

# Agenda

## Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Friday, 13 November 2020, 10.00 am**

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, Worcestershire County Council will be holding this meeting in accordance with the relevant legislative arrangements for remote meetings of a local authority. For more information please refer to: Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Please note that this is a public meeting, conducting remotely by videoconferencing between invited participants and live streamed for general access via a link on the Council's website to the Council's [You Tube Channel](#)

The Agenda papers and background papers can be accessed electronically on the Council's website. Members of the public and press are permitted to report on the proceedings.

## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

### **Friday, 13 November 2020, 10.00 am, Online only**

#### **Membership**

##### **Councillors:**

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

##### **Co-opted Church Representatives (for education matters)**

Mr B Allbut (Church of England)

##### **Parent Governor Representatives (for education matters)**

Vacancy

### **Agenda**

| <b>Item No</b> | <b>Subject</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Page No</b> |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1              | <b>Apologies and Welcome</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                |
| 2              | <b>Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                |
| 3              | <b>Public Participation</b><br>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 12 November 2020). Enquiries can be made through the telephone number/e-mail address below. |                |
| 4              | <b>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | To follow      |
| 5              | <b>Update on 0 -19 Starting Well Partnership</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | To follow      |
| 6              | <b>Update on the Assessment Pathway for Children and Young People who may have Autism</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1 - 10         |
| 7              | <b>Review of Delivery Model for Medical Education Provision Findings</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 11 - 28        |
| 8              | <b>Performance, In-Year Budget Monitoring and 2021-22 Budget Scrutiny</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 29 - 56        |
| 9              | <b>Worcestershire Children First Progress Report</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 57 - 76        |
| 10             | <b>Work Programme 2020-21</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 77 - 82        |

Agenda produced and published by the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance, 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](mailto: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 13 NOVEMBER 2020**

### **UPDATE ON THE ASSESSMENT PATHWAY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY HAVE AUTISM**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel will receive an update on the assessment and diagnostic pathway for children and young people who it is considered are, or may be, on the autistic spectrum (the umbrella pathway).
2. Representatives from the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and Worcestershire County Council (the Council) have been invited to attend the meeting.

#### **Background**

3. Members will be aware of the Notice of Motion in respect of the Diagnosis of Children with Autism which was agreed at Council in November 2017. A further update was provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSPB) in May 2019.
4. At this meeting Members were reminded that it was the service's aspiration to have a maximum wait time of 6 months and a business case was in development to achieve this.
5. Officers agreed to follow up on what was currently provided to schools with regard to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines to ensure accurate referrals and look into providing further written guidance if necessary.
6. The Business case for the Umbrella Pathway was presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel in September 2019 with a request for an update in November 2020.

#### **Actions**

7. Delay was identified between the receipt of the referral to the pathway and the ability to triage and plan if assessment was required. This was due to the need to seek the relevant consent in order to request information from parents/carers (including estranged parents with parental responsibility) and schools. Therefore, commissioners requested the referrer should include consent with parent and school questionnaires at the time of submitting the referral. This change was implemented from January 2020.
8. Professional guidance in the form of Worcestershire Graduated Response, has been co-produced with local families and was published in September 2019. This document informs professionals and families about what support can be expected

from all statutory services. The outcome of this guidance was to ensure that all opportunities to meet the child or young person's needs were explored in order to minimise the need for further assessments.

9. Approval to recruit to the additional posts funded through the Mental Health Investment Standards (MHIS) business case was granted. This included:

- a. Additional 1.5 sessions of Associate Speciality Doctor
- b. Additional 0.6 whole time equivalent (wte) SLT (recruited in advance from Sept 2019)
- c. Additional 0.6 wte senior administrator
- d. Clinical Psychologist 0.6 wte (plus vacancy 0.4 wte)
- e. Advanced Clinical Practitioner 0.4 wte (recruited development role in advance from Sept 2019)
- f. Support Facilitator 0.6 wte (with lived experience)

10. Recruitment to new posts and vacant substantive posts has been challenging due to limited applications, possibly due to an increase in demand from local and regional investment to services for children and young people.

11. Development of post diagnosis/assessment support, specific to those who have recently been assessed has also been delayed due to the limitations in recruitment. However, recruitment processes included assessment of candidate's commitment and vision for the development of universal and targeted support models. Plans are underway to deliver workshops starting January 2021.

12. In March 2020 COVID-19 resulted in all umbrella pathway assessments being cancelled, due to the Government's directive to stop non-essential services. Some professionals were redeployed to front line acute care.

13. As a response to COVID-19, an increased support offer was developed for children and young people and their families by the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Team. This was accessible by those with an autism diagnosis, undergoing assessment or whose difficulties were in line with autism traits. Feedback from families has been positive. Families who were not previously known to SLT have also benefited. On-line resources were also made available which have been accessed by a high volume of people.

14. Following initial lockdown, clinicians who had not been redeployed focused their clinical Umbrella Pathway working hours to non-patient facing activities to support the pathway. This included triage and planning and diagnostic discussion. At the start of December 2019 there were 216 children waiting for diagnostic discussion. At the end of October 2020 there are 38 waiting for diagnostic discussion.

15. Trials of virtual assessments were also initiated in order to minimise additional waiting times within the umbrella pathway. Limitations were experienced according to the age of the child with greater success in the teenagers. Development of new/adapted assessment tools were also implemented by SLT. These have been introduced since September 2020 but again are only suitable for specific young people.

16. Recruitment to all clinical roles is now complete including appointment of a Consultant Paediatrician to Community Paediatrics who has extensive experience (12 years) in neurodevelopmental diagnosis. This offers opportunity to further strengthen the skills and knowledge within the pathway team to maximise efficiency within the pathway.

## Current Position

17. Average waiting times within the Umbrella Pathway have improved overall since 2017 when average waiting times were reported as 157 weeks. Despite delays in recruitment and the impact of all clinical assessments being stopped (NHSE- Next steps on NHS response to COVID-19 – 17 March 2020) between middle of March 2020 to end of June 2020 due to COVID-19, there have been some improvements to the overall waiting times for autism assessment during the past 12 months.

18. This is due to the reduced waiting time between referral and planning and completion of assessments to diagnosis. Table 1 shows the waiting times from referral to planning meeting where evidence of graduated response are considered to decide if the referral should proceed for full assessment including which assessments may be needed. Table 2 shows the overall waiting times in the last 12 months from referral to diagnosis.

**Table 1**

Average waiting times in weeks from referral to planning meeting

| OCT 19 | JAN 20 | APR 20 | JUL 20 | SEP 20 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 21.56  | 21.24  | 16.88  | 19.04  | 4.50   |

**Table 2**

Average waiting time on pathway in weeks - Referral to Diagnosis

| OCT 19 | JAN 20 | APR 20 | JUL 20 | SEP 20 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 81.94  | 69.70  | 67.92  | 65.17  | 60.73  |

## Next steps

19. Maintain new referral process with evidence of full graduated response is included in referrals with information from parents and schools.

20. Focus on recovery and restoration of specific assessments, despite ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

21. Appointment of a project manager to ensure milestones of recovery are achieved, negotiating and implementing urgent actions in the event of any slippage.

22. Ensure all children and young people access a comprehensive Neurodevelopmental history at the start of the pathway to better inform the additional assessment needs.

23. Identify children and young people who are less complex or demonstrate strong traits of autism at the outset for 'one stop shop' assessment with prompt diagnostic discussion. (Example child recently referred to pathway and received diagnosis within 6 weeks of referral.)

24. Monitor impact of above on waiting times and other agreed key performance indicators (KPIs)

### **Purpose of the Meeting**

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

- Consider the information in this report, including impact and limitations due to COVID-19;
- 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 – Umbrella Pathway update October 2020 – presentation slides

### **Contact Points**

Alyson Grice / Alison Spall, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, Tel: 01905 844962 / 846607  
Email: [scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance), the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[Agenda and minutes of Council 9 November 2017](#)

[Agenda and minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board 24 May 2019](#)

[Agenda and minutes of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel 25 September 2019](#)

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



# UMBRELLA PATHWAY UPDATE

## October 2020

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- Delays in ASD assessment national and local challenge
- Pathway redesign 2017
- Referral process changes 2018 and 2020
- Investment received 2019
- Business case shared September 2019

# ACTIONS UPDATE

## **Recruitment** .....plus challenges

- Speech & Language Therapy
- Clinical Psychology
- Administrator- skills and training needed
- Enhanced Medical Role – Equal opportunities
- Support Facilitator – *FiP co-production*

**Referral process** - improved information within referral from January 2020

## IMPACT of COVID 19

- Government directive: non essential services stopped
- Redeployment of staff
- Trial of virtual assessments
- Development of virtual assessment tools
- Focus on Planning meetings
- Focus on Diagnostic discussions



## Support Offer

**Job description** - for Support Facilitator Role

**FIP-** request sent for family choice of session topics

**What is Autism?** - workshop January 2021

MDT professional /family experience for each topic

**Web based resources** - Development of resources / recordings of workshops

## SUPPORT DURING COVID

Development of support offer:

- Email address for families to seek help
- Accessed by over 100 families
- 27 families not previously known to SLT
- All families identified children to have ASD or undergoing assessment
- Web based training – emotional regulation during COVID - > 19,000 hits

# CURRENT POSITION

Numbers waiting for individual assessments:

| Professional          | July 2019 | Oct 2020 |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|
| SLT                   | 165       | 145      |
| Clinical Psychology   | 193       | 210      |
| Occupational therapy  | 22        | 38       |
| Community Paediatrics | 150       | 178      |
| Diagnostic discussion | 353       | 38       |

Waiting times - Referral to planning - Weeks

| OCT 19 | JAN 20 | APR 20 | JUL 20 | SEP 20 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 21.56  | 21.24  | 16.88  | 19.04  | 4.50   |

Waiting times- referral to diagnosis - Weeks

| OCT 19 | JAN 20 | APR 20 | JUL 20 | SEP 20 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 81.94  | 69.70  | 67.92  | 65.17  | 60.73  |

## **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 13 NOVEMBER 2020**

### **REVIEW OF DELIVERY MODEL FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION PROVISION FINDINGS**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills and the Director of Education and Early Help have been invited to the meeting to update the Panel on the review of the delivery model for medical education provision ahead of the findings and proposals being discussed at Cabinet in February 2021 (presentation attached at Appendix 1).

#### **Background**

2. The Medical Education Team (MET) is a service delivered by Worcestershire Children First (WCF), providing education for children who are unable to attend school because of medical needs including mental health difficulties. In January 2020 Cabinet approved a timeline and process for conducting a review of the MET provision and service. In June 2020 Cabinet approved an extended timeline to make the recommendations in December 2020. It has recently been agreed to postpone to February 2021. Implementation of proposals will commence in September 2021. The additional time was needed because of the stakeholder engagement and participation required to coproduce the new model that had been delayed by COVID-19 and is critical to include health commissioners and providers.

3. The MET has continued to support pupils during COVID-19. All pupils have had access to online learning, telephone subject support and safe and well checks from staff and some vulnerable children have been taught onsite. Work packs, emails activities and online materials have been provided for Maths, English, Science, Business Studies and PSHE, providing continuity of curriculum for students. A resilience course for older students and additional activities focused on emotional health and wellbeing have been an integral part of the offer.

#### **Consultation and Coproduction**

4. The availability of stakeholders such as schools, parents and health professionals to engage and participate in the MET Review has been severely limited by COVID-19. This engagement was crucial to the success of any proposals for the MET service. In July 2020, post national lockdown, the review 'picked up pace' and a multi-agency steering group met virtually and regularly, to progress the core activity of the review whilst facilitating the engagement of the following key stakeholders:

- a) Children, young people and parents who currently access the service or have done previously;
- b) Staff and management of the Medical Education Service;
- c) Staff and management of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Alternative Education Providers and Special Schools;
- d) Staff and management in the NHS – including both commissioner and providers (particularly relevant to mental health);
- e) Staff and management in Worcestershire Children First Early Help Services and Social Care.

5. The outbreak of COVID-19 meant that it was not possible to hold face to face meetings and workshops, so the following were completed instead:

- 10 surveys from health practitioners
- 24 surveys from social care and family support practitioners
- 24 surveys from parents
- 5 questionnaires completed by children and young people
- 6 questionnaires completed by MET staff
- 2 facilitated group discussions with health practitioners
- 2 facilitated group discussions with MET staff
- 9 interviews with parents
- 5 interviews with schools

6. These methods of coproduction and consultation activity were ‘the best fit’ to evidence the individual and collective priorities, aspirations, challenges and potential solutions during a national lockdown.

7. Whilst engagement with stakeholders was underway, a data analysis task was being completed by WCF commissioning colleagues. They examined the Medical Education Team records 2003 - 2020 to profile the scale and nature of referrals, the demand for the MET, and the support provided. The data produced from this analysis was compared to:

- profiles of the children’s and young person’s population in the county,
- public health strategic assessments (particularly concerning mental health)
- school attendance records held by WCF.

8. It was compiled into a report for the steering group and stakeholders to empower decision making.

9. In addition, desk top research into the medical education arrangements and provisions in ten other local authorities (including all of Worcestershire’s neighbours and two statistically similar authorities in other parts of the UK) was simultaneously reported to the steering group for their consideration.

10. The information produced, using the methods outlined above, enabled three task and finish groups to co-produce the proposals included in the presentation.

## **Next steps**

11. A report detailing a revised timetable for developing a new model of delivery for medical education provision will be discussed at Cabinet in February 2021.



## **Purpose of the Meeting**

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

- Consider the update provided since the last report to Panel on 16 June;
- 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 Education and Skills.

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 – Presentation – Worcestershire Children First: Medical Education Review Findings

## **Contact Point**

Alyson Grice/Alison Spall, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, (01905 844962/846607)  
Email: [scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- [Agenda and Minutes of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel 23 January 2020](#)
- [Agenda and Minutes of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel 16 June 2020](#)

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

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WORCESTERSHIRE  
**CHILDREN FIRST**



**Medical Education Review Findings  
Overview and Scrutiny November 2020  
Sarah Wilkins & Gabrielle Stacey**

- Why a review of medical education?
- The review timeline
- Who was the review co-produced with?
- Research methods
- Stakeholder feedback
- The proposed model
- Next steps

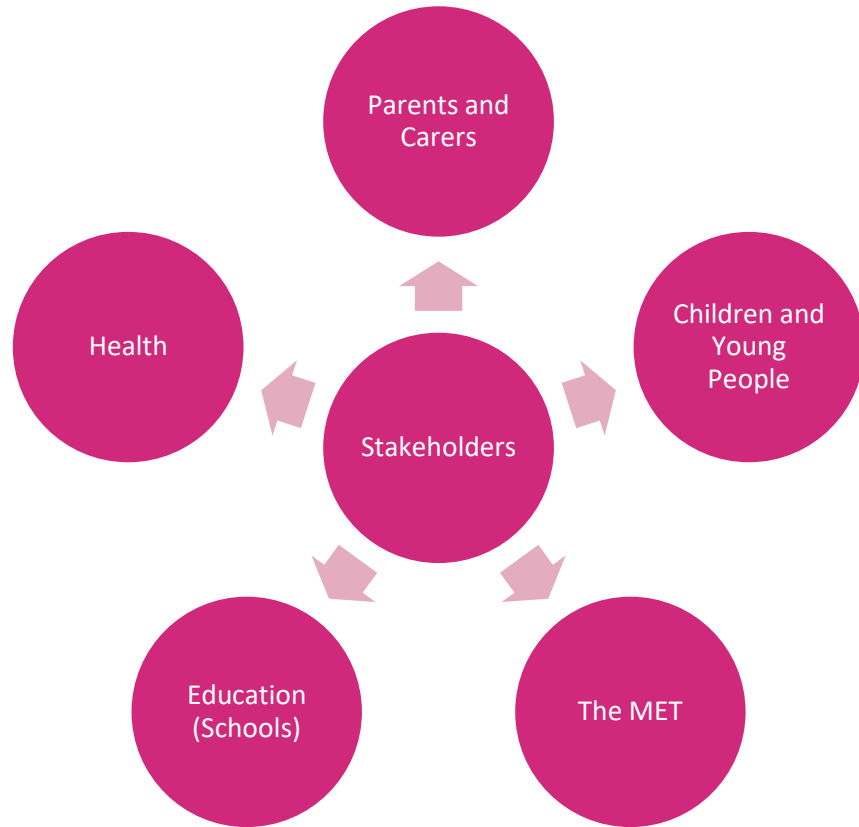
# Why a review of Medical Education?

- The negative impact on children when they miss education
- A priority for Health, Social Care and Education
- To be less reactive and more proactive: development of a seamless pathway
- To improve multi-agency working within Medical Education

# The Review Timeline



# Co-produced with?



# Researched via?



# Children and Young People feedback

Children want to continue to...

- Feel settled and make academic progress
- Have friendly and respectful staff
- Do small group work and 1-1s
- Have a quiet environment
- Be transported to and from bases
- Have involvement from CAMHS
- Feel safe and confident
- Have social opportunities to make friends
- Be away from mainstream school
- Be in a welcoming environment

Children want to see improvements in...

- Outdoor and physical activities on the curriculum
- Non-core curriculum items like design & technology, languages being offered
- School trips and other similar opportunities
- Lighting and layout of premises improved
- Be academically challenged



# Parent/Carer feedback

- Integration and joint working
- Support
- Upskilling
- Flexibility and collaboration between home school and MET
- Small and nurturing /1to1 tuition/online learning/face to face
- Education and life skills
- GCSE completion
- More than mainstream education offer, but not a special school

# Education (School) feedback

- To be the leaders
- Direction from medical professionals
- Response centred around Individual Health Care Plan
- Focus on maintaining learning in English and Maths
- Art/Craft for therapeutic elements
- Short and long-term provision
- Knowledge and expertise as well as direct support
- Family support/social care supporting reintegration
- Support for mental health needs and physical health needs

# Medical Education staff feedback

- Access to external/additional funding
- Standard and more permanent contracts for staff with admin support
- Schools to provide facilities and resources
- MET going into home schools to prevent, delay or reverse school refusals and non-attendance
- Home schools taking responsibility for medium to long term education of their pupils
- Multi-agency ownership
- Registered provision
- A credible and well-resourced remote/online learning offer
- Physical bases
- Provision for post-16yrs to Years 12 to 13

# Social Care feedback

- Parental involvement
- Multidisciplinary team approach
- MET as a support service within a multi-agency approach focusing on reintegration back into home school
- MET providing advice before referral
- Involvement at point of reintegration, working with the family
- To be part of the strategic partnership

# Health feedback

- Multidisciplinary team approach
- Parental involvement/upskilling
- A focus on maintaining engagement and attendance at school and reintegration
- Support for mental health needs and physical health needs
- A jointly commissioned approach
- A special school for children with high anxiety – long term provision
- A recovery model
- Exit planning
- A similar approach and model adopted by Perryfields

# The Proposed Pathway

PREVENTION – providing a learning environment and network which promotes attendance and positive engagement in education

- Protocol, toolkit and supporting guidance
- Training and learning networks
- Commissioning of help and support for parents

EARLY INTERVENTION – early identification and provision of tools to prevent regular/ chronic non-attendance and engagement in education

- Adoption of “Individual Healthcare Plans”
- Support and challenge where attendance of 10 days or more is identified.
- Prioritising the assessment and treatment of children and young people

INTERIM INTERVENTIONS – additional help and support provided to schools, children/ young people

- Creation of a Multi-Agency Assessment Panel
- Outreach into schools
- Hospital-based provision
- Provision of an emergency referral process

RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION – provision of a safe, nurturing and therapeutic environment to assist re-engagement with education

- Home schools lead via Individual Healthcare Plans
- Commissioning of registered provision, ideally with bases across county
- A commissioning specification for short-term education
- Schools to be charged on a pro rata basis

RETURN AND REINTEGRATION – long-term education provision and permanent placements

- Return and reintegrate to long-term education provision
- Year 11 considered for a longer-term placement until end of academic year
- Deliver a phased and supportive return to school.
- The Multi-Agency Assessment Panel will consider the help and support required to aid a successful return and reintegration

# Proposed Outcomes

## Children & Young People

- Maintain engagement in education, principally in school
- Engaged and enjoying learning and education
- Maintain academic progress
- Prepared for exams and achieving qualifications
- Feel safe confident and supported in new environment
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Able to maintain routine and structure
- Able to maintain social contact with peers and form friendships
- Have their education and support needs clearly identified
- To be prepared and ready for the next stages and life and education
- Able to build resilience and life skills to manage conditions and disabilities throughout life
- Feel confident and able to successfully return to mainstream education

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## Parent / Carers

- Feel informed included and engaged in decision making about their child

## Schools

- Feel informed and supported by other agencies, are leading multiagency approach and able to find alternative education arrangements to meet CYP's needs

## Next Steps

- Feedback from stakeholders on proposed model
  - [sendimprovement@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:sendimprovement@worcestershire.gov.uk)
- Detailed analysis of proposals from HR, legal and finance followed by implementation planning
- Submission of a WCC Cabinet report seeking approval on the proposed recommendations and implementation plan - February 2021
- Implementation of the recommendations - January – August 2021
- ‘Go Live’ start of academic year 2021/22

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## **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**13 NOVEMBER 2020**

### **PERFORMANCE, IN-YEAR BUDGET MONITORING AND 2021/22 BUDGET SCRUTINY**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Panel will be updated on current performance and financial information for services relating to its remit:
  - Children's Social Care and Families
  - Public Health relating to Families
  - Education and Skills
2. In addition, as part of the Budget Scrutiny process for 2021/22, the Panel will receive details of the emerging pressures and challenges for services, as identified by the Directorates, for the 2021/22 Budget. Discussion about emerging pressures and challenges will then help to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Panels' scrutiny of the draft 2021/22 Budget at meetings in January 2021.
3. The Cabinet Members with Responsibility (CMRs) for Children and Families, and Education and Skills have been invited to attend the meeting to respond to any queries from Panel Members.

#### **Performance Information**

4. Performance information provides a further tool for the Scrutiny Panels in maintaining members' understanding of services provided to the public, the effectiveness of current policies, and early knowledge of any issues or areas for further scrutiny.
5. In addition, the Corporate Balanced Scorecard provides a means of understanding progress against the Council's Corporate Plan and has a range of indicators linked to key priorities and themes for each Directorate. This is reported to Cabinet and is also available on the Council's [website](#).
6. Attached at Appendix 1 is a dashboard of performance information relating to Quarter 2 (July to September 2020). It covers the indicators from the Directorate level scorecard and those from the corporate scorecard and other management information (as appropriate) which relate to services relevant to this Scrutiny Panel's remit.

#### **Financial Information**

7. In addition to regular performance information, the Panel also receives in-year budget information. The information provided is for Period 6 and is attached in the form of presentation slides at Appendix 2.

## **Budget Scrutiny 2021/22**

8. As part of the Budget Scrutiny process for 2021/22, Directorates have been asked to identify the emerging pressures and challenges for services, and these are also set out in Appendix 3.

9. The Panel's discussions on these issues will be reported to OSPB on 9 December 2020.

## **Purpose of the Meeting**

10. Following discussion of the information provided, the Scrutiny Panel is asked to determine:

- any comments it would wish to highlight to the CMR or OSPB (at its meeting on 19 November 2020) relating to the in-year budget and performance information
- any comments to report back as part of the budget scrutiny process on the emerging pressures and challenges for services, to the OSPB at its meeting on 9 December 2020.
- whether any further information or scrutiny on a particular topic is required.

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 - Children and Families Performance Information Dashboard  
Appendix 2 - In-year Budget Information (Presentation Slides)  
Appendix 3 - 2021/22 emerging pressures and challenges for services

## **Specific Contact Points for this Report**

Alison Spall and Alyson Grice, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, Tel: 01905 846607/  
01905 844962 Email: [scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

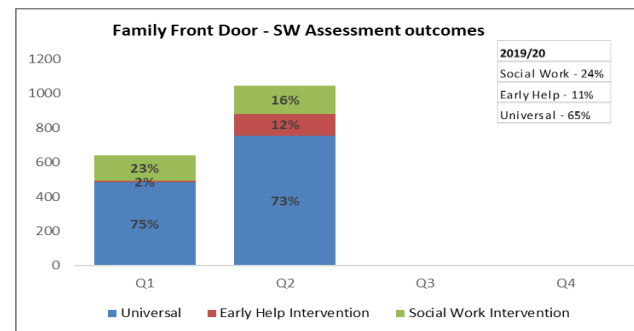
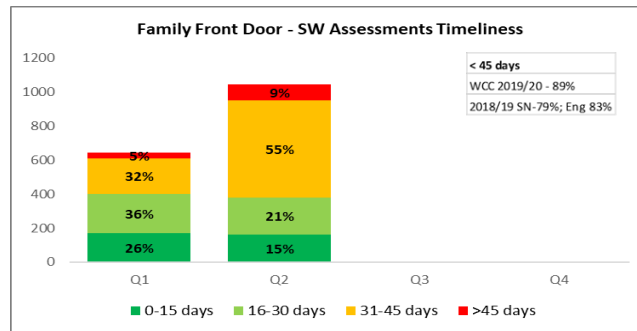
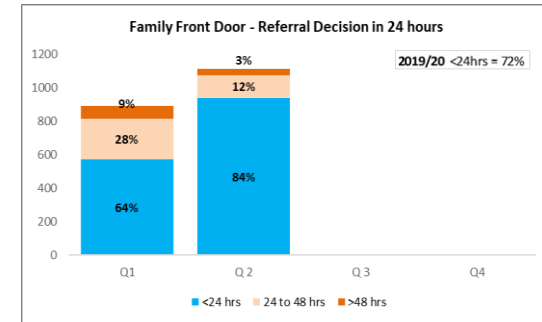
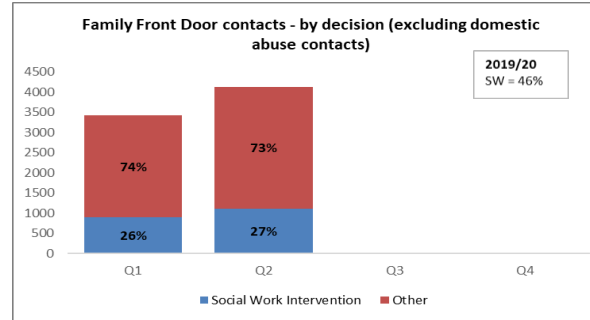
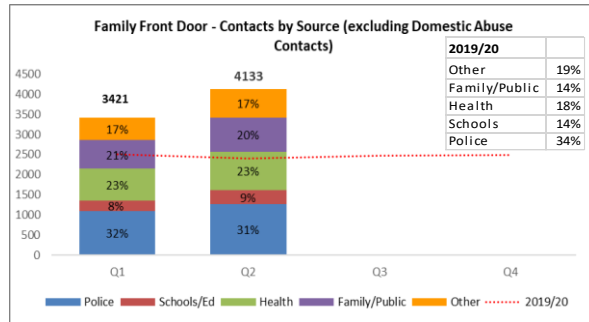
[Budget book 2019/20](#)

[Agendas and minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 29 January 2020 and 22 July 2020](#)

[Agendas and minutes of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 23 January 2020 and 17 July 2020](#)

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

## Family Front Door



We have seen a rise in demand for services at our "front door" from an average of 1000 per month to 2000 since the start of the Covid pandemic.

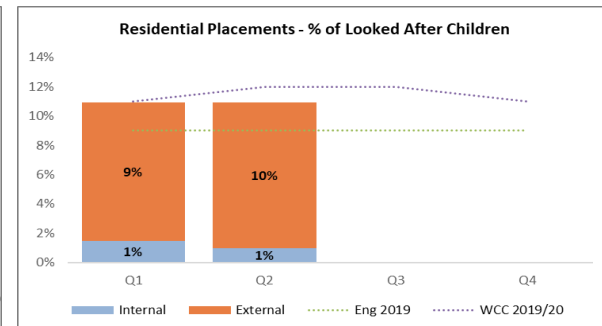
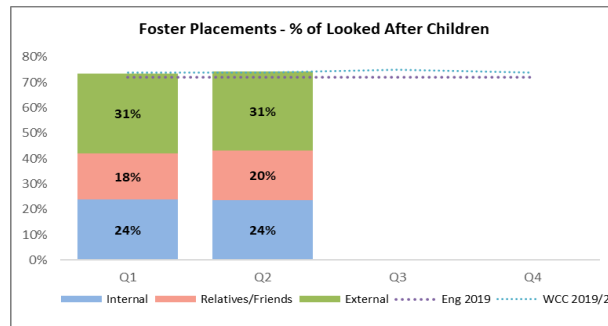
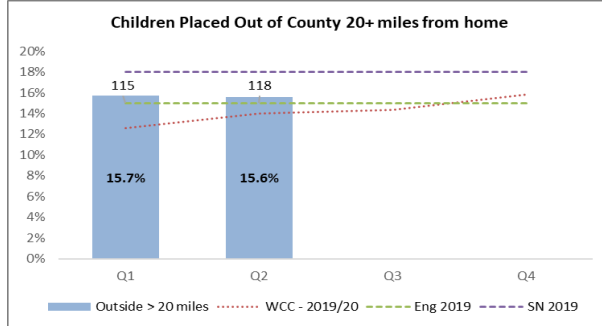
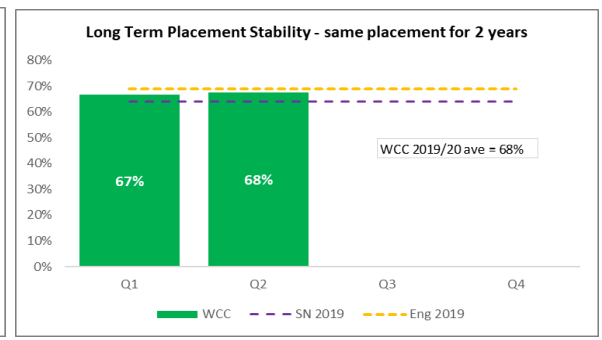
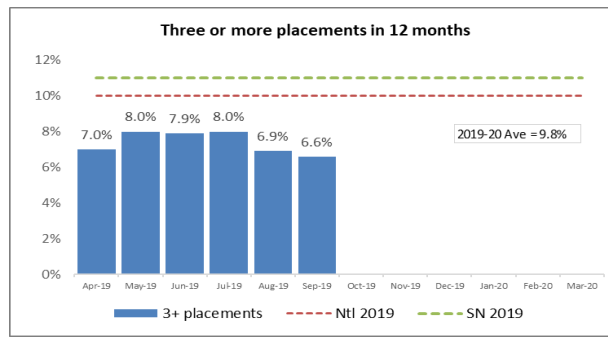
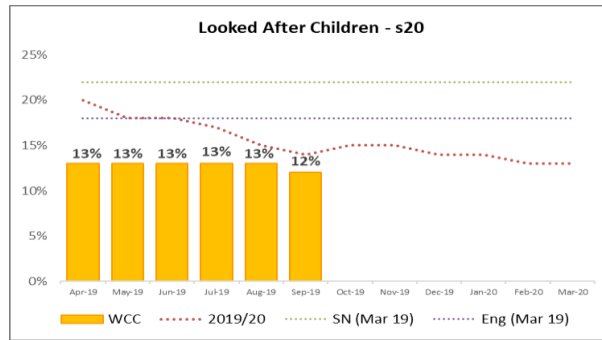
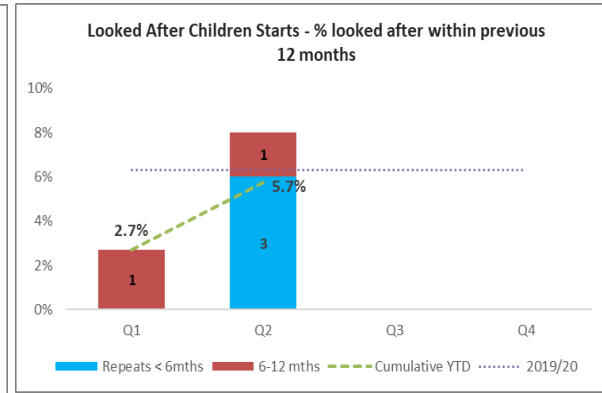
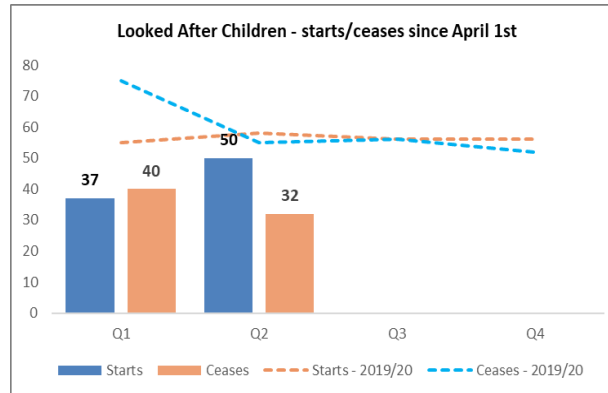
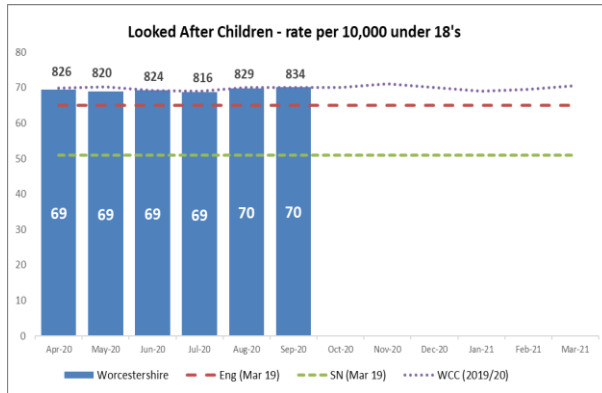
The % of contacts that meet the threshold for a SWA had improved from 45% to 50% pre covid but this had dropped to an average of 25%.

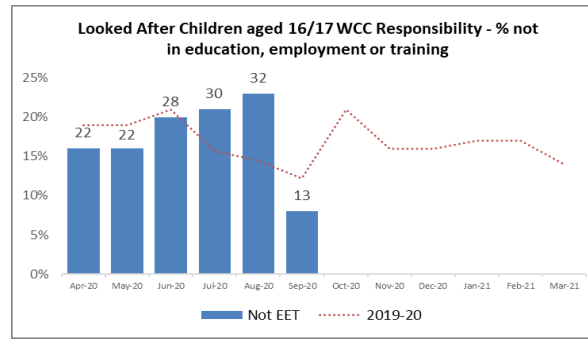
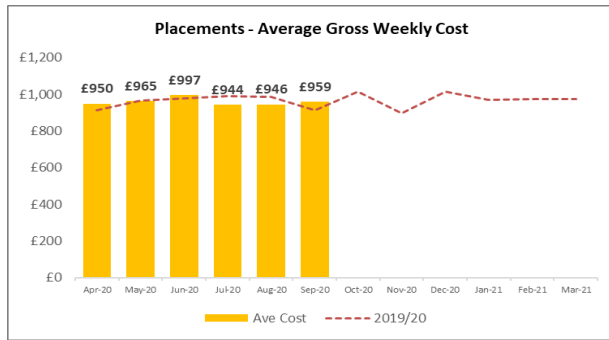
The content of referrals is showing both high end risk, with some very serious harm case is being presented and conversely extreme low level concerns that continued to be presented at FFD as opposed to referred into universal or early help services.

Whilst we can't say we have identified all "hidden harm" from a Safeguarding assurance perspective we are confident that professionals and the public know where to refer concern for the welfare of children but we remain concerned that professionals and family knowledge of what early help services are available and the meaningful accessibility to these services is insufficient and as such continues to impact on presentation of low level concerns at the family front door.

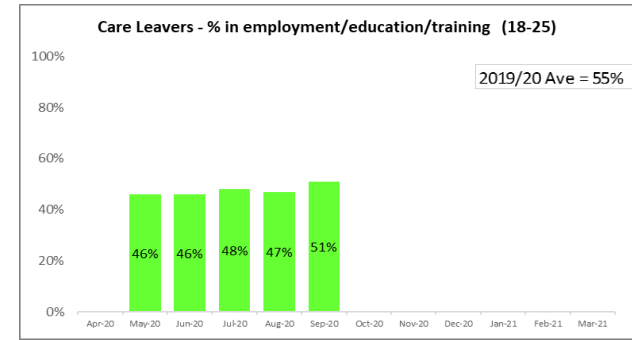
Mental Health and Self Harm have seen a 82% and 151% rise respectively as risk factors identified in our social worker assessment over 18/19 and 19/20. It is of note that this data does not yet include the covid impact we will see in 20/21. This is linked to the "socially unacceptable behaviours" risk factor we have seen increase by 80% and is highlighted significantly in our edge of care referrals.

### Through Care - Looked After Children and Care Leavers





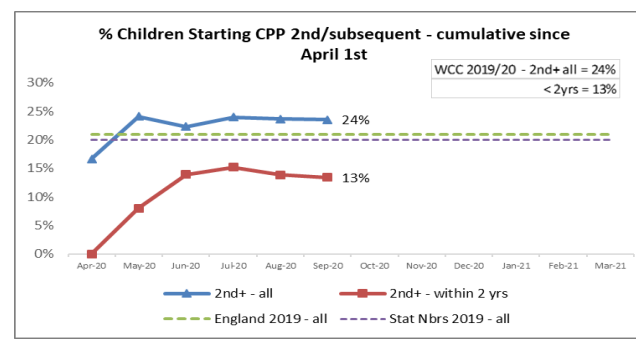
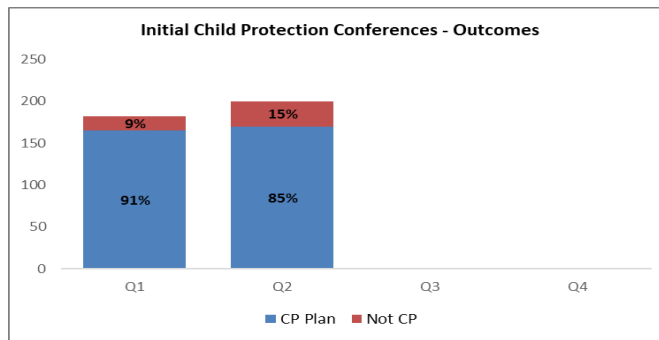
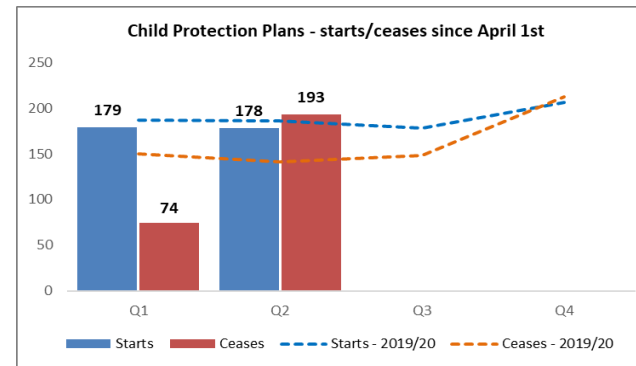
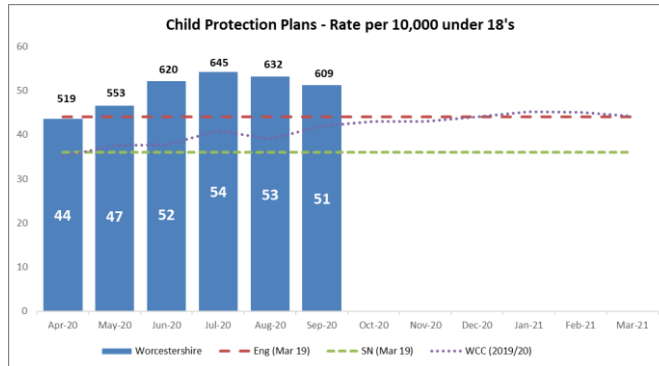
No comparator data is available for this indicator



Care Leavers 19-21 in Employment, Education or Training as at 30 Sep 2020: **47%**. Latest comparative figure for age 19-21 using national annual snapshot methodology (2018/19) - Statistical Neighbours: **53%**, England: **52%**

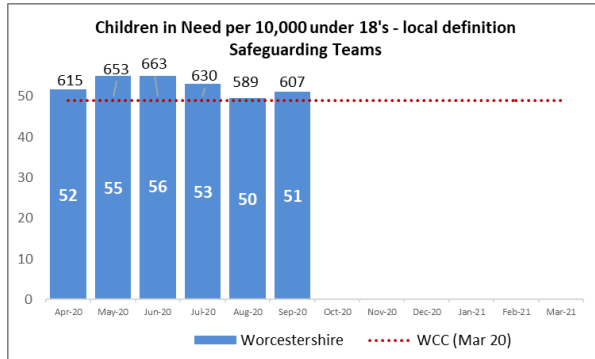
Looked after children numbers continue to rise, although prevention of care still remains positive. New accommodations year to date are less than seen this period last year but the numbers exiting care have still not reached normal levels thus impacting on the overall numbers of children in our care. Cases open to care proceedings have all now been identified with court dates so we will see care and permanency planning for these children progress over the next few months. Other exit care planning such as rehabilitation to parental care or moves to semi/independent living has resumed but continues to be effected by Covid and local/national lockdown measures. Through "lockdown" we saw stability in placements and reduced missing incidents. However care planning for children and young people that involved rehabilitation to parental care and moves to semi/indep living were delayed as restrictions were in place.

# Child Protection

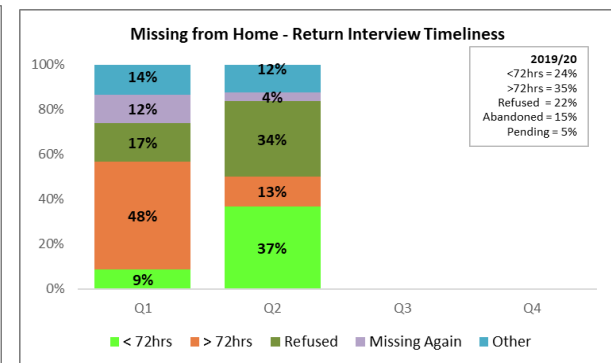
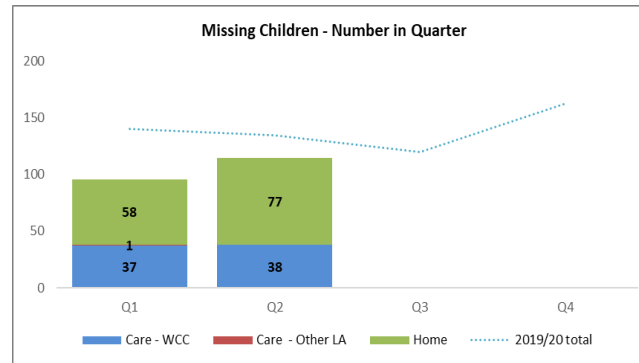


Child protection numbers are now above Statistical Neighbours and England averages. This is most certainly a reflection of our Covid protocol where children were not removed from child protection plans April – June 20 due to the more limited ability to complete direct work and incorporate partnership contributions to the social work assessment. Maintaining child protection plans in place for these children during Covid 19 and specifically during the early national lockdown and school closures is in our view safe practice.

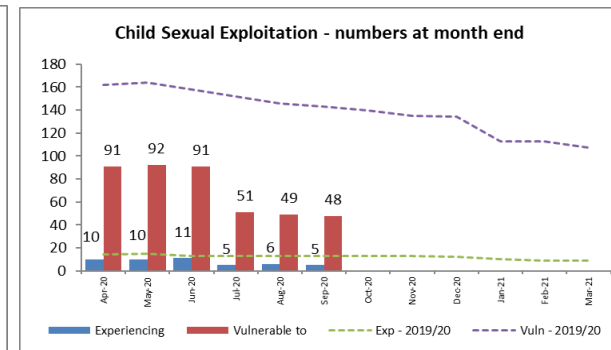
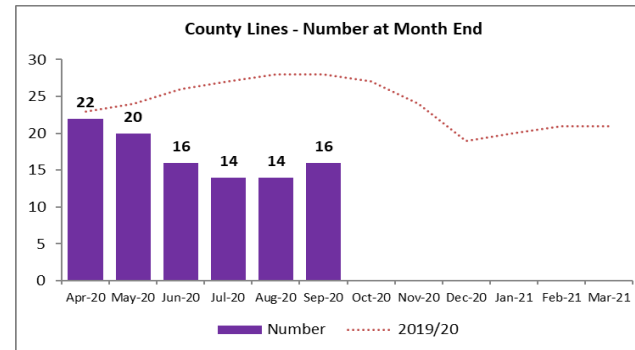
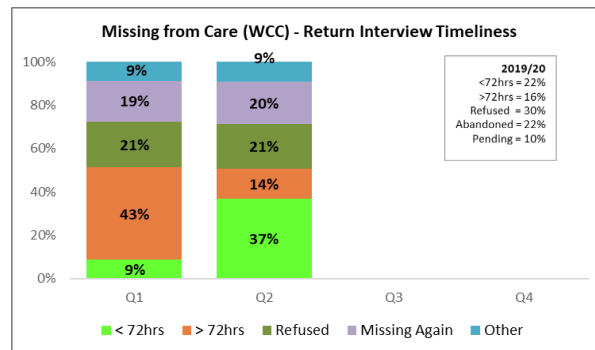
### Children In Need



Child in Need Census (wide definition) - rate per 10,000 at 31 March 2019 - WCC= 305; Statistical Neighbours = 287; England = 334

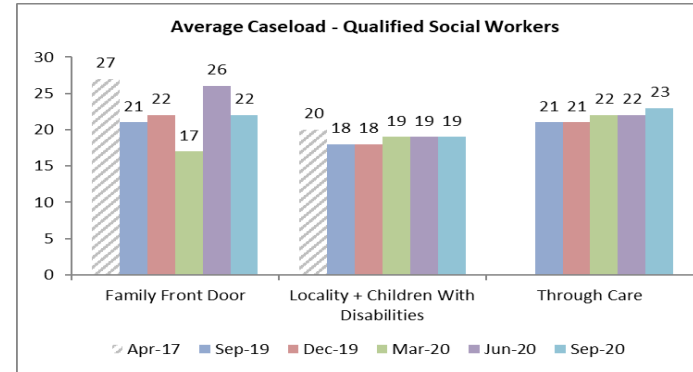
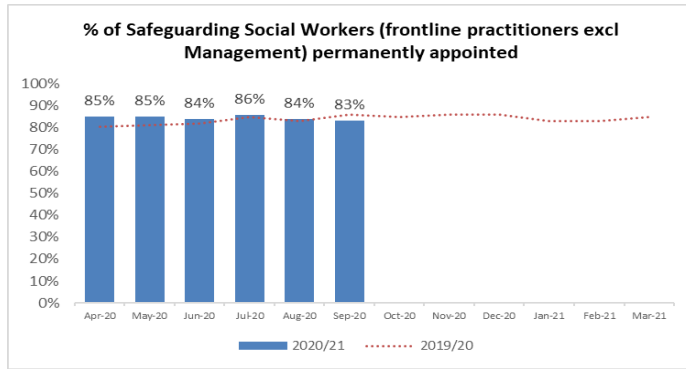


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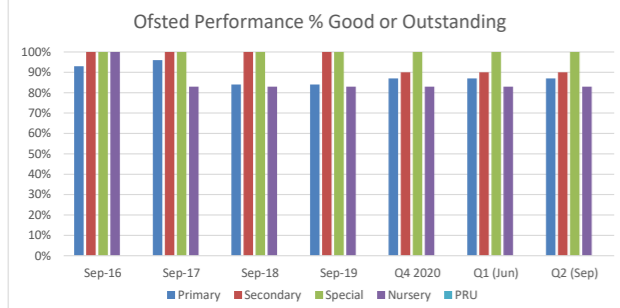


Development of our "Get Safe" model of working with child exploitation across the levels of need has enabled us to identify more children and young people and identify potential risks earlier. We have seen a 116% increase in assessments identifying "Get Safe" exploitation risk factors.

### Staffing







**Ofsted Performance - % Good or Outstanding - All Schools by phase**

| Phase     | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| Primary   | 89%    | 88%    | 83%    | 83%    | 83%     | 83%      | 83%      |
| Secondary | 93%    | 96%    | 84%    | 84%    | 87%     | 87%      | 87%      |
| Special   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 90%     | 90%      | 90%      |
| Nursery   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%    | 100%     | 100%     |
| PRU       | 100%   | 83%    | 83%    | 83%    | 83%     | 83%      | 83%      |

**Ofsted grades - LA Maintained Schools**

| Grade       | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| Outstanding | 30     | 27     | 25     | 25     | 24      | 24       | 24       |
| Good        | 123    | 104    | 92     | 86     | 84      | 85       | 85       |
| RI          | 17     | 11     | 15     | 16     | 12      | 10       | 10       |
| Inadequate  | 3      | 9      | 8      | 4      | 6       | 6        | 6        |
| Total       | 173    | 151    | 140    | 131    | 126     | 125      | 125      |
| % O & G     | 88.4%  | 86.8%  | 83.6%  | 84.7%  | 85.7%   | 87.2%    | 87.2%    |

**Ofsted grades - Free Schools and Academies**

| Grade       | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| Outstanding | 17     | 21     | 22     | 20     | 17      | 17       | 17       |
| Good        | 43     | 62     | 66     | 73     | 77      | 77       | 77       |
| RI          | 2      | 2      | 6      | 8      | 9       | 10       | 10       |
| Inadequate  | 1      | 2      | 9      | 11     | 13      | 14       | 14       |
| Total       | 63     | 87     | 103    | 112    | 116     | 118      | 118      |
| % O & G     | 95.2%  | 95.4%  | 85.4%  | 83.0%  | 81.0%   | 79.7%    | 79.7%    |

**School Attendance**

| Phase     | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| Primary   | 96.1%  | 96.0%  | 96.0%  | 96.0%  | 95.1%   | 92.1%    | 95.7%    |
| Middle    | 95.0%  | 94.4%  | 95.5%  | 96.0%  | 94.4%   | 91.9%    | 95.1%    |
| Secondary | 95.2%  | 95.1%  | 94.7%  | 94.7%  | 93.4%   | 93.1%    | 93.7%    |

| National  | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Primary   | 96.0%  | 96.0%  | 95.8%  | 96.0%  |
| Secondary | 94.8%  | 94.6%  | 94.5%  | 94.5%  |

**Missing Education**

| Category             | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| CME Enquiries        | n/a    | n/a    | 78     | 204    | 130     | 126      | 169      |
| CME Registered       | 90     | 56     | 40     | 36     | 67      | 59       | 53       |
| EHE Registered       | 556    | 561    | 718    | 737    | 762     | 685      | 707      |
| Permanent Exclusions | 106    | 140    | 127    | 90     | 80      | 10       | 18       |

**Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET - 16 to 18 Year olds)**

| Category               | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| Number of NEET         | 179    | 210    | 131    | 143    | 349     | 386      | 241      |
| Number of Unknown NEET | n/a    | n/a    | 3541   | 6573   | 138     | 126      | 3601     |

**% School age Looked After Children with an up to date Personal Education Plan**

| Category      | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| % Up to Date  | 87%    | 75%    | 82%    | 81%    | 100%    | 100%     | 100%     |
| % Out of Date | 13%    | 25%    | 18%    | 19%    | 0%      | 0%       | 0%       |

**Commentary - Nikki Jones**

Due to Covid no Ofsted inspections have been undertaken since early March 2020. Hence the outcomes remain unchanged since reporting in the last quarter. At present we are expecting inspections to recommence January 2021. There have been 4 Ofsted visits in the Autumn term but these do no result in a judgement, and so have no impact on the data.

**Commentary - Matt Pooler**

Year on year, attendance has previously been the same or better for each phase and this is also reflected in National figures. The Q1 2020 figures are showing a drop due to the pandemic but by Q2 the figures had improved greatly due to wider school-reopening, supported by WCF, and are close to pre-pandemic levels.

**Commentary - Matt Pooler**

There are currently 53 Children registered as missing education. The increase over previous years is due to a number of outstanding enquiries being confirmed to be CME. CME enquiries also remain high and the increase is due to the introduction of a centralised hub in 2019 to receive referrals to the Local Authority to quickly identify children missing and at risk of missing education and includes effective monitoring and tracking with clear time frames for intervention.

Electively home educated children continue to fluctuate around 700+. Ongoing analysis of reasons for EHE continues. As part of followup process over the Summer, caseworkers worked intensively to check EHE education, reintegrate to a school place or update to CME where necessary. EHE with SEN remains fairly steady. The children with EHCPs have been identified and annual reviews arranged to ensure the family decision remains to home educate and does not reflect lack of suitable provision within a school.

Worcestershire's overall Permanent Exclusion rate remains very similar to National levels and significantly better than the West Midlands overall (2017/18 results). Initially 19-20 was expected to show similar exclusion figures to the previous year but the pandemic reduced the number of new exclusions and lowered the total figures. The Exclusions and AP review references the Education and Skills Strategy Aim of reducing permanent exclusions.

**Commentary - Matt Pooler**

September 2020 Peak - Due to young people moving through education in September, there are a large number of unknowns that need to be tracked. Until these individuals are identified, the unknown figure remains high and is at its peak in September. This peak is understood by the DFE. This year we have received college lists earlier and have the NEET team making phone calls to identify those young people who might be NEET quicker. There is an expectation that the NEET will increase this year due to the pandemic as this was experienced during the latter months of 2019/20 (Q's 4 and 1).

The team continues to work with stakeholders across the region to identify factors that underpin the NEETs position. These include the range of local options available for learners, poor engagement of learners, unmet mental health need, the quality of careers advice available, and trends for students leaving placements.

**Commentary - Colette Maynard-Bond**

**Statutory School Age PEPs**

All pupils in Reception Year to Year 11 receive an on-site PEP visit from a PEP Co/Area Learning Advocate once a year and a PEP phone consultation twice a year (non Covid-19 practice). Additional on-site visits may occur (non Covid-19 practice), due to transition, complexity of situation or those identified as a result of pupil progress meetings. There is a high rate of PEP completion each term (100%). All PEP meetings (currently virtual) scheduled to take place are completed. There is an improving quality of information in the PEP document due to: professional development for Designated Teachers and Social Care colleagues, clarity of information and expectations from the Virtual School and support / guidance offered by VS staff which impacts on the quality of information shared in the PEP process.

**Post 16 and Early Years PEP completion**

Post 16 and early years PEPs are completed by social workers, the Post 16 Worcestershire PEPs are 'signed off' by Virtual School. The completion rate and quality still requires significant improvement.

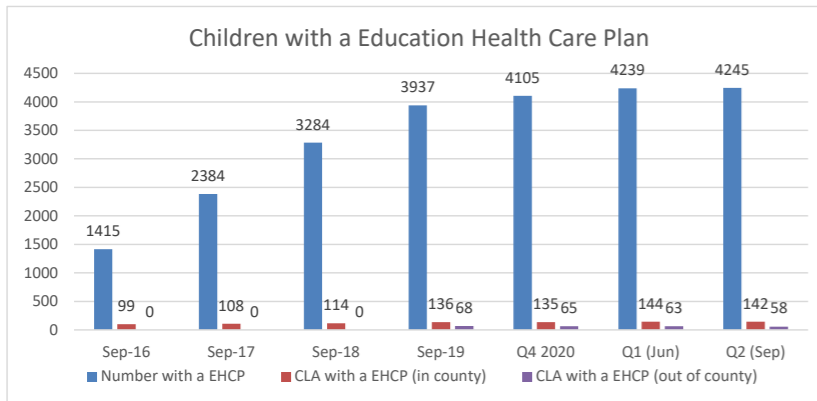
**Pupils Causing Concern**

There are regular meetings with Social Care to discuss pupils at risk of CME, less than 25 hours of education and those where there is a delay in placing in school provision. Half termly pupil progress meetings are held internally where pupils who are not making progress against their own challenging targets are discussed, reviewed and a plan of action is implemented.

**Quality Assurance**

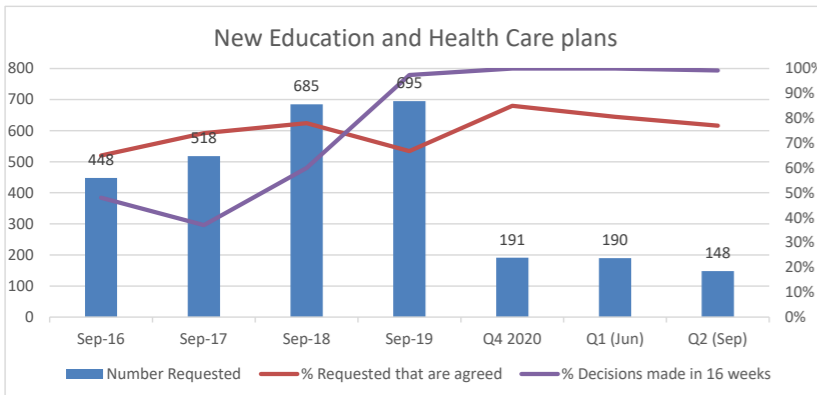
Half termly quality assurance activities focus on specific groups of CLA or themes, these reflect the priorities within the school improvement plan. Next steps further improve practice.

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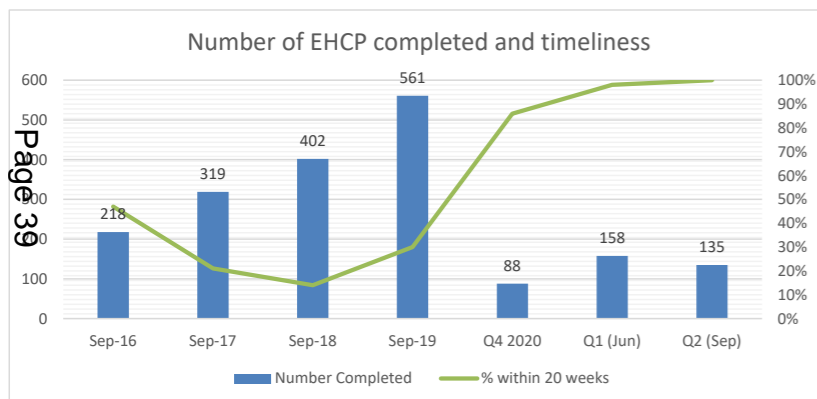
#### Children with a Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

|                                 | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| Number with a EHCP              | 1415   | 2384   | 3284   | 3937   | 4105    | 4239     | 4245     |
| CLA with a EHCP (in county)     | 99     | 108    | 114    | 136    | 135     | 144      | 142      |
| CLA with a EHCP (out of county) | n/a    | n/a    | n/a    | 68     | 65      | 63       | 58       |
| CIN with a EHCP                 | n/a    | n/a    | n/a    | 74     | 103     | 88       | 113      |
| CPP with a EHCP                 | n/a    | n/a    | n/a    | 16     | 17      | 18       | 22       |
| EH plans with a EHCP            | n/a    | n/a    | n/a    | 43     | 60      | 0        | 0        |



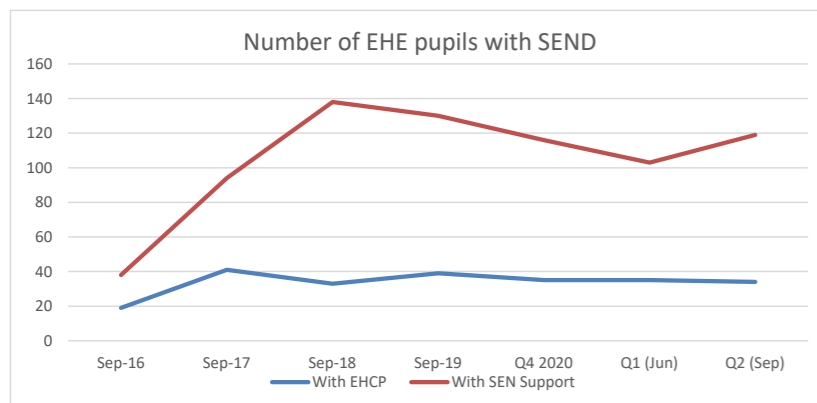
#### New Education and Health Care Plans

|                              | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| Number Requested             | 448    | 518    | 685    | 695    | 191     | 190      | 148      |
| % Requested that are agreed  | 65%    | 74%    | 78%    | 67%    | 85%     | 81%      | 77%      |
| % Decisions made in 16 weeks | 48%    | 37%    | 60%    | 97%    | 100%    | 100%     | 99%      |



#### Number of EHCPs completed and % within 20 weeks

|                   | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| Number Completed  | 218    | 319    | 402    | 561    | 88      | 158      | 135      |
| % within 20 weeks | 47%    | 21%    | 14%    | 30%    | 86%     | 98%      | 100%     |



#### Number of EHE pupils with SEND

|                  | Sep-16 | Sep-17 | Sep-18 | Sep-19 | Q4 2020 | Q1 (Jun) | Q2 (Sep) |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| With EHCP        | 19     | 41     | 33     | 39     | 35      | 35       | 34       |
| With SEN Support | 38     | 94     | 138    | 130    | 116     | 103      | 119      |

#### Commentary - Gabrielle Stacey

The number of CYP with an EHCP has continued to rise in Worcestershire albeit at a slower rate in the last quarter. This slowing is likely to be due to Covid 19 which resulted in legal exemptions to a small number of EHC needs assessments being completed in the statutory 20 weeks and a reduction in the number of requests for assessments during this period. Further monitoring will be needed in order to understand whether there is a more general slowing in the rate of increase we have seen in recent years and further analysis of the extent to which this number reflects the cessation of existing EHCPs.

Covid-19 has resulted in a reduction in the number of requests for assessments during the last quarter. Not all students with SEND support attended school during this time which would have impacts on settings ability to put in place support through the graduated response and therefore whether a request for a needs assessment would be appropriate.

Excellent improvements in performance have been made over the last two years resulting in 100% of EHCPs being completed with 20 weeks within the last quarter. Strategic developments in the team are now focused on annual reviews and the quality of EHCPs.

#### Commentary - Gabrielle Stacey

The number of children with an EHCP who are EHE has remained steady over the last year. A robust response in place where a child becomes EHE involving close working between SEND casework and the EHE teams. Numbers of children with SEND support who are EHE has increased in the last quarter but remains lower than this time last year. An analysis of current requests /decisions whether to EHE and how this relates to Covid-19 is being undertaken by the EHE team.

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# Appendix 2 – September – Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Update 2020/21

## Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**13 November 2020**

As at Period 6, the forecast expenditure on Dedicated Schools Grant budget is £224m – a forecast overspend of £1.96m

| 2020/21 Budget Monitoring<br>Period 6 - September 2020 | Budget<br>£000 | Forecast<br>Outturn<br>£000 | Overspends       |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|
|                                                        |                |                             | Variance<br>£000 | Variance<br>% |
| Schools DSG Block                                      | 130,365        | 130,365                     | 0                | 0.0%          |
| High Needs DSG Block                                   | 52,136         | 54,096                      | 1,960            | 3.8%          |
| Early Years DSG Block                                  | 35,886         | 35,886                      | 0                | 0.0%          |
| Central DSG Block                                      | 3,515          | 3,515                       | 0                | 0.0%          |
| <b>DSG</b>                                             | <b>221,903</b> | <b>223,863</b>              | <b>1,960</b>     |               |

- Key pressures remain as previously reported to panel – specifically Out of County provision and Post-16 provision in the High Needs block.
- Overspend is ‘carried forward’, against future DSG income. The overall deficit at the start of the year was £6.2m. High Needs overspend end of 2019/20 - £7.9m- Worcestershire total deficit is £6.2m and will be carried forward against future DSG income. A statutory instrument being laid to ensure all deficits are in a unusable reserve to 2022-23 for local government accounting purposes.
- Worcestershire High Needs pressures are in line with known national picture as a significant number of LA’s experienced an overspend at the end of 2019/20, ours was £8.7m. In 2020/21 we received £8.7m towards High Needs which will keep pace with spending but not address the historical deficit. Due Covid-19 High Needs Spend suppressed and demand is starting to increase.
- High needs funding is increasing by a further £730m, or 10%, in 2021-22 – that follows the £780m increase this year this represents an increase of £7.8m which will help to keep pace with demand led budget but will not address the current deficit of £8.1m.

# Remaining CFC Budgets in the County Council

| Service                                | 2020/21<br>Gross<br>Budget | 2020/21<br>Net<br>Budget | 2020/21<br>Forecast | Variance<br>After<br>Adj's | Variance<br>After<br>Adj's |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                        | £000                       | £000                     | £000                | £000                       | %                          |
| SENDIASS                               | 160                        | 95                       | 95                  | 0                          | 0.0%                       |
| Children's Commissioning & Partnership | 349                        | 349                      | 349                 | 0                          | 0.0%                       |
| Historic Chs                           | 11,690                     | 380                      | 357                 | (23)                       | -6.0%                      |
| Childrens S75                          | 19,505                     | 1,604                    | 1,604               | 0                          | 0.0%                       |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>31,704</b>              | <b>2,428</b>             | <b>2,405</b>        | <b>(23)</b>                | <b>-0.9%</b>               |

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No issues are being seen from a financial perspective relating to areas within the County Council relating to CFC budgets

All areas are forecasting to spend to budget as at the end of Quarter 2 apart from a very minor variance within Historic Pension Liabilities.

At the end of June, WCF is forecasting a deficit of £0.8m or 0.6% – this is shown below by both expenditure type and by service

The forecast deficit is due to an increased number of external placements since April 2020 which is consistent across the country where other Local Authorities are experiencing significant demand increases and pressures on budgets.

## Worcestershire Children First Budget Monitoring Statement - by Expenditure Type

|                                                           | Latest Budget  | YTD           | Full-year Projection | Variance     | Variance     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                                           | £000           | £000          | £000                 | £000         | %            |
| Contract Income                                           | 119,148        | 78,713        | 119,471              | 323          | 0.27%        |
| Government Grants                                         | 0              | 55            | 0                    | 0            | 0.00%        |
| Interest                                                  | 0              | 0             | 0                    | 0            | 0.00%        |
| Sales, Fees and Charges                                   | 1,260          | 937           | 1,561                | 301          | 23.88%       |
| <b>Total Income</b>                                       | <b>120,408</b> | <b>79,705</b> | <b>121,033</b>       | <b>624</b>   | <b>0.52%</b> |
| <i>less expenditure</i>                                   |                |               |                      |              |              |
| Employees                                                 | 41,586         | 17,937        | 40,228               | -1,358       | -3.27%       |
| Premises                                                  | 734            | 158           | 741                  | 7            | 0.93%        |
| Transport                                                 | 15,983         | 5,141         | 15,787               | -196         | -1.23%       |
| Supplies & Services                                       | 16,146         | 6,379         | 16,328               | 182          | 1.12%        |
| Third Party Payments                                      | 45,961         | 20,176        | 48,745               | 2,784        | 6.06%        |
| Transfer Payments                                         | -2             | 0             | 0                    | 1            | -75.00%      |
| Education Payments                                        | 0              | 0             | 0                    | 0            | 0.00%        |
| Reserves                                                  | 0              | 0             | 0                    | 0            | 0.00%        |
| Support Services                                          | 0              | 0             | 0                    | 0            | 0.00%        |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                                  | <b>120,408</b> | <b>49,791</b> | <b>121,827</b>       | <b>1,419</b> | <b>1.18%</b> |
| <b>Projected Surplus/(Deficit) before Corporation Tax</b> | <b>0</b>       | <b>29,914</b> | <b>-795</b>          | <b>-795</b>  |              |



# September Monitoring by Service WCF

## Worcestershire Children First Budget Monitoring Statement - by Service Heading

|                                                           | Latest Budget<br>£000 | YTD<br>£000   | Full-year Projection<br>£000 | Variance<br>£000 | Variance<br>% | Change since last month<br>£000 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| WCF Management & Board                                    | 692                   | 300           | 665                          | -27              | -3.97%        | -5                              |
| Training                                                  | 178                   | 17            | 178                          | 0                | 0.00%         | 0                               |
| Resources Teams                                           | 4,884                 | 1,652         | 4,758                        | -126             | -2.58%        | -74                             |
| Support Service Payments                                  | 7,324                 | 3,662         | 7,324                        | 0                | 0.00%         | 0                               |
| <b>Resources</b>                                          | <b>13,078</b>         | <b>5,631</b>  | <b>12,924</b>                | <b>-154</b>      | <b>-1.17%</b> | <b>-79</b>                      |
| CSC Safeguarding Services                                 | 14,511                | 6,079         | 13,913                       | -598             | -4.12%        | 263                             |
| Integrated Family Front Door                              | 4,430                 | 1,840         | 4,110                        | -320             | -7.23%        | -2                              |
| Placements & Provision                                    | 50,421                | 22,572        | 52,962                       | 2,541            | 5.04%         | -299                            |
| Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board                | 86                    | -125          | 86                           | 0                | 0.00%         | 0                               |
| CSC Through Care                                          | 3,926                 | 1,852         | 3,862                        | -64              | -1.63%        | 18                              |
| CSC Targeted Family Support                               | 1,734                 | 738           | 1,529                        | -205             | -11.83%       | -3                              |
| <b>Social Care</b>                                        | <b>75,108</b>         | <b>32,957</b> | <b>76,462</b>                | <b>1,354</b>     | <b>1.80%</b>  | <b>-24</b>                      |
| Quality and Improvement                                   | 1,713                 | 516           | 1,662                        | -51              | -2.98%        | 0                               |
| Early Help & Partnership                                  | 3,875                 | 1,463         | 3,885                        | 10               | 0.25%         | -38                             |
| SEND & Vulnerable learners                                | 7,469                 | 2,097         | 7,428                        | -41              | -0.54%        | -7                              |
| <b>Education and Early Help</b>                           | <b>13,057</b>         | <b>4,076</b>  | <b>12,975</b>                | <b>-82</b>       | <b>-0.63%</b> | <b>-45</b>                      |
| Home to School Transport                                  | 17,398                | 5,583         | 17,398                       | 0                | 0.00%         | 0                               |
| <b>Home to School Transport</b>                           | <b>17,398</b>         | <b>5,583</b>  | <b>17,398</b>                | <b>0</b>         | <b>0.00%</b>  | <b>0</b>                        |
| Youth Offending Services                                  | 507                   | 127           | 507                          | 0                | 0.00%         | 0                               |
| <b>Youth Offending Services</b>                           | <b>507</b>            | <b>127</b>    | <b>507</b>                   | <b>0</b>         | <b>0.00%</b>  | <b>0</b>                        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                              | <b>119,148</b>        | <b>48,374</b> | <b>120,266</b>               | <b>1,118</b>     | <b>0.94%</b>  | <b>-150</b>                     |
| Contract Income                                           | 119,148               | 78,713        | 119,471                      | 323              | 0.27%         | -23                             |
| <b>Projected Surplus/(Deficit) before Corporation Tax</b> | <b>0</b>              | <b>30,339</b> | <b>-795</b>                  | <b>-795</b>      |               | <b>-173</b>                     |

In Resources, one-off in-year savings on staffing and non-staffing have been identified, this has brought the Directorate to a small underspend position.

Social Care - Placements numbers and average costs are the most volatile and high-risk area of the Social Care budget. There has been a Covid-19 impact on our ability to move children and young people onto permanent arrangements which has contributed to increased costs as well as an increase in external placements. The overspend in placements is partially offset by other underspends across the Social Care service e.g. turnover, vacant posts, or where there are active efforts to reduce non-staffing spend.

Education and Early Help is forecasting a small underspend. The budget include the transfer of Learning and Achievement Services from Babcock which happened on 1 June 2020. £5.1m net and 133 staff.

Home to School Transport is forecast to budget. Additional costs and lost income in are estimated at £3.5 million in 2020/21. The current forecast assumes that increased pressures on Home to School Transport expenditure will be met by the COVID-19 grant received by Government and this position is being reviewed regularly Grant of £503k to support Autumn Term has been announced in August and a further £86k in October.

Risk Management – To mitigate the risk and volatility on placements a specific reserve of £1.1m was set up as part of the 2019/20 Budget process.



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# Any questions?

# 2021/22 Emerging Pressures and Challenges

## Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**13 November 2020**

- The company has been in operation since 1st October 2019, delivering children's services on behalf of WCC.
- Governed by Company Law with Board of Directors as well as accountable to WCC through contractual arrangement.
- WCC still under direction of DfE to support WCF to continue to improve services.
- Different construct from other services, same commitment to Worcestershire residents.
- 2019/20 Financial results – broadly on budget, including in Social Care Placements. 1% budget surplus through in-year one off underspends such as temporary vacancies. This shows good financial management as we have been very careful to manage within our resources since we went live on 1 October 2019.

# Budget Process - Agreement of 2021/22 contract price

- On or before 1 July each year, both parties agree timetable for negotiation process starting at CSP on 29 July 2020. (More challenging this year due to uncertainty on Spending Review and subsequent funding announcements due to Covid-19)
- On or before 30 September, both parties consider first proposals in order that a budget for both the Company and the Council can be presented for engagement and necessary consultation by a date agreed annually in January as part of the budget setting process.
- Both parties meet through July to December each contract year at least four times to discuss in good faith and agree the factors to be taken into consideration in agreeing the Contract Sum for the Services in the next Contract Year- factors that impact on the budget include pay awards, demand pressures and changes in the law etc.
- The board in parallel of this process must comply with all legal duties of the Companies Act and ensure that we are satisfied that the Company is a going concern and can meet its contractual and financial obligations.
- WCF Board met on 28 July and agreed with the high level options to reduce expenditure to meet indicative cash target for 2021-22.
- DfE have consultation rights on budget as part of Governance Side Agreement.

# Budget Pressures

The P6 monitoring position previously discussed points to the in-year budget pressures which are forecast to continue to 2021/22 – namely Social Care Placements, which are trending upwards in both number and complexity. This is also replicated regionally and nationally.

In addition to this, we have seen a shift in this year in the use of Short Breaks from groups to 1:1. This is attributable to Covid-19, however if parents continue to favour this type of provision for 2021/22, this would result in a budget pressure.

We have other expected pressures in the service for 2021/22, such as provider inflation and software licensing costs, and annual growth requirements in Home to School Transport.

Worcestershire Children First Budget Monitoring Statement - by Service Heading

|                                                           | Latest Budget<br>£000 | YTD<br>£000   | Full-year Projection<br>£000 | Variance<br>£000 | Variance<br>% | Change since last month<br>£000 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| WCF Management & Board                                    | 692                   | 300           | 665                          | -27              | -3.97%        | -5                              |
| Training                                                  | 178                   | 17            | 178                          | 0                | 0.00%         | 0                               |
| Resources Teams                                           | 4,884                 | 1,652         | 4,758                        | -126             | -2.58%        | -74                             |
| Support Service Payments                                  | 7,324                 | 3,662         | 7,324                        | 0                | 0.00%         | 0                               |
| <b>Resources</b>                                          | <b>13,078</b>         | <b>5,631</b>  | <b>12,924</b>                | <b>-154</b>      | <b>-1.17%</b> | <b>-79</b>                      |
| CSC Safeguarding Services                                 | 14,511                | 6,079         | 13,913                       | -598             | -4.12%        | 263                             |
| Integrated Family Front Door                              | 4,430                 | 1,840         | 4,110                        | -320             | -7.23%        | -2                              |
| Placements & Provision                                    | 50,421                | 22,572        | 52,962                       | 2,541            | 5.04%         | -299                            |
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| CSC Through Care                                          | 3,926                 | 1,852         | 3,862                        | -64              | -1.63%        | 18                              |
| CSC Targeted Family Support                               | 1,734                 | 738           | 1,529                        | -205             | -11.83%       | -3                              |
| <b>Social Care</b>                                        | <b>75,108</b>         | <b>32,957</b> | <b>76,462</b>                | <b>1,354</b>     | <b>1.80%</b>  | <b>-24</b>                      |
| Quality and Improvement                                   | 1,713                 | 516           | 1,662                        | -51              | -2.98%        | 0                               |
| Early Help & Partnership                                  | 3,875                 | 1,463         | 3,885                        | 10               | 0.25%         | -38                             |
| SEND & Vulnerable learners                                | 7,469                 | 2,097         | 7,428                        | -41              | -0.54%        | -7                              |
| <b>Education and Early Help</b>                           | <b>13,057</b>         | <b>4,076</b>  | <b>12,975</b>                | <b>-82</b>       | <b>-0.63%</b> | <b>-45</b>                      |
| Home to School Transport                                  | 17,398                | 5,583         | 17,398                       | 0                | 0.00%         | 0                               |
| <b>Home to School Transport</b>                           | <b>17,398</b>         | <b>5,583</b>  | <b>17,398</b>                | <b>0</b>         | <b>0.00%</b>  | <b>0</b>                        |
| Youth Offending Services                                  | 507                   | 127           | 507                          | 0                | 0.00%         | 0                               |
| <b>Youth Offending Services</b>                           | <b>507</b>            | <b>127</b>    | <b>507</b>                   | <b>0</b>         | <b>0.00%</b>  | <b>0</b>                        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                              | <b>119,148</b>        | <b>48,374</b> | <b>120,266</b>               | <b>1,118</b>     | <b>0.94%</b>  | <b>-150</b>                     |
| Contract Income                                           | 119,148               | 78,713        | 119,471                      | 323              | 0.27%         | -23                             |
| <b>Projected Surplus/(Deficit) before Corporation Tax</b> | <b>0</b>              | <b>30,339</b> | <b>-795</b>                  | <b>-795</b>      |               | <b>-173</b>                     |

# Spending Pressures and Service Reviews to reduce expenditure

- Growth will be provided in the budget for to meet inflation for pay, prices, demand and demographic increases. However for planning purposes at this point, savings will be required to balance the budget in 2021/22. This figure is around £3m or around 2% of the budget.
- **Resources functions reduction and redesign**
  - Restructure of Business System and Development and consolidation of administration following transfer of Learner and Achievement services.
  - Restructure of Finance - principles aligned with Council finance restructure.
  - Restructure of Transformation and Commissioning Teams.
- **Company-wide review of responsibilities for education and social care services, including learner and achievement staff TUPE transferred from Babcock, to identify potential overlap and efficiencies.**

# Increased Income from Trading

- **Increase income from learner and achievement services**
  - Traded income reduced as part of transfer for 10 month to March 2021.
  - Detailed analysis prior to transfer review traded activity for 3 year prior to transfer
  - Systems and processes in place, trading targets agreed with all staff in WCF for 2020/21 (10 months £685k)
  - Analysis supports increase by £600k which FYE £1.4m comparable with previous actual trading income
  - Potential for growth in future years wider services to schools
  - Need to continually assess given Covid-19 and 2<sup>nd</sup> national lockdown



# Further work during 2021/22

During 2021/22 reviews will be undertaken to ensure

- Early Help review at levels 2 and 3 following TUPE transfer of ContuU Trust staff from 1 October 2020. The review will also take account of funding reductions from DSG £540k, to ensure a sustainable service.
- Children with Disabilities and SEND piloted new ways of working then form part of a review of function and form.
- Business cases being developed.

# Priorities for Children's Services

- Continue improvement programmes for services subject to external inspection
  - Children's social care and safeguarding services
  - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Prevention, early help and management of risk.
- Narrowing inequalities.
- Early years capacity and school readiness.
- Supporting schools to improve.
- Post 16 and move to independence and employment
- Manage Covid-19 impact on services - Increase referrals from schools from September onwards.
- Continue work on DSG recovery plan particularly High Needs.



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# Any questions?

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
PANEL****13 NOVEMBER 2020****WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN FIRST PROGRESS REPORT**

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**Summary**

1. The Panel is presented with a joint report by Worcestershire County Council (the Council) and Worcestershire Children First (WCF), which has been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) and sets out details of the progress made during Worcestershire Children First's first year of operation delivering children's services in Worcestershire.
2. As part of the DfE's Statutory Direction, Worcestershire County Council is required to provide a joint report with WCF to the DfE on the first full year of the company's operation, along with further quarterly joint reports thereafter.

**Background**

3. WCF was launched on 1 October 2019 and has operational responsibility for the delivery of Children's Services on behalf of the Council.
4. The decision to develop WCF as a wholly owned Council company was made in direct response to the statutory direction published on 19 September 2017, with the Council agreeing to work in partnership with the DfE.
5. During the development of the company, the Council decided to include education and early help services within the company in order to facilitate a structure that minimised fragmentation of the system in Worcestershire.
6. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel has continually been updated throughout the development of Worcestershire Children First, so it is appropriate to receive the report submitted to the DfE.

**Purpose of the Meeting**

7. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:
  - Note the Worcestershire Children First progress report presented by the Director of Children's Services and the Strategic Director of People
  - Agree whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children and Families.

## Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 - Worcestershire Children First – Covering letter and report on first year of operation (attached)
- Appendix 2 - [WCF Annual Report](#)
- Appendix 3 - [WCF Financial Statements](#)
- Appendix 4 - [WCF Interim Business Plan](#)
- Appendix 5 - [WCF Business Plan](#) (April 2020- March 2021)
- Appendix 6 - [Business Plan Review - Impact of COVID-19](#)
- Appendix 7 - Social Care and Safeguarding Self-Assessment (available electronically)
- Appendix 8 - [WCF Service Plan](#) (included in Business Plan pages 16-18)

## Contact Points

Alyson Grice/Alison Spall, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, Tel: 01905 844962/846607  
Email: [scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children's 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 23 November 2017, 25 January 2018, 22 March 2018, 16 November 2018, 29 January 2019, 17 July 2019, 11 September 2019 and 13 November 2019

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

**Dr Catherine Driscoll,**  
Director of Children's Services

**Paula Furnival**  
Strategic Director of People

Worcestershire County Council  
County Hall  
Spetchley Road  
WORCESTER  
WR5 2NP

John Bostock  
Department for Education

Our Ref:CD/KW

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear John,

### **Worcestershire Children First Progress Report**

As Worcestershire Children First reaches its first birthday, a report has been prepared to summarise the progress made throughout the past year. The report is a joint report between Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Worcestershire Children First (WCF) recognising the positive relationships that have been maintained and strengthened throughout the year.

When Worcestershire Children First successfully launched on 1 October 2019, there was no sign of a global pandemic. Fast forward a year and new operating procedures and policies have been developed, introduced and updated to ensure children and young people are kept safe and are accessing education. We remain incredibly proud of how we have responded to the challenge presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and this is evidenced in the attached report and supporting appendices.

This change in focus has resulted in Worcestershire County Council pausing the contracting monitoring arrangements since March 2020, as WCF is not able to operate as set out within the existing contract. In practice this has only meant that the formal contract monitoring meetings have not taken place as all other performance monitoring has continued e.g. WCF's Board and reporting to Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel. This is explained in more detail in the progress report. It is recommended that this practice is sustained for the longer term and the contract is officially varied to reflect this. As part of the DfE's consultation rights, we welcome your views on this and any other comments or queries you have on the reports attached.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr Catherine Driscoll**  
Director of Children's Services



**Paula Furnival**  
Strategic Director of People

## **Worcestershire Children First Report on first year of operation**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This report has been prepared jointly by WCC and WCF to set out the progress achieved during the first year of company operation in delivering children's services in Worcestershire. The Department for Education's Statutory Direction to Worcestershire County Council requires the provision of a joint report to the Department on the first full year of the company's operation with further quarterly joint reports thereafter.

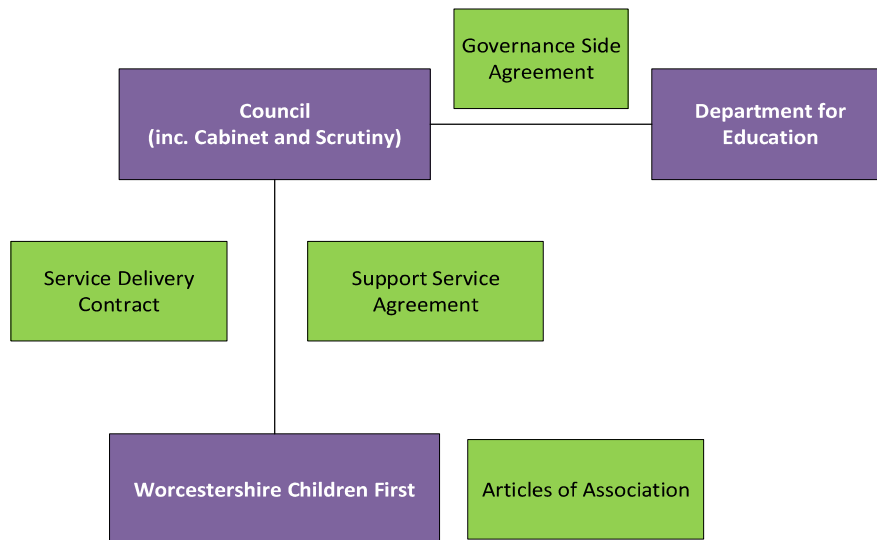
2. On 1 October 2019, following a two-year programme of activity, Worcestershire Children First (WCF) officially took over the operational responsibility for the delivery of Children's Services on behalf of Worcestershire County Council (the Council). The decision to develop WCF as wholly-owned council company was made in direct response to the statutory direction published on 19 September 2017, with the Council agreeing to work in partnership with the Department for Education (DfE). During the company development WCC decided to include education and early help services in the company in order to facilitate a structure that minimised fragmentation of the system. The aim was that at the point of transferring services into WCF, services would be performing well and WCF would have a positive platform on which to sustain and continue to improve outcomes for children and young people.

3. In June 2019, the Council's Children's services were inspected by Ofsted. The judgement was published on 29 July 2019 and the service was judged to be Requires Improvement to be Good. Ofsted recognised that progress had been made in many areas of children's services in Worcestershire since the previous inspection in 2016, when the local authority was judged to be inadequate. They stated that effective work by senior management and staff, together with commitment and investment by political leaders, had led to improved responses to the needs of children and families. As a result, outcomes for many children and their families are better, and there is evidence of a sustained trajectory of improvement. This rate of improvement was a significant achievement for the Council and is testimony of the hard work and tenacity of the leadership team, managers and frontline staff, as well as the wider Council and safeguarding partners. Worcestershire was the first Authority nationally to achieve an improvement in Ofsted grading prior to establishment of an ADM. This progress demonstrates a strong basis for continued improvement.

### **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS**

4. As part of the development of WCF three contractual arrangements were developed and agreed. These are depicted in the diagram below and now form the basis of the relationship between WCF and the Council and the Council and the DfE.





5. The service delivery contract confirms what the Council is expecting WCF to deliver on the Council's behalf, how the Council will pay WCF along with how the Council will hold WCF to account for the services it has delegated to it. The service delivery contract also includes a set of obligations for WCF which include the production of a Business Plan and the maintenance of several key performance indicators within an agreed tolerance level.

6. The Support Service Agreement consists of a set of overarching core terms and 14 individual support service specifications ranging from HR, Property & Facilities Management, Finance and Project Management. These individual specifications describe the services to be provided by the Council to WCF along with the relevant financial information (e.g. the cost of the support services) and the relevant performance information.

7. The Governance Side Agreement is between the Council and the DfE and builds on the agreed Memorandum of Understanding and Statutory Direction. It is in place only whilst the Council remains under Direction.

8. Within the contractual arrangements, a monthly Performance and Commissioning Group (PCG) and a Quarterly Review Board were created. The PCG closely monitors the progress of the contractual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Support Service Agreements and receives updates on actions taken by WCF and the Council. The PCG also reviews and monitors issues which may have an impact upon the WCF business plan. The Quarterly Review Board aims to provide a more strategic oversight to the governance arrangements and the PCG feeds into this group, providing an update of the discussion at those meetings.

## **WORKING RELATIONSHIPS: WCC AND WCF**

9. There are strong working relationships between WCC and WCF which go far beyond the formal contractual monitoring arrangements and add the most value to improving outcomes for children and young people. The Chief Executive of WCF is the Council's appointed Director of Children's Services and as such has a direct line to the Council's Chief Executive and the Corporate Governance arrangements e.g. Strategic Leadership

Team, Council and Cabinet. The CEx/DCS also meets on a regular basis with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children’s Services.

10. During this time the Council has restructured and recruited a new Strategic Director of People who has the lead commissioning role of WCF within the Council. This has strengthened the strategic system leadership required to improve outcomes for the county’s children and young people. This has already led to a detailed commitment to the development of an all age disability programme of work.

11. WCF’s Director of Resources is a member of the Council’s Finance Management Team and has a place on the Council’s Chief Officer Group. All of WCF’s Executive Management Team have a direct relationship with the Council’s Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel reporting on performance and key areas of development/improvement as well as attending strategic partnership groups such as the Safeguarding Board and Children and Young People’s Strategic Group (a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Board). Through the Support Service Agreement, WCF colleagues also have a direct operational relationship with the key support services. In addition to this there are also three Council nominated (two Cabinet Members and one Strategic Director) who are Non-Executive Directors for WCF and attend monthly WCF Board meetings.

12. During the Covid 19 pandemic working relationships have been effective in response to the challenges facing the county. WCF has played a full part in the county’s emergency response arrangements to minimise duplication and meet need. An example of this partnership relates to supporting education providers. WCC and WCF worked together to ensure all education providers have undertaken a Risk Assessment to support the decision making through the different phases of recovery. Public Health, Health and Safety, Human Resources were the primary teams who reviewed the submitted Risk Assessments. SEND Services, School Improvement and Accommodation were also involved in the review and panel decisions. This trust and confidence has really enhanced relationships.

## COMPANY GOVERNANCE

13. The governance structure for the Boards of Worcestershire Children First can be seen in the diagram below:



14. Monthly board meetings have taken place since go live with the first public meeting held on 18 February 2020. Both sub boards have met, with the Quality Assurance Board having an overview of the procedures in the Company and focused look at SEND and social care. The Risk, Governance and Audit Board reviewed the 2020/21 Budget

in detail for the Company prior to approval by the Board, received the External Audit Plan for 2019/20 and the Internal Audit arrangements.

15. The company has had the audited financial statements for 2019/20 approved by the WCF Board on 28 July 2020, following a detailed review by the Risk, Governance and Audit Board which was attended by our External Auditors. The audit report was positive and no issues to report to those charged with governance. The AGM is scheduled for the 1 October which will review the first part year of operation of the company. The annual report is attached at **Appendix 1**.

16. The WCF Board (including sub Boards) have continued to meet monthly since 1 October and governance remains strong.

17. Significant achievements have been made during the year of operation, including the seamless transition of support for children and families with no disruption at go live. The experience of other ADM services has been to see a drop in KPI's following transition to any company. WCF Quarter 3 and 4 data for 2019/20, alongside feedback from colleagues in DfE, Regional Schools Commissioner, Schools, partners and importantly our own staff has been positive.

18. As well as front line service delivery there are corporate governance arrangements that have to be delivered in partnership with colleagues in the Council through support services arrangements which are:

- Full monthly budget monitoring undertaken since go live in October 2019
- Submission to deadline of monthly VAT returns
- Payment of staff and suppliers and PAYE/ NI to inland revenue
- Cash management arrangements for the company – particularly important in a pandemic
- Full input and seamless reporting in the budget process 2020/21
- Joint finance meetings to ensure seamless service to WCF, the Council and Schools. Schools Budget process completed in consultation with the Worcestershire Schools Forum.
- Completion of audited financial statements for 2019/20. (Attached at **Appendix 2**)

## **WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN FIRST BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21**

19. The Council requires WCF to develop and publish a Business Plan and the DfE requires the Council to consult with them prior to its approval. In September 2019, Cabinet approved WCF's Interim Business Plan which was adopted in time for the launch of WCF and continued until 31 March 2020 (the interim plan is attached as **Appendix 3**). The Business Plan is owned by WCF on a day to day basis and will be refreshed by WCF and approved by Cabinet on an annual basis. The Plan sets out WCF's vision and strategic goals for the next three-five years and outlines how they will deliver services for children, young people and families, on behalf of the Council. It also describes WCF's staffing and governance structure as well as predictions and proposals in relation to finances.

20. The refreshed 2020/21 Business Plan was approved by Cabinet (and the DfE), in March 2020 (attached as **Appendix 4**). It maintained the previously agreed aims for WCF

which are to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Worcestershire, by addressing their needs holistically through excellent early help and prevention, education provision and social care. Its Vision, Mission and Values define the way WCF will work to improve outcomes for children and young people. They are indicators of the direction of travel, to guide services and colleagues:

- **Vision:** Worcestershire to be a wonderful place for all children and young people to grow up
- **Mission:** Supporting children and young people to be happy, healthy and safe
- **Values:** Children at our heart. Value family life. Good education for all. Protection from harm.

21. Taking into consideration the population and deprivation statistics of Worcestershire as well as the current service levels, the Plan provided details of WCF's strategic goals over the next five years.

22. The Business Plan for 2020/21 outlined that, in the short term, WCF will focus on continuing the improvement of children's social care and safeguarding and SEND services as well as the following specific priorities:

- Implementation of Liquidlogic Case Management System – April 2020
- Supporting delivery of the Early Help Strategy 2020-2024 – April 2020 onwards
- Troubled Families Programme -throughout 2020/21
- Transfer and Integration of Learning and Achievement Services (Babcock Prime) – Transfer 1 June 2020
- Delivery of the Education and Skills Strategy 2019-2024 – Ongoing
- Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Programme – Ongoing
- Supporting Families First (Edge of Care)
- Implementation of Family Safeguarding.

23. In the medium to longer term the Plan sets out that WCF will increase its efforts to co-produce with service users and have a relentless focus on delivering good quality, impactful services. Opportunities will be explored that will help deliver the vision and mission and aim to work effectively and efficiently within an agreed financial envelope. WCF also aims to have national recognition for the quality of services it provides and the positive impact it makes to children and young people's lives. The business plan has been reviewed due to the impact of Covid-19 (attached at **Appendix 5**) and provides an update on how the pandemic affected service delivery.

## **AREAS OF PROGRESS OCTOBER 2019 TO MARCH 2020**

### **Children's Social Care and Safeguarding**

24. Full detail of the service's progress and plan for development is attached in the Self - Assessment report attached as **Appendix 6**

25. The Social Care and Safeguarding service developed a plan on a page for the first year of the company. This set out the areas of focus identified by Ofsted in the June

ILACS inspection, priority areas for business development and areas for innovation. The plan is attached as **Appendix 7**.

26. Embedding a Quality Assurance and Performance (QAP) Framework has enabled a true and current understanding of what we are doing, how well we are doing it and what do we need to do differently to ensure we continue to develop and improve our services. Early on in our improvement work we established a three-dimension Framework for Quality Assurance including:

- Performance data
- Service User Feedback
- Audit activity

We have developed and embedded this framework throughout our services to help answer the important questions, how our services are being experienced by children, young people and their families and what difference we are making to their lives.

This framework is one of the service's key strengths and one of the things we are most proud of in our improvement journey to date.

27. We recognise that it is essential to 'close the loop' and embed the learning through a variety of activity and channels including staff communication, supervision, management oversight and training. Working alongside the Director for Social Care and Safeguarding and the senior leadership team, including the Principal Social Worker, dissemination of learning takes place across the Service in a range of ways:

- Case audit feedback to the individual Social Worker/Case worker and Manager at the time of audit
- Team Meeting and Staff Supervision
- Quality Assurance Reports
- Principal Social Worker News Letters
- End to End learning presentations - Whole Service Front Line Management meeting chaired by the Director of Social Care and Safeguarding

**28. Family Front Door areas of good progress:**

- Work with Police and Education colleagues on Thresholds (known locally as Levels of Need) shows a positive outcome with police contacts resulting in the need for a Social Work assessment rising from 33% to 36% in year and Education maintaining a high 69% through year. This positive trend evidences an increasing appropriate application against the agreed levels of need.
- Timeliness of Social Work Assessments remains a very positive indicator at 89%. This is significantly higher than Statistical Neighbour/ England averages of 79% and 83% respectively
- Repeat social work assessment at 16% remain lower than Statistical Neighbour/ England averages of 23% evidencing appropriate intervention at the conclusion of assessments meeting need.
- Multi Agency engagement in strategy discussions from Police, Health and Education has been a sustained positive indicator year to date
- Multi Agency work through the Safeguarding Board Quality Assurance sub group continues and is supported by a multi-agency audit and training programme.

- Quarterly audit activity and reflective practice sessions with our Safeguarding Education lead looking at education sector application of the Levels of Need guidance has led to a consistent improvement and understanding of social care's role in children's lives. The evidence of this is, consistency in education achieving 69% of their contacts resulting in level 4 needs outcome to children's social care.
- WCF are now a panel member on the Youth Justice led joint decision-making panel which started in November 2019. This is already demonstrating positive impact for information sharing, services provided to young people and links into early help offers for children and our GET SAFE agenda

## 29. Children in Need and Child Protection areas of good progress

- Our social work approach continues to ensure we offer support and assistance to a family early, through Early Help or our Child In Need interventions, but also to take proactive safeguarding action within Public Law Outline and Pre-Proceedings/Care Proceedings where there is no timely/sustained outcomes for a child, therefore this cohort should always be the lesser representative group.
- Our rise in the number of children and young people subject to child protection plans now put us in line with England averages. The rise in CP is reflective of our work with partners to:
  - Manage risk in the family home and prevent care where it is safe to do so.
  - Have firm and consistent application of threshold in each category of harm.
  - Address both premature closure at first review and long term "monitoring" of families in risk adverse practice.
  - Raise the understanding of the impact of Neglect on children.
- Our Data audit has shown a reduction in the number of children coming off a Child Protection plan at 3 months (first review) down to 16% year to date from 20% at 18/19-year end. We can also see a positive rise from 49% up to 57% in the number of children coming off a plan at 9 months in line with development of managerial oversight.
- In terms of sustainable outcomes for children, whilst we remain higher than Statistical Neighbours/England for repeat plans over 2 years, there is a continuing reducing trend in repeat plans in under 2 years down to 13% well below Statistical Neighbour/England averages of 21%. Audit has evidenced repeat plans over two years is reflective of historical (4 years +) poor decision making, professional over optimism and limited support on step down which has been addressed in our culture of practice improvements and by the use of the signs of safety model.
- Initial Child Protection Conferences resulting in a CP plan is 85%; this is reflecting the value of the multi-agency conversation and Signs of Safety methodology used in conferences to agree the true level of risk. Whilst this is a considerable improvement on data from 17/18 (averaging 77% and significant inconsistency) ultimately, we would seek this to be a higher outcome to ensure we are not putting families through the children protection process unnecessarily. This is a multi-agency journey that includes parents and young people to share and agree risks.
- We continue to see an increase in our Child In Need population to 46 per 10,000 from 42 for year end 18/19. The increase in Child In Need and Child Protection and decrease in Looked After new entrants is part of the scale of interventions. We would want to see this pattern continuing to recognise our vision of "Valuing Family Life" and ensuring families access early help and Target Family Support early and at the lowest level first.

- Our Outcomes for Children In Need shows a small % resulting in Child Protection and Care which is reflective of an appropriate threshold for social work service being applied.
- Data showing a reducing trend in the length of time children are open to CIN (9 months +) is a positive reflection of active work to achieve outcomes early with no drift and delay as was seen historically in this cohort.
- We continue to see a rising number of young people aged 12 years and over attending their conferences and having their views clearly represented at the child protection conference.

### **30. Looked After Children and Care Leavers areas of good progress**

- The proportion of children subject to section 20 in care has further reduced from 21% last year to 14%.
- Placement stability is also improving at just under 70% of placements continuing for 2 years. This is supported with the success of consolidation meetings in seeking to avoid placement breakdown; currently standing at 78% of placements being maintained.
- NEET figures which were of concern in the last year are now showing a trend (Quarter 2 and 3) of reduction as a result of focussed activity between social care and education colleagues.
- Repeat care episodes are low with only 11 children in the last year.
- Last year 195 children achieved permanency within 6 months of entering care. This currently stands at 25% for this year which reflects timeliness within the PLO process.
- There has been a reduction in the use of placement with parents, currently at 4.5% which is below the England average. This is a result of targeted work on long term Care Orders and care plans for discharge being pursued as well as good quality court care planning.
- Children experiencing 3 or more placement moves is down to 8% from 11% last year.
- The HIT (Homeless Intervention Team) merged with Care Leavers in January 2020 due to the benefits in sharing skills, knowledge and working relationships with Housing colleagues.
- The Care Leavers participation group continues to organise a variety of activities and events and is focussing hard on trying to engage care leavers who are not in touch.
- A film was produced by a care leaver illustrating his own experiences of care and the care leavers service as well as those of a number of other young people. The film was presented to Corporate Parenting Board and a wider staff audience.  
The film can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/P4EY2fiHM8E>
- There is regular liaison and review with the Ministry of Housing – Homelessness Advice and Support Team on progress being made and initiatives to avoid young people experiencing homelessness.
- Two additional Personal Advisors have been appointed following DFE funding for homelessness prevention.
- The two Housing panels in the county have been reviewed to re-focus their remit around difficult to place young people and seek joined up solutions. Weekly KPI's and data reporting to senior management on the use of Bed and Breakfast are now in place and clear action plans presented to move a young person to suitable accommodation as efficiently as possible.
- Specialist knowledge continues to be developed within the team around presenting issues such as substance misuse, self-harm, UASC and the avoidance of criminalisation.

- Care leavers in EET and those in suitable accommodation continues to be higher than the England average and statistical neighbours.

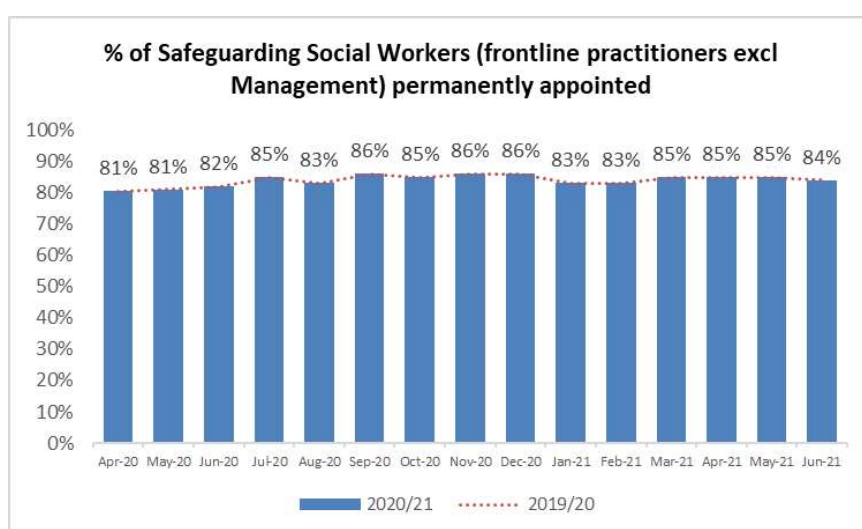
## SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE

31. The Positive Outcome Project established in 2020 provides high quality 70 and 100-day student Social Work placements and increases capacity for direct work with children and young people across the county at level 3 needs.

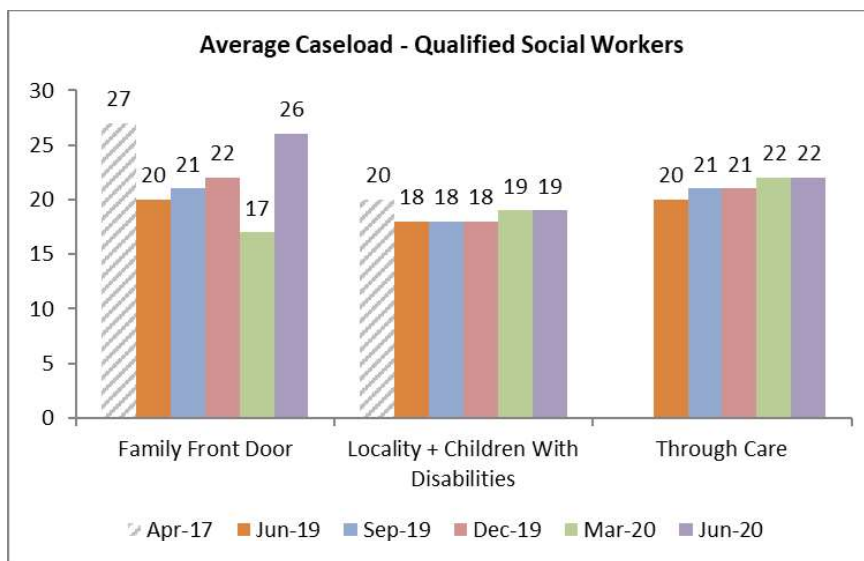
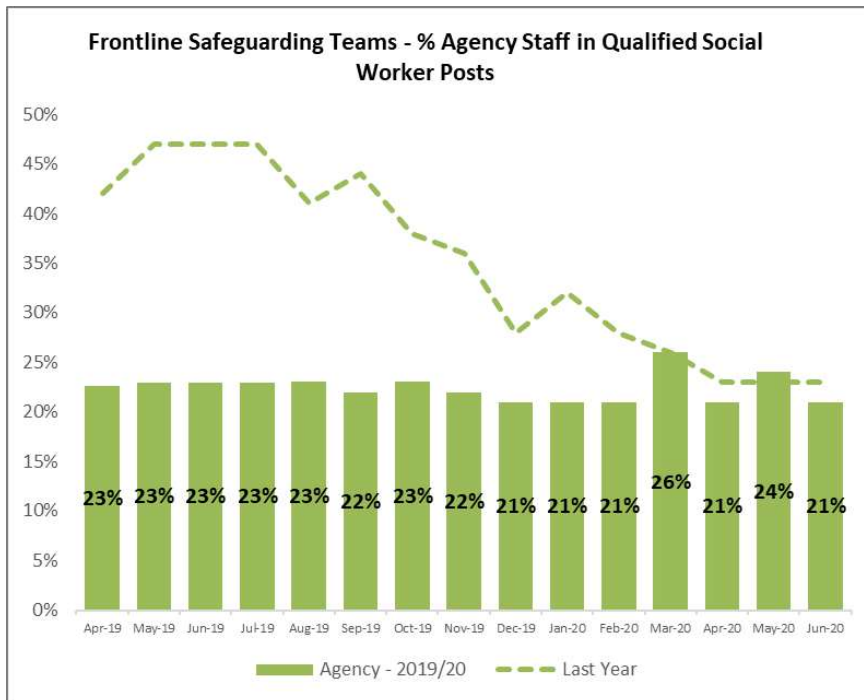
32. Bi-annual Health Checks are undertaken, the most recent of these was completed over November and December 2019. The Health Check provides data that evidences our improvement and how we have sustained this over the last year, the finding were:

- 94% of staff feel listed to and have their worries and concern addressed by managers
- 88% of social work staff have dedicated monthly supervision that is reflective and includes review of performance
- 84% of social worker say they feel valued at work
- 71% of social worker feel they have a manageable case load
- 95% of staff feel their managers are visible, approachable and responsive
- 78% of social workers report receiving direct feedback on audits of their work
- 90% of staff say they receive regular information on learning from Quality Assurance activity within the service.
- 98% of staff feel Signs of Safety are using the Signs of Safety model and 94% feel this is a good tool for working with families
- 94% of social workers say they understand the Vision, Missing and Values of Worcestershire Children First and 91% say they understand how they and their team contribute to these.

33. Management Stability and Capacity is a fundamental foundation on which to build a stable workforce where staff feel supported, challenged and empowered to do the best thing for children and families. Permanent appointed posts remain stable.







## SERVICE USER FEEDBACK

34. 94% of families asked told us that practitioners spoke with children and gained their wishes and feelings/views.

35. Good levels of attendance (64%) and participation (94%) by young people in their Looked After Child reviews achieved in 2019/20.

## **SEND IMPROVEMENT**

36. The SEND Improvement programme has continued to make positive progress and improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. Feedback from our DfE and NHSE Advisors has commended the progress being made including the management of the transfer of the SEND Support Services from Babcock Prime to WCF: 'The LA is managing WSoA work well, but there are significant challenges. First, the financial pressures on the High Needs Block, second, senior interim officers leaving at the end of October 2019, third, the establishment of a new Alternative Delivery Model in October 2019, and the winding up of the current provider of SEND services, Babcock Prime, by October 2020. (Monitoring visit 5 July 2019) 'There is a strong sense of drive and optimism amongst the SEND Partnership Board members.....Previous concerns about the continuity of effort across both the organisational change, and personnel change in key lead roles in SEND have been considerably assuaged by this visit.' (Monitoring visit 6, Oct 2019).

37. A Joint Key Performance framework of indicators are monitored by the SEND Improvement Board to review and agree further improvements. This joint agency SEND Dashboard has been commended as an example of 'excellent practice' to be shared with other Local Areas.

38. Another area of significant progress is the rate of completion of Education, Health and Care plans. Since February 2020 the 20 week completion rate has maintained at 100% providing, with the exception of June 2020 (98%) where one EHCP was not completed on time. This improved timeliness includes improved holistic EHC needs assessment, improved timeliness of advice from health colleagues and most importantly better outcomes for children and young people.

## **TROUBLED FAMILIES PROGRAMME**

39. Troubled Families Programme was in the final year of phase 2 of the 5-year programme in 2019/20. At June 2018 Worcestershire had completed 9 % of the programme and was faced with losing significant income. A recovery plan was implemented, and this was overseen by the MHCLG. In September 2020 it was agreed that the authority was no longer in recovery and had 'turned the programme around'. As we move to the end of Q4 we achieved 81% of the total programme and we exceeded our revised target. A significant recovery and beyond the revised projections made with MHCLG.

## **IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON SERVICE DELIVERY**

### **Children's Social Care and Safeguarding**

40. Children's social care services remained operational throughout the pandemic in order to protect and support vulnerable children. The model of operation changed as set out in the April 2020 emergency Covid 19 service delivery protocol for social care and safeguarding services focusing on a risk-based approach to face to face assessments and contacts.

41. The protocol has been updated in phases.

Phase 1 – March – June 2020. The initial management and emergency response to community lockdown.

Phase 2 – July – August 2020. Starting the road to recovery by opening more services and management of workload and workflow in preparation for phase 3.

Phase 3 – September – December 2020. This phase sets out how to reset services responding to demand, hidden harm and new ways of working. During this phase the impact and learning gained from phases 1 and 2 will be kept under review.

Phase 4 – will be launched January 2021.

42. The DfE have monitored performance during the pandemic and Worcestershire has consistently performed very well comparatively. The latest DfE analysis is detailed below:

| Covid-19 Key Performance Indicators - Phase 3 |                                                                                                        |                      |                      |                      |                      |                      |                |          |            |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------|------------|
| No.                                           | Indicator                                                                                              | 02/08/20             | 09/08/20             | 16/08/20             | 23/08/20             | 30/08/20             | Stat. Neigh. * | Region * | National * |
| 1                                             | Children Looked After contacted by their Social Worker in the last 2 weeks                             | 49.8%<br>(407/817)   | 45.5%<br>(372/817)   | 52.2%<br>(428/820)   | 51.0%<br>(419/821)   | 47.3%<br>(390/825)   | 34.53          | 36.99    | 44.22      |
| 2                                             | Children Looked After contacted by their Social Worker in the last 4 weeks                             | 81.3%<br>(664/817)   | 78.8%<br>(644/817)   | 75.9%<br>(622/820)   | 76.9%<br>(631/821)   | 77.2%<br>(637/825)   | 63.5           | 62.7     | 70.46      |
| 3                                             | Children Looked After who have had their care plan reviewed in light of Covid-19                       | 99.6%<br>(814/817)   | 99.6%<br>(814/817)   | 100.0%<br>(820/820)  | 100.0%<br>(821/821)  | 100.0%<br>(825/825)  | 99.78          | 85.7     | 94.9       |
| 4                                             | Children Subject of a Child Protection Plan contacted by their Social Worker in the last 2 weeks       | 85.9%<br>(549/639)   | 80.3%<br>(508/633)   | 78.6%<br>(480/611)   | 81.5%<br>(510/626)   | 78.4%<br>(498/635)   | 76.96          | 72.35    | 77.12      |
| 5                                             | Children Subject of a Child Protection Plan contacted by their Social Worker in the last 4 weeks       | 98.1%<br>(627/639)   | 95.9%<br>(607/633)   | 95.3%<br>(582/611)   | 94.7%<br>(593/626)   | 94.5%<br>(600/635)   | 94.7           | 92.73    | 70.46      |
| 6                                             | Children Subject of a Child Protection Plan who have had their care plan reviewed in light of Covid-19 | 100.0%<br>(639/639)  | 100.0%<br>(633/633)  | 100.0%<br>(611/611)  | 100.0%<br>(626/626)  | 100.0%<br>(635/635)  | 99.73          | 89.83    | 95.99      |
| 7                                             | Children in Need Contacted by their Social Worker in the last 2 weeks                                  | 52.7%<br>(1109/2104) | 49.8%<br>(1032/2074) | 50.6%<br>(1050/2076) | 49.8%<br>(1043/2096) | 43.1%<br>(858/1993)  | 31.15          | 38.47    | 41.47      |
| 8                                             | Children in Need Contacted by their Social Worker in the last 4 weeks                                  | 71.3%<br>(1499/2104) | 70.4%<br>(1460/2074) | 68.6%<br>(1423/2076) | 67.8%<br>(1421/2096) | 67.3%<br>(1342/1993) | 52.55          | 61.03    | 63.41      |
| 9                                             | Children in Need who have had their care plan reviewed in light of Covid-19                            | 88.7%<br>(1866/2104) | 88.7%<br>(1840/2074) | 88.8%<br>(1844/2076) | 90.4%<br>(1894/2096) | 92.1%<br>(1835/1993) | 89.78          | 76.76    | 86.19      |
| 10                                            | Children Becoming Looked After in the Period                                                           | 3                    | 7                    | 3                    | 1                    | 9                    |                |          |            |

43. The pandemic affected partners' service delivery arrangements which have had an impact on children's social care services. Additional low level contacts have been received at the Family Front Door from families and professionals seeking early help for children and young people, many reporting they were unsure of what other agency support was available or accessible during the pandemic and community lock down. These contacts were all responded to in order to provide the information and support required but they did not meet the level 4 safeguarding criteria of social work services.

44. Work is being undertaken via the Safeguarding partnership and directly with Early Help providers to ensure families and professionals do know how and where to access early help and to ensure these are accessible and effective for the families who need them.

45. Arrangements for moving looked after children onto permanency were slowed due to court capacity and community lock down. The number of children leaving our care this year were half of the number in the same period last year. Good safeguarding practice has been in place under our phase 1 and 2 protocols where CIN and CP cases have not been closed or stepped down due to the more limited ability to assess accurately the level of risk and the more limited engagement of partners in the lives of those children.

46. This has led to a higher than usual number of children Looked After as well as those subject to CP and CIN remaining open to the service. Phase 3 is designed to address this safely but will take time as new incoming work also needs to be managed.

47. These factors are having an impact on social worker caseloads which we need to monitor closely due to the increased demand seen as a result of schools returning and "Hidden Harm" being identified.

48. Contacts at the Family Front Door have been consistently higher than the same period last year for all contacts and domestic abuse contacts as follows:

| Family Front Door contacts (excluding domestic abuse) | 2019         | 2020         |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| April                                                 | 746          | 961          |
| May                                                   | 821          | 1,054        |
| June                                                  | 920          | 1,582        |
| July                                                  | 846          | 1,497        |
| August                                                | 710          | 1,192        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                          | <b>4043</b>  | <b>6,286</b> |
| Family Front Door Domestic Abuse contacts             | 2019         | 2020         |
| April                                                 | 288          | 417          |
| May                                                   | 290          | 425          |
| June                                                  | 220          | 524          |
| July                                                  | 365          | 482          |
| August                                                | 324          | 406          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                          | <b>1,487</b> | <b>2,254</b> |

## Education

49. On 20th March schools closed to all pupils other than vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. From June schools welcomed pupils back from specific year groups. Worcestershire schools supported a better than national attendance of pupils during the wider re-opening period. However, this was still only 18% of the total school age population in school, with other pupils receiving their education through home learning.

50. WCF have led the Education Incident Planning Group, with school leaders from all phases and staff from WCC throughout the pandemic in order to provide guidance, advice and develop processes to support the continuation of education and plan for full return in Autumn term. Specialist task groups for early years, special schools and alternative provision run alongside the Planning Group to understand and address particular arrangements for children accessing this provision.

51. A comprehensive risk assessment (RA) document has been provided to all schools (maintained, voluntary aided and academies) to support both partial return and full return. The primary purpose of the RA is to ensure the safety of pupils, families and staff. For maintained and voluntary aided schools, WCC and WCF specialist public health, health and safety, education and HR teams, have reviewed the assessments to support full opening.

52. All schools were open by 7th September 2020 as follows:

| <b>Date of return</b> | <b>Maintained</b> | <b>Academy</b> | <b>All Schools</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 01/09/2020            | 5                 | 0              | <b>5</b>           |
| 02/09/2020            | 42                | 45             | <b>87</b>          |
| 03/09/2020            | 75                | 62             | <b>137</b>         |
| 04/09/2020            | 2                 | 5              | <b>7</b>           |
| 07/09/2020            | 1                 | 6              | <b>7</b>           |
|                       | 125               | 118            | <b>243</b>         |

53. Many schools initially opened to specific age groups to plan carefully the implementation of the changes for pupils in line with the preventive measures described in their risk assessments.

54. There has been a positive return to school during September. Figures for 24<sup>th</sup> September show that 91.5% of pupils are in school compared with the national rate of 86.4%

55. There are positive Covid 19 cases in a small number of schools and the protocol to collapse 'bubbles' of children and staff to prevent transmission are in place. In the event of bubbles needing to self-isolate schools have prepared for and will implement a remote learning offer. Public health support and advice is available to schools through the Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT) supplemented by staff from WCF. Here 2 Help are assisting those families who need to self-isolate who require additional assistance.

56. The focus in the coming weeks is to ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully supported in school and that vulnerable children are back in school.

57. Ofsted will be making visits during the autumn term to a range of schools for the purpose of helping parents and the public to understand how individual schools are returning to the school's normal curriculum.

58. There are over 500 Early Years settings in Worcestershire in receipt of nursery education funding. We have worked with WCC and settings to support sustainability issues including the provision of grant opportunities. Figures for 17<sup>th</sup> September show all funded settings open with over 4000 children reported as attending. The Early Years sector has had the same access to risk assessment tools and Public Health advice including access to the LORT as the school sector.

## **CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC**

59. In late March 2020, WCC and WCF jointly agreed to a 'pause' of the contract arrangements as a result of COVID-19. This enabled the County Council and Worcestershire Children First to prioritise working together on co-ordinating their business continuity plans during the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring resource is put where it is required most to keep children and their families safe and supported.

In practice this has meant that:

- Any performance management implications relating to the KPIs have been suspended during this time, for example escalation processes.
- Covid-19 KPI data is shared with the County Council to ensure visibility of the changes in service provision during the pandemic and analysis from DfE national returns when the analysis is available.
- Contract variations apart from financial arrangements have been suspended during this time, including the KPI refresh.
- The Governance groups (PCG and QRB) have not met throughout this period. Instead regular (monthly) keep in touch online meetings are in place with key WCC and WCF colleagues.
- WCC and WCF continued to work together on business continuity planning / co-ordinating responses at all levels and communications and WCF colleagues form part of the emergency response.

60. During the pandemic the company has kept both Cabinet and elected members updated. The Chair of the Children's and Families Scrutiny panel expressed her thanks to everyone and said she "couldn't be more proud of the work we have done".

## FINANCIAL POSITION

61. In 2019/20 the outturn for the company was a small net underspend of £0.5M after corporation tax (0.9%) on a £55M budget. The breakdown by service area is set out in the tables below. The £522k has been transferred to the company's retained earnings.

| Service Area                      | Revised                     |                              |                    |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                   | Budget<br>2019/20<br>£000's | Outturn<br>2019/20<br>£000's | Variance<br>£000's |
| Resources                         | 2,152                       | 1,938                        | -214               |
| Support Services Contracts        | 3,518                       | 3,518                        | 0                  |
| Social Care and Safeguarding      | 35,832                      | 34,780                       | -1,052             |
| Education and Early Help          | 5,192                       | 5,423                        | 231                |
| Home to School Transport          | 8,223                       | 8,469                        | 246                |
| Youth Offending Services          | 254                         | 254                          | 0                  |
| <b>Total Expense budgets</b>      | <b>55,171</b>               | <b>54,382</b>                | <b>-789</b>        |
| Income                            | -55,171                     | -55,027                      | 144                |
| <b>Net Expenditure before Tax</b> | <b>0</b>                    | <b>-645</b>                  | <b>-645</b>        |

### Retained Earnings

|                                                |            |
|------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Opening Balance                                | 0          |
| Contribution to Retained Earnings (Net Profit) | 522        |
| Closing Balance                                | <u>522</u> |

62. Whilst a robust process of assurance, review and authorisation surrounds the budget, some areas are clearly not without risk. Monitoring of the 2020/21 budget will be critical during the year particularly during Covid-19 and close arrangements are in place with Worcestershire County Council. The current financial position is challenging and there is considerable pressure on children's social care budgets, locally and nationally. The overall position for WCF at the end of August is a forecast overspend of £0.9m on a £120m budget or 0.8%.

63. The forecast deficit is driven by a recent increase in External Placements for Looked After Children, an increase which is in contrast to the relatively stable numbers seen over the last 12-18 months. There is evidence to show that some of the recent increase is Covid-19 related due to our ability to move children and young people onto permanent arrangements which has contributed to increased costs as children are not leaving care at the same rate as normal.

64. Detailed work is well underway in planning for 2021/22 Budget given the financial context the company will be given a contribution to meet unavoidable pay, inflationary and demand pressures in the contract price, but will need to make cost reductions / savings in order to ensure the budget is balanced, these reductions amount to £3m.

## CONCLUSION

65. The first year of the Company has delivered considerable progress despite the unexpected challenges in dealing with the impact of Covid-19. The demand for advice, guidance and practical support has been relentless. The response from all teams has

been excellent and this has been acknowledged and appreciated by a wide range of partners and stakeholders. The delivery of our services has been well managed and has been a considerable achievement. Partnership working remains strong and effective. Our data and experience of delivery during the pandemic will influence service delivery and demand; we have the intelligence we need to inform our thinking as we plan and continue to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

66. Despite the challenges, performance is strong and we are innovating and growing. We are a trusted partner and have achieved a great deal in the first year in all aspects of service delivery.

67. We are in the process of planning for 2021/22 which will be financially challenging with increased demand for services with pressure and uncertainty for financial resources across the public sector. However, we have a sound platform to build upon and to address the challenges ahead.



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
PANEL****13 NOVEMBER 2020****WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21**

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**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 2020/21 Work Programme has been developed by taking into account issues still to be completed from 2019/20, 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 current Work Programme was discussed by OSPB on 22 July and agreed by Council on 10 September 2020.

**Dates of Future Meetings**

- 29 January 2021 at 10am
- 16 March 2021 at 2pm
- 16 July 2021 at 10am
- 22 September 2021 at 2pm
- 12 November 2021 at 10am

**Purpose of the Meeting**

6. The Panel is asked to consider the 2020/21 Work Programme and agree whether it would like 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 2020/21

## **Contact Points**

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Email: [scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director Legal and Governance), the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and Minutes for Council on 10 September 2020
- Agenda and Minutes of OSPB on 22 July 2020

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

## 2020/21 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME: Children &amp; Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

| Date of Meeting  | Issue for Scrutiny                                                                                                             | Date of Last Report                                | Notes/Follow-up Action                                                                 |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13 November 2020 | Update on 0-19 Starting Well Partnership                                                                                       | 11 January 2019<br>10 May 2019<br>14 February 2020 | Update on progress of Service since launch (1 April 2020) and performance against KPIs |
|                  | Update on the implementation of the Business Case for the Assessment Pathway for Children and Young People who may have Autism | OSPB 25 May 2019<br>CFOSP 25 September 2019        | Panel requested update on implementation of new delivery model                         |
|                  | Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring/Budget Scrutiny (Finance/Performance Q2 July-September 2020)                         |                                                    |                                                                                        |
|                  | WCF Progress Report to DfE                                                                                                     |                                                    |                                                                                        |
|                  | Update on progress of new model of delivery for Medical Education provision                                                    | 23 January 2020<br>16 June 2020                    | Further update to Panel required after Cabinet meeting in Feb 2021                     |
| 29 January 2021  | Scrutiny of 2021/22 Budget                                                                                                     |                                                    |                                                                                        |
|                  | Covid Education Update                                                                                                         |                                                    | Including detailed update on remote learning                                           |

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                              | Supporting Families First                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 17 July 2020                                                          | Including update on Family Safeguarding Innovation Project                                                                                                                                        |
|                              | Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 11 September 2019<br>(WSCB Annual Report)                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 16 March 2021                | Educational Outcomes for Children in Worcestershire 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 9 October 2018<br>7 February 2018<br>17 July 2019<br>14 February 2020 |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Possible Future Items</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| TBC                          | Sufficiency work including private residential provision used by the council. To include types of placements in Worcestershire, emergency placements, costs, availability and information on Worcestershire children who have been placed out-of-county in unregistered children's homes, including when, where and in what circumstances | 11 January 2019                                                       | Suggested by the Director of Children, Families and Communities during the Performance Monitoring discussion on 13 November 2019. (to be scheduled following the government national care review) |
| TBC                          | Ofsted ILACS Inspection – Feedback following annual standard inspection (Ofsted report published 29 July 2019).                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 11 September 2019                                                     | Delay due to COVID-19. Date of follow up inspection tbc                                                                                                                                           |
| TBC                          | Update on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 16 June 2020                                                          | Ofsted/CQC re-visit delayed – now likely to be 2021                                                                                                                                               |
| TBC                          | Elective Home Education                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                       | Scrutiny task group to be set up autumn 2020                                                                                                                                                      |

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TBC                | Joint Targeted Area Inspection (focus on children's emotional health and well-being)                                                                                                  |                                                                      | Date tbc                                                                                                                                                                 |
| TBC                | Review of Alternative Provision for SEND and Vulnerable Learners                                                                                                                      |                                                                      | Requested at Panel meeting 13 November 2019 - Review delayed due to COVID-19                                                                                             |
| TBC                | Impact of child poverty                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                      | Requested at Panel meeting 13 November 2019. Ref report from Worcester City Task Group. Also linked to Public Health. Consider once economic impact of COVID-19 clearer. |
| TBC                | Virtual School (including the Virtual School Governing Body)                                                                                                                          |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                          |
| TBC                | Overnight Unit-based Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities – Update                                                                                                             | 8 August 2018<br>4 June 2019<br>25 September 2019<br>15 October 2020 | Following an in-depth Scrutiny in 2018, the Panel has been monitoring the new model of service delivery implemented from April 2020 every 6 months.                      |
| Standing Items     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance and In-year Budget Monitoring</li> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Budget Scrutiny Process</li> </ul> | Jan/March/July/Sept/Nov                                              |                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Scrutiny Champions | Safeguarding – Cllr Tom Baker-Price<br>Education – Cllr Steve Mackay<br>Looked After Children - Cllr Fran Oborski<br>Finance/budget – Cllr Pat Agar                                   |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                          |

