

Agenda

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 6 March 2019, 10.00 am
County Hall, Worcester

All County Councillors are invited to attend and participate

This document can be provided in alternative formats such as Large Print, an audio recording or Braille; it can also be emailed as a Microsoft Word attachment. Please contact Democratic Services on telephone number 01905 844963 or by emailing democraticservices@worcestershire.gov.uk

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

Wednesday, 6 March 2019, 10.00 am, County Hall, Worcester

Membership

Councillors:

Mrs F M Oborski (Chairman), Mrs J A Potter (Vice Chairman), Ms P Agar, Mr T Baker-Price, Mr R W Banks, Ms R L Dent, Mr P M McDonald, Mr S J Mackay and Ms T L Onslow

Co-opted Church Representatives (for education matters)

Bryan Allbut (Church of England)

Parent Governor Representatives (for education matters)

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 5 March 2019). Enquiries can be made through the telephone number/e-mail address below.	
4	Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meetings (previously circulated)	
5	Children's Social Care Service - Ofsted Monitoring Visit Feedback	1 - 8
6	Progress Update on Joint Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Written Statement of Action/Improvement Plan	To follow
7	Performance and In-year Budget Monitoring	To follow
8	Work Programme 2018/19	9 - 14

Agenda produced and published by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. To obtain further information or hard copies of this agenda, please contact Alyson Grice 01905 844962/Samantha Morris 01905 844963 email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website [here](#)

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 06 MARCH 2019

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICE – OFSTED MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families and the Assistant Director Safeguarding Services (Children's Social Care) have been invited to the meeting to provide an update on the outcome of Ofsted's seventh Monitoring Visit of the Council's children's safeguarding services, which took place on 8 and 9 January 2019 and focused on the local authority's arrangements for the protection of children and young people vulnerable to child sexual exploitation and who go missing from home or care.

Background

2. On 24 January 2017, Ofsted published their report entitled 'Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers; and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board'.

3. The overall judgement for Worcestershire was 'inadequate'. Following the Ofsted judgement, an eight-point Service Improvement Plan (SIP) was developed by Children, Families and Communities Leadership Team to cover all of the recommendations made by Ofsted.

4. As a result of this judgement, Ofsted put in place a series of Monitoring Visits to track the Council's progress. To date there have been seven such visits in May 2017, September 2017, January 2018, April 2018, July 2018, October 2018 and January 2019. The result of the first visit was not published but Ofsted concluded that the Local Authority was not making the expected progress to improve services for children and young people. In the following visits, however, Ofsted noted that progress was being made.

Feedback from Ofsted Monitoring Visit – No.7

5. The visit focused on the Local Authority's arrangements for the protection of children and young people vulnerable to child sexual exploitation and who go missing from home or care. Andy Waugh Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) from Ofsted, led the inspection, working alongside fellow Ofsted inspector Alison Smale, (HMI). This was the fifth monitoring visit that Andy Waugh has been involved in in Worcestershire.

6. Ofsted published their letter outlining the results of the visit on 31 January 2019. The purpose of each letter following an Ofsted Monitoring Visit is to outline the outcome of the visit. There are no judgements made, but instead a statement summarising the direction of travel. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 1.

Next Steps

7. It has been confirmed that the Monitoring Visit in January was our last and a full inspection can be expected in the spring. Ofsted Inspections are carried out under the ILACS Framework (Inspections of Local Authority Children's Services) and sometimes referred to as ILACS inspections.

8. The Service Improvement Plan (SIP) was refreshed in November 2018 to reflect work completed to date and ensure priorities remain focused. Monitoring of the SIP is done through monthly Children, Families and Communities Leadership Team (CFCLT) meetings chaired by Catherine Driscoll, Director of Children, Families and Communities, as well as in monthly meetings with Service Leads chaired by Emma Brittain, Service Lead for Family Front Door and Partnerships. Bi-annual feedback is also provided to the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and the Worcestershire Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel. When available, a high level version of the refreshed plan will be reviewed through the SIP governance process.

9. Our Improvement Partnership programme of work with Essex County Council has continued with a specific focus now on preparing for a full re-inspection.

10. The next scheduled activity will be support and review of our Annex A data in March in preparation for inspection, expected in the spring. Annex A is a list of data required by Ofsted during an inspection. We will be required to submit all data in the Annex A list on the day that we are notified of inspection.

11. CFCLT will continue to lead the delivery of the SIP and ensure positive momentum is maintained whilst the implementation phase of Worcestershire Children First is underway in parallel.

Purpose of the Meeting

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

- note the information in the report and appendix 1,
- 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 and Families

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Ofsted Monitoring Visit Outcome Letter

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

Worcestershire County Council 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

Alyson Grice/Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Officers 01905 844962/844963
Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) the following background papers relate to the subject matter of this report:

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)

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31 January 2019

Dr Catherine Driscoll
Director of Children, Families and Communities
Worcestershire County Council
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2YA

Dear Dr Driscoll

Monitoring visit of Worcestershire local authority children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to Worcestershire local authority children's services on 8 and 9 January 2019. The visit was the seventh and final monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in November 2016. The visit was conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors Andrew Waugh and Alison Smale.

The local authority has made some progress in improving services for children and young people who are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation and children and young people who go missing.

Areas covered by the visit

Inspectors evaluated the local authority's arrangements for the protection of children and young people vulnerable to child sexual exploitation and who go missing from home or care. Inspectors considered other relevant aspects of adolescent vulnerability, including contextual safeguarding.

A range of evidence was looked at that included holding case discussions with social workers and reviewing case records. Inspectors also scrutinised relevant local authority performance management and quality assurance information. Inspectors met with managers and partners.

Overview

Since the last inspection in 2016, the local authority has made progress in improving its services for children and young people who are at risk from sexual exploitation and those children and young people who go missing. Children at risk of child sexual exploitation and going missing are proactively worked with in order to identify and reduce risk. No issue of significant harm was identified that had not

been responded to by the local authority. As a result of a more effective approach to children going missing, overall numbers of children going missing and repeat missing episodes have reduced. Social workers know their children well. Reflective supervision is aiding a better understanding of children's lives and vulnerabilities. Consistency of practice and management oversight needs to improve further to ensure that all assessments and plans for vulnerable children at risk of child sexual exploitation and going missing reflect the risks and vulnerabilities and are effective in addressing these.

In other areas of exploitation, including gangs, drugs and county lines, the local authority was able to describe how practice and systems for identification of risk and information-sharing are being developed by the local authority and its partners, but these are not yet fully implemented and utilised.

Findings and evaluation of progress

Social workers know their children and have built trusted and open relationships with them. A social media application is being used to facilitate communication with some children. In most cases, children's views are sought and are valued in day-to-day practice. However, this good practice is not sufficiently embedded and reflected in case recording, written plans or assessments. This is particularly the case where young people are harder to engage with, meaning that some children's lived experiences are not fully represented in written documents that describe their needs or in plans that aim to reduce and minimise existing risks.

Assessments do not fully capture the risks and vulnerabilities experienced by all young people. This means that for some young people there may be risks that are not fully assessed. While child sexual exploitation screening and risk assessment tools are firmly embedded in key documents such as assessments and referrals, the tools are not consistently completed, particularly in referrals. This is a missed opportunity to measure and evaluate risks at the earliest point that could lead to better informed assessments and planning for children. In some cases where child sexual exploitation risk has been identified, corresponding alerts were not on the child's file.

The local authority has increased its workforce capacity to ensure a more effective and timely response when children go missing. The recruitment to three children missing officer posts has increased the number of return home interviews completed, but there are a minority of children who are not receiving a service that is consistent or timely. The return home interviews that are completed are beginning to effectively capture the child's account, as well as intelligence that may be useful in informing future planning and interventions. The outcomes of the interviews are routinely shared between social workers and children missing officers.

Delays in holding multi-agency child exploitation (MACE) meetings mean that concerns and intelligence in relation to child sexual exploitation are not always

effectively shared in a timely way with the multi-agency group, which means that risks cannot be reduced as quickly as they could be.

Care and pathway plans are not always up to date. A minority do not reflect young people's current living arrangements and risk status. Some young people have both pathway and care plans that don't consistently align, and at times this leads to confusion. In a small number of cases, it is positive that social workers are starting to write plans in a way that is accessible for young people. The effectiveness of this approach is variable and in some cases the language used in plans is not young-person friendly and includes too much jargon.

Too many vulnerable young people are not in education, training or employment, which increases their vulnerability. In some cases, risks have been exacerbated by ineffective partnership between schools, colleges and children's social care, resulting in exclusion or loss of education placements. Resolution takes too long and allows risks for vulnerable young people to escalate.

Some foster carers do not have the necessary skills and resilience to care for children who repeatedly go missing. A small number of children have experienced repeated placement breakdown where the carers have not had the skills or resilience to meet their needs and manage risk. The result of this is that a small cohort of children with more complex vulnerabilities experience too many unplanned endings to their placements and are moved to alternative provision without comprehensive matching or preparation taking place. The local authority has been aware of this and has begun work to develop its approach to the management and support of carers and potential placement breakdown. More needs to be done with the small minority of children with complex and challenging behaviours to ensure that this approach achieves greater placement matching and stability.

Partnership working between the police and social workers for children vulnerable to sexual exploitation and going missing is increasingly well developed. Both the police and children's social care have recruited specialist staff to work in this area alongside each other. They are establishing protocols for effectively sharing information. This enables detailed mapping of people of concern who present risks to children, along with locations where children may be exposed to exploitation. Joint operations have been successful in disrupting perpetrators and safeguarding several children. The local authority recognises that children may become vulnerable to other forms of exploitation, for example through gang activity, misuse of drugs or via county lines, and has begun to plan at a strategic level. However, its strategic approach is currently under-developed and needs to be strengthened to ensure that these children are safeguarded effectively.

Social workers value the support they receive from team managers and within their teams. Caseloads for most social workers are manageable and enable social workers to know children they are working with well. Children are seen by their social workers regularly in line with their needs and levels of vulnerabilities. Trusting relationships enable young people to share their lived experiences more

openly. Children with more complex needs benefit from effective co-working arrangements. This means that work is more effectively tailored to the specific needs of the child, and less experienced social workers are partnered with more experienced colleagues to support their professional development.

Management oversight is not as consistently good as it should be and has yet to result in consistently good enough practice by social workers. Case management decisions are not always sufficiently detailed. In a significant minority of cases, inspectors did not see sufficient management challenge to poor social work practice in assessment and plans and when children are not seen within expected timescales.

Supervision is regular and is increasingly reflective, using a strengths-based model of intervention to better understand children's lives and areas of vulnerability. Most managers are beginning to model a more critically evaluative approach that identifies risks and vulnerabilities. Supervision does not always support the progress of children's plans in a timely way and actions are not always followed through at a pace that reflects the needs of the child.

The local authority's approach to and process for case auditing is good. Audits are accurately identifying deficits in practice and are not overly optimistic in their conclusions. In some cases, audits lead to improvement actions for individual case workers and improvements in practice. However, in other cases where audit findings are not followed through and management oversight is weaker, practice remains inconsistent. This results in assessments and plans that are not fully effective.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for your positive engagement with the programme of monitoring visits. I am copying this letter to the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andy Waugh
Her Majesty's Inspector

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 6 MARCH 2019

WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

Summary

1. From time to time the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel will review its work programme and consider which issues should be investigated as a priority.

Background

2. Worcestershire County Council has a rolling annual Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny. The 2018/19 Work Programme has been developed by taking into account issues still to be completed from 2017/18, the views of Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members and the findings of the budget scrutiny process.
3. Suggested issues have been prioritised using scrutiny feasibility criteria in order to ensure that topics are selected subjectively and the 'added value' of a review is considered right from the beginning.
4. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is responsible for scrutiny of:
 - Children's Social Care and Families
 - Public Health relating to Families
 - Education and Skills
5. The Work Programme was agreed by Council on 8 November 2018.

Dates of Future Meetings

- 10 May 2019
- 17 July 2019
- 25 September 2019
- 13 November 2019

Purpose of the Meeting

6. The Panel may like to consider the 2018/19 Work Programme and consider whether it would wish to make any amendments. The Panel will wish to retain the flexibility to take into account any urgent issues which may arise.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2018/19

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this Report

Samantha Morris/Alyson Grice, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, Tel: 01905 844963/844962

Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

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:

- Agenda and minutes of Council on 8 November 2018 – available on the Council website [here](#)
- Agenda and Minutes of OSPB on 26 September 2018 - available on the Council website [here](#)

2018/19 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME: Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The main focus of the Panel's work is to follow up the Ofsted report and the implementation of the Service Improvement Plan, and Worcester Children First (WCF) the Alternative Delivery Model which are standing items on all agendas.

Updates on the Service Improvement Plan and Ofsted monitoring visits to include consideration of the workload of social workers (including travel time and key workers) and considering comparative figures in relation to performance of agency staff, recruitment and retention and caseloads.

Date of Meeting	Issue for Scrutiny	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
6 March 2019	Update of the SEND Action Plan	16 May 2018 8 August 2018	
6 March 2019	Update on the Children's Social Care Service Improvement Plan – Ofsted Monitoring Visit Feedback	14 August 2017 24 October 2017 22 March 2018 16 May 2018 14 September 2018 16 November 2018	
6 March 2019	Performance Monitoring	14 January 2019	To be reported to the Panel on a quarterly basis.
4 June 2019	Overnight Unit-based Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities – ongoing Scrutiny	8 August 2018	An in-depth Scrutiny was also carried out and reported to the OSPB on 26 April 2018
4 June 2019	Education Otherwise		
Early September	Review the service delivery contract for Worcester Children First	23 November 2017 25 January 2018 22 March 2018	

		16 November 2018 29 January 2019	
September	Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Annual Report	13 September 2017 14 September 2018	
13 November 2019	School Organisation Plan (2019-24)	N/A Plan was circulated to the Manel February 2019	The Plan was agreed by Cabinet on 13 December 2018 and will be refreshed in December 2019
November and January	Budget Scrutiny	16 November 2018 14 January 2018	
Possible Future Items			
TBC	School Attainment and Performance	7 February 2018	
TBC	Commissioning a Prevention and Early Intervention Service for Children and Young People	11 January 2019	The Director of Public Health agreed to come to a future meeting to give full briefing on the service
TBC	Commissioning a 0-19 Prevention and Early Intervention Service: Children's centres	7 February 2018 14 September 2018	
TBC	Development of Edge of Care Services	11 January 2019	Suggested during the Budget discussion
TBC	Sufficiency work including private residential provision used by the council (as suggested by CD)	11 January 2019	Suggested by the Director of Children, Families and Communities during the Performance Monitoring discussion
TBC	Placements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • types of placements in Worcestershire • emergency placements • costs • availability 	N/A	

TBC	Vulnerable Children: Education at home	N/A	
TBC	<p>Alternative Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Referral Units • Review of current provision of service and how it is delivered • Babcock Prime • Migrant Children 	N/A	
TBC	Special Educational Needs/Disabilities Strategy		
Standing Items	<p>Performance Management</p> <p>Quality Assurance</p> <p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Budget Scrutiny Process</p>	TBC	
Scrutiny Champions	<p>Safeguarding – Cllr Tom Baker-Price</p> <p>Education – Cllr Fran Oborski</p> <p>Looked After Children - Cllr Jane Potter</p> <p>Finance/budget – Cllr Bob Banks</p>		

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