally. To support this priority, the government has put the virtual school head role on a statutory footing to signal how important it is for everyone to champion the education of looked after children, wherever they are placed. The Virtual Headteacher will ensure the educational attainment of the children they look after is tracked and monitored as if the children attended a single school.
5. In April 2014 additional funding via the pupil premium was introduced for looked after children. Local authorities are allocated funding of £1,900 based on the number of eligible looked after children from the first day of care rather than, as previously, six months. The distribution of Pupil Premium funding has to relate directly to targets relating to improved progress in the Personal Education Plan.

Commentary on the results of Worcestershire looked after children

6. The cohorts reported on nationally are those looked after children in care to Worcestershire who have been looked after for 12 months or more. In Worcestershire the cohorts are small in each Key Stage so one pupil not achieving can have a profound effect on overall performance. Another significant factor which impacts on educational outcomes is the higher than average percentage of looked after children identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities which at 75% in January 2014 is higher than statistical neighbours at 70% and the national figure of 67%. For comparison the percentage of their peers with SEND is only 20%.

7. We are aware that the gap is not narrowing sufficiently at Key Stage 1 nor at Key Stage 4 although there has been slight improvement between looked after children and their peers at Key Stage 2 from 2013 to 2014. However they are still 12 percentage points (ppts) below their statistical neighbours and 13 ppts below looked after children nationally.

Key Stage 1

8. At Key Stage 1 data indicates that in 2014 in Reading 62% of Worcestershire looked after children are achieving level 2 or more compared to 90% of their peers. They also achieve less well than their equivalent cohorts within the statistical neighbours and nationally.

9. In Writing only 58% achieved level 2 or more compared to 87% of their peers. The percentage of Worcestershire looked after children achieving level 2 or more was 12 ppts lower than their statistical neighbours and 3ppts lower than National figures.

10. In Maths 65% of Worcestershire looked after children achieved level 2 or more compared to 92% of all children in the authority. They are achieving 12ppts lower than their statistical neighbours and 7ppts lower than National figures.

Key Stage 2

11. At Key Stage 2 in Reading, Writing and Maths there has been a slight improvement in the percentage of Worcestershire looked after children achieving level 4 and above from 2013 to 2014 at 35% in 2014 compared to 33% in 2013 but for all Worcestershire pupils 72% achieved level 4 in 2013 and 77% achieved this standard in 2014. Looked after children were still 12ppts below their statistical neighbours and 13 ppts below looked after children nationally in 2014.

Key Stage 4

12. At Key Stage 4 the percentage of looked after children achieving 5 or more A*- C at GCSE including English and Maths has fallen over the last three years with only 13% in 2014 and 11% in 2015 achieving this benchmark. In 2013 the national figure was 16% and in 2014 it was 12%. The gap between looked after children and their peers was 46% in 2014 and this has widened to 49% in 2015.

School Absence

13. In the academic year 2014/15 the overall absence rate for LAC was 4.7% which is 0.2% higher than all pupils in Worcestershire. In 2012/13 the overall absence rate for Worcestershire LAC was 4.6% compared to 4.9% for all pupils. In 2013/14 the overall absence for LAC was 4.6% compared to 5.1% for all pupils. However LAC missed 1.1% of sessions due to unauthorised absence compared to 0.8% for all pupils.

14. There has been a slight increase in the rates of unauthorised absence in the LAC population in 2014/ 15 at 1.1% compared to 0.6% in 2013/14 and 0.7% in 2012/13. Equivalent figures for their peers stand at 0.8%, 0.9% and 0.9% respectively.

Commentary on all looked after children in Worcestershire schools

15. In 2015 the percentage of looked after children achieving 5 or more A*-C including English and Maths was 16% both in Worcestershire and nationally, compared to 60% of non-looked after children in Worcestershire schools and 56% of non-looked after children nationally.

16. The percentage of looked after children achieving 5 A*-C not including English and Maths is 20% compared to 70% of non-looked after children. Nationally the figures for comparison are 22% of looked after children and 65% of their peers respectively.

17. The percentage of looked after children achieving 5 or more A*-G was 62% in Worcestershire schools compared to 63% nationally but the figures for their peer is 95% and 94% respectively.

18. Progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 for all pupils in English and Maths combined is significantly above expectations. This is the case for children who are not looked after in each of these subjects as well as combined. For example progress in Maths is 6ppts above expectations and for looked after children progress is better than expected for Maths by 2ppts whilst being 1ppt below expectations for English. There is no combined measure of progress for English and Maths for looked after children.

The role of the Virtual Headteacher

19. The Virtual Headteacher should be the lead responsible officer for ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of the authority's looked after children, including those placed out of authority.

20. There are three key cohorts of children for whom the Virtual Headteacher has to have knowledge. Those who are in care to Worcestershire and are educated in Worcestershire schools, those who are in care to Worcestershire but educated out of the authority and those children placed in Worcestershire schools, who are in care to other local authorities. For reporting purposes data however is only collected on those children who are in care to Worcestershire.

21. There are three key areas of responsibility for which the Virtual Headteacher is accountable

a. To make sure that there is a robust system to track and monitor the attainment, achievements and progress of looked after children by

- maintaining an up-to-date roll of its looked after children who are in school or college settings and gathering information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress
- informing Headteachers and designated teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked after by the local authority
- ensuring that baseline data is collected when a child comes into care.
- ensuring that schools know their looked after children and make sure that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is in place for any looked after Child in the care of Worcestershire.
- ensuring that the PEP cycle works well and informs the care planning process.

b. To ensure that all looked after children have a robust and effective PEP and access any additional support to improve their attainment by

- working with relevant professionals to ensure PEPs are of high quality, demonstrate outcomes and that Pupil Premium is used to support any targets set
- ensuring social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP
- challenge and support schools to provide the necessary additional support through effective use of the Pupil Premium grant to looked after children.

c. To champion the educational needs of looked after children across the authority and those placed out of authority by

- advocating for looked after children with all relevant partners such as Social Care, Head teachers, Educational Psychology, Admissions, School Transport, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities teams, Exclusions and Post 16 Engagement
- working with Virtual Headteachers in other authorities to ensure that the needs of all looked after children are met.
- reporting regularly on the attainment of looked after children through the authority's corporate parenting structures
- ensuring that all Corporate Parents are aware of their role and their responsibilities to the looked after children.
- ensuring that all looked after children are placed in good or better schools.
- ensuring that any decisions which Social Workers wish to make about changes in education placements are agreed by the Virtual Headteacher at the planning stage before changes are made.
- ensuring that any permissions given by Head teachers or Social Care staff to allow holidays in school time are discussed and challenged.
- ensuring that, where a child is attending a school that it is not rated as good, that the Virtual Headteacher and Social Worker review the appropriateness of the child continuing to attend that school or moving to a better school at a natural transition point in that child's education.

Purpose of the Meeting

22. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- consider the information in the report
- determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny, and
- agree whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children, Families and Communities

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 - Comparative data for looked after children in care to Worcestershire

- Appendix 2 – Raise online data for all looked after children in Worcestershire schools

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Sue Ayres. Interim Virtual Headteacher: 01905 766463

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

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Figures for Annexe M

% Level 2+ at End of KS1

		Reading			Writing			Maths		
		2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
LAC for 12 months or more	Worcs	71	62	-	64	58	-	57	65	-
	Stat Neighbours	74	79	-	65	70	-	74	77	-
	National	69	71	-	61	61	-	71	72	-
All Pupils	Worcs	89	90	91	86	87	89	91	92	93
	Stat Neighbours	90	91	92	87	88	89	93	93	94
	National	89	90	90	85	86	88	91	92	93

LAC data from [DFE Outcomes for LAC 2014](#). "All Pupil" figures from [Local Area Interactive Tool](#)

% Level 4+ at End of KS2

		RWM			Reading			Writing			Maths		
		2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
LAC for 12 months or more	Worcs	33	35	-	48	56	-	43	47	-	38	39	-
	Stat Neighbours	45	47	-	61	65	-	55	58	-	62	61	-
	National	45	48	-	63	68	-	55	59	-	56	59	-
All Pupils	Worcs	72	77	76	84	88	88	82	84	85	82	84	84
	Stat Neighbours	75	79	80	87	90	90	83	86	88	84	86	87
	National	76	79	80	86	89	89	83	85	87	85	86	87

Figures obtained from [Local Area Interactive Tool](#) with pupils included based on the authority which is their corporate parent irrespective of where they are placed.

% 5+ A*-C Grades Including English and Maths at end of KS4

		2012	2013	2014	2015
		LAC for 12 months or more	Worcs	17	23
	National	15	16	12	-
All Pupils	Worcs	61	63	59	60
	National	59	59	53	53

Worcestershire LAC data obtained from performance table data set (checking file in the case of 2015)
Statistical Neighbours are not included as their LAC attainment is often suppressed due to small numbers
"All pupils" figures from [Local Area Interactive Tool](#)

		Overall Absence %			Unauthorised Absence			Persistent Absentee %		
		2012/ 13	2013/14	2014/15	2012/ 13	2013/14	2014/15	2012/ 13	2013/14	2014/15
LAC for 12 months or more	Worcs	4.6	4.6	4.7	0.7	0.6	1.1	7.0	7.0	4.0
	Stat Neighbours	4.8	5.0	4.3	0.9	1.1	1.0	6.6	6.6	5.8
	National	4.7	4.4	3.9	1.2	1.1	1.0	6.0	6.0	4.7
All Pupils	Worcs	4.9	5.1	4.5	0.9	0.9	0.8	5.0	4.4	3.8
	Stat Neighbours	5.1	5.4	4.5	0.9	0.9	0.8	5.2	4.8	3.6

	National	5.1	5.3	4.5	1.1	1.1	0.9	5.2	4.6	3.6
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Figures obtained from [Local Area Interactive Tool](#) and [Pupil Absence Statistical Collection](#). "All Pupil" figures for 2014/15 do not include the summer term

At least one fixed term exclusion %

		2011/2	2012/3	2013/4
LAC for 12 months or more	Worcs	12.2	12.3	11.4
	Stat Neighbours	12.2	11.8	11.1
	National	11.8	11.3	9.8
All Pupils	Worcs	2.0	1.8	1.7
	Stat Neighbours	2.1	1.8	1.7
	National	2.2	1.9	1.9

LAC figures obtained from [Local Area Interactive Tool](#)

"All pupils" figures from [DFE Exclusions Statistical Collection](#)

Pupils with Special Educational Needs - January 2014

Worcs LAC:	75%	Worcs All:	20%
SN LAC:	70%	SN All:	17%
National LAC:	67%	National All:	18%

LAC data from [DFE Outcomes for LAC 2014](#)

"All pupil" figures from [Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics January 2014](#)

No of LAC per 10,000 Children Under 18

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Worcs	52	56	56	60
Stat Neighbours	46	46	45	46
National	59	60	60	60

Figures obtained from [Local Area Interactive Tool](#)

Key Stage 4, attainment, thresholds by pupil characteristics,2015*

Worcestershire LA School (8859999)

Percentage of candidates achieving thresholds

The Basics are the percentage of pupils achieving C grade or above in both English and mathematics performance tables approved qualifications. Statistical significance tests have not been performed on this data.

Cohort		Percentage of pupils achieving each threshold									
		5+ A* to C (incl Eng and Mat)		5+ A* to C		5+ A* to G		English Baccalaureate		Basics	
		School	National	School	National	School	National	School	National	School	National
Children Looked After											
CLA	74	16	16	20	22	62	63	1	3	18	19
Not CLA	5653	60	56	70	65	95	94	26	24	62	58

*From 2014 only performance tables approved qualifications are counted

Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 performance – expected progress*

Worcestershire LA School (8859999)

The table indicates the proportion of pupils making expected progress between KS2 and KS4. Statistical significance tests have been performed on the data.

	English				Mathematics			
	Cohort	School	National	Sig	Cohort	School	National	Sig
Children Looked After								
CLA	73	37	38		74	32	30	
Not CLA	5566	71	70	Sig+	5585	72	66	Sig+

A dash means that no significance test has been carried out. A blank space means that a significance test has been carried out and the result for school or group is not significantly different from the national average.

*From 2014 only performance tables approved qualifications are counted

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

19 JANUARY 2016

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES – COMMISSIONING UPDATE

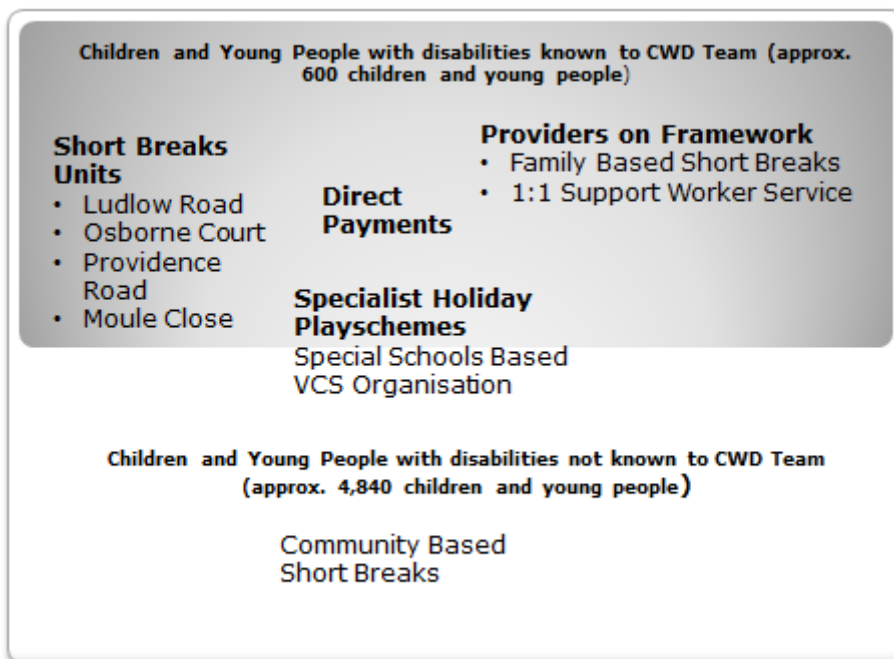
Summary

1. The County Council commissions a variety of community short break services and overnight short breaks for children and young people with disabilities. A short break is a positive activity or service which:
 - helps to develop a child or young person's health, social and emotional development by giving them opportunities to take part in and enjoy new experiences
 - gives parents and carers a break from caring responsibilities from time to time, allowing them time to re-fresh familial relationships.
2. This paper provides an update around future commissioning plans for services for children with disabilities.
3. The current provision of short breaks is in compliance with the Children's Act 2006 statutory regulations for Children in Need and in particular: Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2005 requires local authorities to provide Short Breaks for Disabled Children, and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011.

Background

4. Worcestershire provides a variety of specialist short breaks services for eligible children and young people who require support after assessment of their needs (assessment undertaken by Children's Social Care), and community short breaks that are accessed on a self-referral basis. These are in addition to universal and targeted services delivered by providers from all sectors.
5. Specialist short breaks provision is jointly commissioned and funded by the Local Authority (LA) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and delivered through:
 - 5.1. Family based residential and 1:1 support worker provision delivered through a framework of preferred providers and funded through LA budget
 - 5.2. Specialist summer holiday playschemes (through special schools and voluntary sector providers) funded by LA, with a contribution from CCGs
 - 5.3. Residential stays at 4 Short Breaks Units:
 - at Providence Road, Bromsgrove and Moule Close, Kidderminster run by the Local Authority with the budget from the LA
 - at Ludlow Road Kidderminster and Osborne Court, Malvern run by Worcestershire NHS Health and Care Trust (HACT) with the CCGs budget.

6. Community short Breaks services are commissioned by Worcestershire to complement what is already provided by the voluntary and community sector. They are provided in addition to the above specialist short breaks that are exclusively accessed after a social care assessment of needs that provide support for those families with children and young people who require the highest levels and the specialist services.
7. The current contracts for these community short breaks were extended to end on 30 September 2016.
8. Community short breaks are largely accessed on a self-referral basis except for specialist playschemes that take on both referred and self-referred children and young people. These include:
 - 8.1. Community short breaks being delivered by providers from the public, voluntary and independent sectors
 - 8.2. District based positive activities short breaks being delivered by Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers
 - 8.3. Special schools based playschemes, weekend and after school clubs including those being delivered in partnership with voluntary sector providers accessed on referral and self-referral basis.
9. The diagram below shows an outline of the approximate numbers of children with disabilities in Worcestershire. Approximately 600 children and young people are known to the Children with Disabilities Social Care team, and approximately a further 4,840 are known to require additional support.



Feedback on current service

10. Feedback about current services from parents and young people through engagement undertaken within 2015-16 outlined the following points:
 - They most enjoy the specialist facilities at the venues i.e. sensory rooms, soft play etc.
 - They outlined the importance of them having a chance to socialise with friends or other children and young people with the same needs as themselves.
 - That beyond specialist play opportunities that they do not access many, if any, other types of activities.

11. A further engagement exercise to start to collate feedback about current services, and what works well was conducted in the Summer term of 2015. The summary is outlined in **Appendix 1**.

Needs Assessment

12. The County Council intends to conduct a detailed needs assessment of services for children with disabilities to ensure that planning for future demand is undertaken. Also, further work with parents, carers and young people will be undertaken to understand how short breaks can be further developed to meet the needs of families, children and young people.

13. The Council will focus on:
 - Promoting independence for young people and preparing young people for adulthood through a robust transition pathway.

- Prevention and early intervention in order to reduce demand on specialist provision, where appropriate.
- Improve flexibility of service provision.
- Promote easier access to a directory of services for families to be able to seek advice and support themselves
- Address financial challenges across health and social care.

Purpose of the Meeting

14. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny panel are asked to:
- Support a needs assessment
 - Participate in discussion around future ideas and designs for services

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 - Children & Young People Community Health Services
Community Short Breaks Service Report: Parent Carer Focus Groups – Summer Term 2015

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

Children & Young People Community Health Services Community Short Breaks Service Report

Parent Carer Focus Groups – Summer Term 2015

Background:

Worcestershire County Council is seeking the views of parent carers on community health services, and is reviewing each of these services to gain an understanding of what works well and what could be improved.

The community short breaks services form part of these services under review, and the council want to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the children and their families with available resources.

As part of the process Children's Services Parent Engagement Advisor (PEA) agreed to undertake a series of focus groups with parent carers to get their views on the services on offer. This was to add some contextual intelligence to the data collected via the online questionnaire.

Methodology

A number of parent carer groups were contacted via email and asked if they would be happy to take part in a consultation process. The PEA then either went along to a session and asked the questions to the group or contacted the parent carers individually on the telephone.

All the contributors were reassured that their comments would be anonymous and that the facilitator was not part of the commissioning service. All participants were told that their views would form part of report compiled by the PEA and that none of their comments would be directly attributable to them.

Each group or individual had the same brief introduction and clarification about what the Community Short Breaks services are was given. They were then asked:

1. What is good about the service you receive
2. What is not so good
3. Even better if... (EBI)

Project/Event details

Following on from the original email four focus groups were facilitated and a number of phone calls made to individuals. These all occurred during April and May 2015.

The respondents were from across the county and 10 of the children attend a special school. There was a range of disabilities from autism to PMLD, complex medical needs or disability and hearing impairment. The age of the children ranged from 5 to 19, some families had other children along with the child with additional needs where others had only the child with the disability.

In total 16 parent carers took part:

- 2 on the phone
- 4 in a parent carer forum (Our Voice)
- 3 in a special school drop in (Fort Royal)
- 7 in 2 different coffee mornings

Summary of results

For the purposes of this consultation the responses have been collated under the three questions that the respondents were asked. Individual responses

were then grouped under themes and commentary made to outline these – where appropriate actual quotations have been used to illustrate the points.

What went well?

All of the respondents said there should be a wide choice of short breaks available, to cater for all families.

When discussing what went well, parents listed the types of breaks they had used and had found useful.

Short breaks for the whole family including siblings and parents – as these allow the family to get out into the community and enjoy mainstream activities on offer. Siblings get the opportunity to meet others in a similar position and parents can get support from each other. There should be a variety of fun activities at different times, which appeal to different families with a variety of age groups. The experience of being part of a larger group enables families to relax as they are not the 'only ones', but it is important that there is flexibility to go off and explore as a smaller family unit.

'You are there with others, but not as a large organised group'

'Families with teenagers are rarely catered for – it is nice to do things together as a family but with other teens around. We went on an evening out to see a tribute act, it was such fun and something we wouldn't have contemplated alone as a family, but because our teen had friends with them we could all enjoy it.'

Holiday clubs are really important – it is good respite for the rest of the family and the children have a good time.

It's important to note that there should be a variety of holiday play schemes available as all families are different and have different needs.

In-school holiday play schemes:

- great because the child knows the surroundings and the staff – the parents have confidence that they are leaving them with someone who knows them.
- parents value that they don't have to 'settle them in' over a period of time, they can use them straight away.

'when I bought X along the first time I got really anxious as I didn't recognise

any of the staff and I thought this isn't going to work, then one person said 'Hello X' and I immediately breathed a sigh of relief I knew it was going to be ok – X knew them and responded.'

'I need to feel confident that my child is being cared for by trained staff. Some groups wouldn't know how to deal with a seizure – the holiday clubs I use do.'

Holiday clubs are really important – it is good respite for the rest of the family but thought needs to be given to making age appropriate provision.

Non-school holiday play schemes

Some children enjoy being somewhere that isn't school and they are more able to settle easily into another place, as long as it's only one other place.

Parents liked that the days are usually longer and therefore if they work it fits better with the working day.

The children get to do fun stuff and have a good time:

'I know my child gets the 121 attention they need and someone there to play with them and occupy them, it wouldn't be possible for me to give them that all the time at home'

Parents like to be able to use direct payments to pay for some of the sessions.

Families liked that each day was themed and they were given a full list of what was happening and when – they could then select the activities they knew their child would enjoy and send them on those days. If there was a cost associated with the activity they would pay for that on top, which they were able to do, but could see that for others that could be a barrier.

Regular activity clubs where parents can stay or drop their child off were also valued. Parents liked the flexibility of being able to either stay and socialise with other mums or be able to nip off and do some shopping.

The opportunity to meet and socialise with other parents in similar circumstances is really valuable to a large number of the mums. They got support from each other, while their children had an opportunity to play and have fun.

'I found out about this club by chance and it's been brilliant, through this I've found out about other things – we (parents) all give support and advice to each other.'

'Really important that I get the opportunity to mix with other mums, while

knowing that my child is safe and having a good time. We look out for each other, and each other's children.'

'I come here just as much for me, as for my child'.

'Inclusion is great, in theory, but it's nice to have somewhere that is especially for our children. In mainstream school, my child is 'mothered' by the other children, because she isn't as able – here she gets to be a mother hen – it does wonders for her confidence.'

Age appropriate clubs, especially those for teenagers were popular, it was important that they weren't all activity based – but sometimes just give the young people space to socialise and chill out with their friends.

'Usually teens just want somewhere to chill out with their friends, maybe make a meal together, like other teens. This helps them to develop their independence and grow as individuals.'

After school clubs for teenagers, which are not based in school, but somewhere else. Offering opportunities for teens to socialise and do activities that other teenagers get to do with friends. Doesn't have to be trips out all the time, but sometimes just the chance to 'chill' together and listen to music, watch DVD's.

Need to be aware that some families are rurally isolated and therefore accessing mainstream youth club provision is very difficult, particularly if it's based in Worcester.

'What is great about the provision we use is the young people are picked up from their (special) school, taken out or to the clubs base, and then we pick them up from there. This is still in the local area, so it's something we can do.'

School run after school and Saturday club provision – where available was really popular. Parents liked that it was in school and their child is comfortable in the surroundings with staff that know them. This gives them confidence that they are happy to leave them and they can enjoy the break and their children get to develop their independence.

What not so well?

It is important to be aware that some children/young people have physical disabilities and may have mobility problems – whilst all buildings and facilities have to have wheelchair access some are much easier and straight forward than others. Thought should be given to how easy it is for those with mobility difficulties to access activities.

Some parents commented that with holiday play schemes in school you weren't told what was happening on what days until after you'd selected the days you were going to send them.

'I can see that they probably worked out who was coming and then arranged appropriate activities for those days, but it would be nice to have some choice.'

One parent suggested that the days be allocated on the basis that you're allowed x number of activity days (e.g. things that cost more such as Horse riding, days out) and x number of in-school days (with low cost activities). That way parents would know the children were getting a balance of things to do and wouldn't feel like they were missing out.

Teens are not catered for as well as younger children. Teens don't really want to stay at school in the holidays, it's good to have a mixture available.

Even better if...

The opportunity to go away for a weekend as a family but part of a wider group would also be useful – Youth hosteling weekends together would have the same benefits for the family as the short breaks 'day trips'.

Father and children activities: often fathers work fulltime and therefore don't get the same opportunities as mothers to meet peers in similar situations. Having supported groups where fathers have the chance to meet and interact with other dads and their children would be very beneficial.

Full day or activity weekends for the children only. Most mainstream provision isn't suitable for our children for a variety of reasons, but mainly that the group sizes are too large and it contains lots of 'busy' 'noisy' activities with a lot of instruction. We don't have the confidence that mainstream have the expertise to work with our children effectively.

Targeted provision would include smaller groups, a clear and defined structure

to the day, divided into small, manageable chunks and including opportunities to chill, relax and just observe – some structured downtime. The activities could include gaming opportunities, computer skills, sensory experiences as well as the usual physical based ones or craft sessions. It doesn't have to be an adrenalin fuelled day; there can be some sedentary elements to it.

It's important that there is a mixture on offer – but most important of all that you can find out about them. It's really difficult to know what is out there, and who to ask.

'I'd been looking for something for my son for four years, I'd asked school and they didn't know of anything, I found out about this group by chance and through this I've found out about other things.'

More variety – *'inclusive drama club would be great, where our young people can develop their personalities and boost their confidence.'*

Opportunities for the young people to have a 'sleepover' experience would be excellent – maybe camping in a safe environment. This would give them the opportunity to socialise with their friends, cook and chat – which would lead to an increase in confidence.

Can you mix your holiday play scheme days between providers? If so, parents need to know that.

Equity across the county, some special schools run breakfast clubs, wraparound care, others don't. If all schools ran that provision it would be easier for parents to work.

Utilise the onsite accommodation at the school during the holidays (like a hotel catering for young people with additional needs) – teens could have a 'sleepover' type experience that their mainstream equivalents have, in a safe, familiar environment.

Finally one parent responded:

'Nothing would make the service better – it is excellent, superb and we feel really supported by it.'

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