

Agenda

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Friday, 29 January 2021, 10.00 am

All County Councillors are invited to attend and participate

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

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

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

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

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

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

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

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

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

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

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

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

DON'T FORGET

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

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Friday, 29 January 2021, 10.00 am, Online

Membership

Councillors:

Mr T A L Wells (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, Mrs F M Oborski, 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

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	Apologies and Welcome	
2	Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip	
3	Public Participation Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance 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 28 January 2021). Enquiries can be made through the telephone number/e-mail address below.	
4	Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting (previously circulated)	
5	Performance, In-Year Budget Monitoring and 2021/22 Budget	1 - 30
6	COVID-19 January 2021 Education Update	31 - 42
7	Work Programme 2020-21	43 - 48

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

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

29 JANUARY 2021

PERFORMANCE, IN-YEAR BUDGET MONITORING AND 2021/22 BUDGET

Summary

1. The Panel will be updated on performance and financial information for services relating to Children and Families.
2. In addition, as part of the Budget Scrutiny process for 2021/22, the Panel will consider the draft 2021/22 Budget for areas within the remit of the Panel and the main messages from it, as identified by the Directorate
3. The performance information provided relates to Quarter 3 2020/21 (October to December 2020)
4. The Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Children and Families, and Education and Skills, the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Resources (Worcestershire Children First) and the Chief Financial Officer (S151) have been invited to attend the meeting to respond to any queries from Panel Members.

Budget Scrutiny 2021/22

5. As part of the Budget Scrutiny process for 2021/22, Directorates have been asked to identify the main messages from the draft 2021/22 Budget for areas within the remit of the Panel and these are set out in Appendix 1.
6. The draft Council Budget 2021/22 was presented to Cabinet on 7 January 2021 and is also available to the Panel at Appendix 2.
7. Prior to this, Directorates were asked to set out the emerging pressures and challenges for services, which were discussed at the Scrutiny Panel meetings in November 2020 and a weblink is included in the background papers.
8. The Panel's discussions on the draft Council Budget 2021/22 will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 3 February 2021, when the Board will formulate its comments to Cabinet on the draft Budget.

Financial Information

9. In addition to regular performance information, the Panel also receives in-year budget information. The information provided is for Period 8 (end of November) and is attached in the form of presentation slides at Appendix 3.

Performance Information

10. The Corporate Balanced Scorecard is the means of understanding progress against the Council's Corporate Plan. The Scorecard contains a range of indicators linked to key priorities and themes. Many measures are long-term and may be affected by a wide range of factors, some of which are outside the direct control of the Council. This is reported to Cabinet and is also available on the Council's [website](#).

11. Attached at Appendix 4 is a dashboard of performance information relating to Quarter 3 (October to December 2020) with sections covering children's social care, education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

12. The intention is for the Scrutiny Panels to consider this information on a quarterly basis and then report by exception to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board any suggestions for further scrutiny or areas of concern.

Purpose of the Meeting

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

- any comments to report back as part of the budget scrutiny process on the draft Budget 2021/22 and emerging pressures and challenges for services within the remit of the panel, to the OSPB at its meeting on 3 February 2021
- any comments to highlight to the CMR or OSPB, relating to the in-year budget
- whether any further information or scrutiny on a particular topic is required.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Main messages from draft 2021/22 Budget for areas within the remit of the panel (presentation slides)

Appendix 2 - Draft 2021/22 Budget discussed by Cabinet on 7 January 2021 [Cabinet Agenda Report](#) (Copy issued to Panel members)

Appendix 3 - In-year Budget Information (Presentation Slides)

Appendix 4 - Children and Families Performance Information Dashboard

Contact Points

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

Background Papers

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

- 2021/22 Emerging Pressures and Challenges [Presentation Slides](#) from the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 13 November 2020
- Agendas and minutes of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 11 January 2019, 6 March 2019, 17 July 2019, 1 September 2019, 13 November 2019, 17 July 2020, 8 September 2020 and 13 November 2020

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

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Appendix 1 – 2021/22 Draft Budget and MTFP update

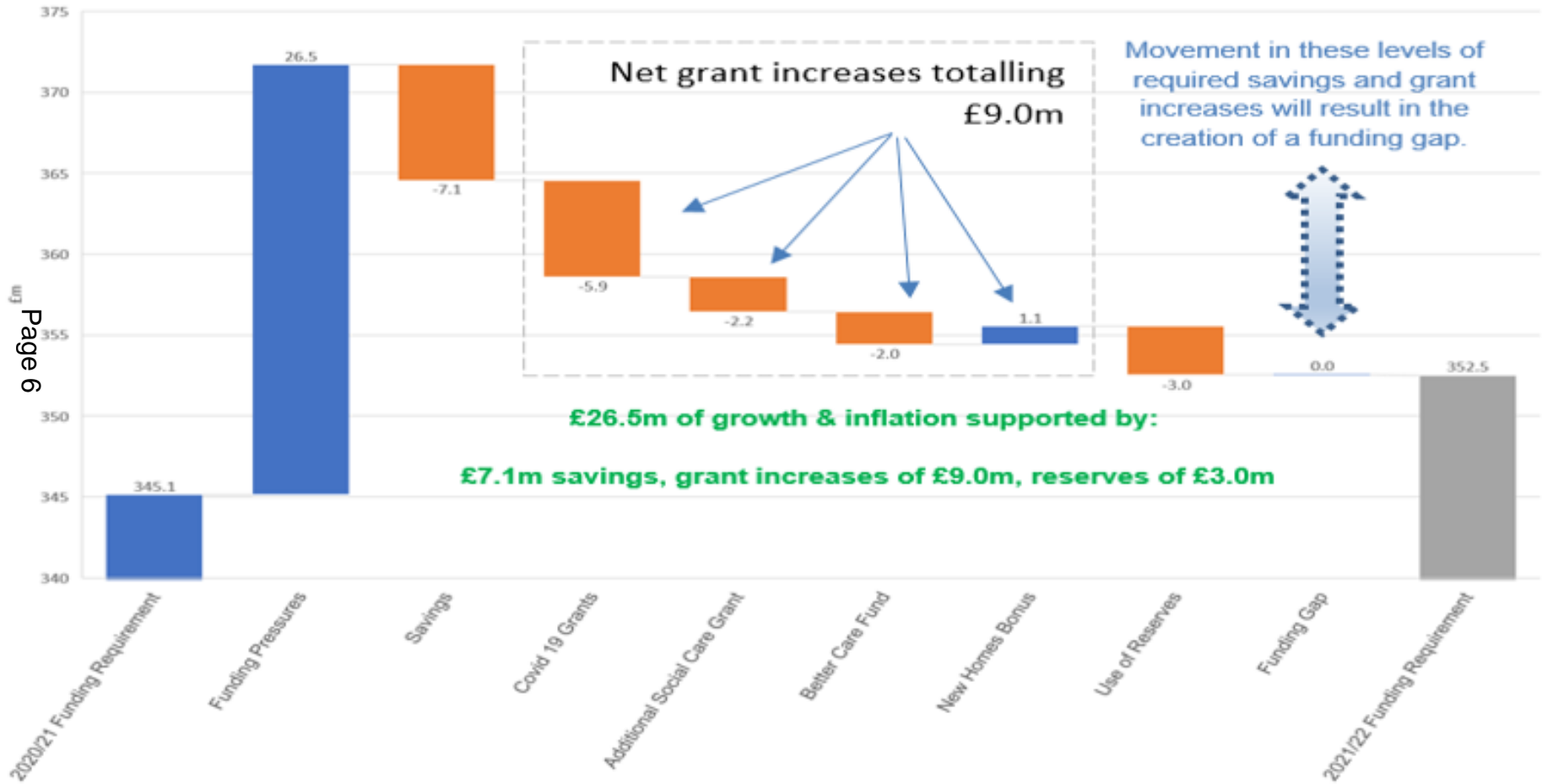
Page 5

**Children and Families Overview and
Scrutiny Panel**

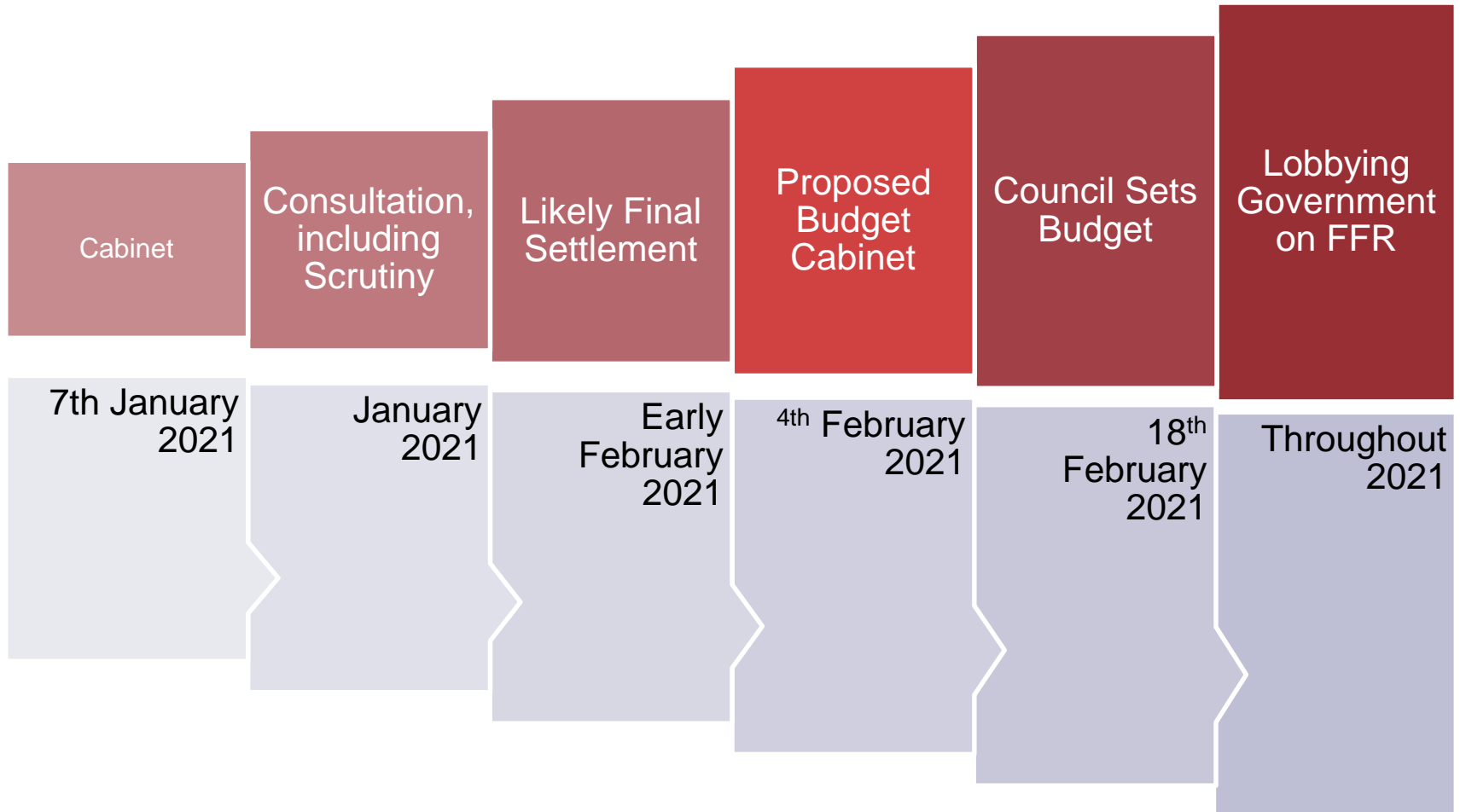
29th January 2021

Overall Change 2020/21 – 2021/22

2021/22 Net Expenditure Budget Reliance on Savings and Grant Income Increases



Page 6



SPECIFIC 2021/22 BUDGET INFORMATION – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

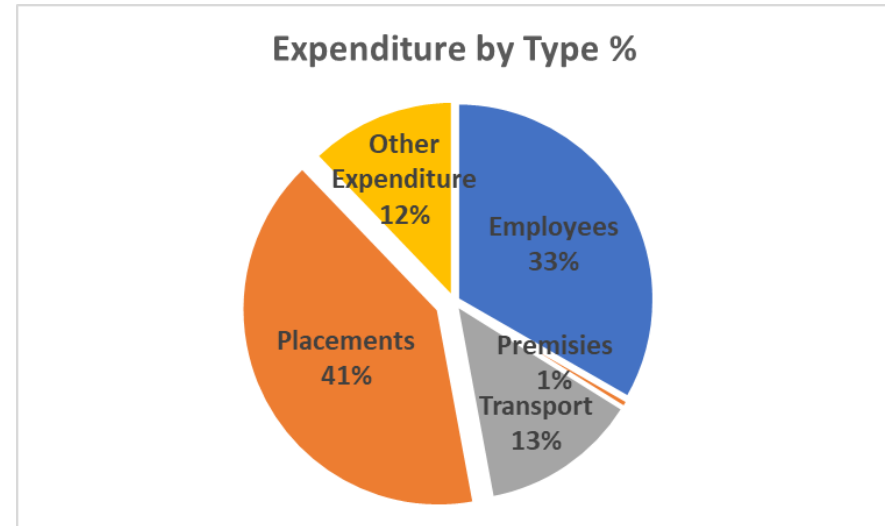
Page 8

- 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).
- WCF Board met on 28 July and agreed with the high level options to reduce expenditure to meet indicative cash target for 2021-22.
- 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 throughout July to December each contract year 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.
- The WCF Risk, Governance and Audit Board reviewed the budget on 15 January 2021 and WCF Board agreed the budget on 19 January 2021.
- DfE have consultation rights on budget as part of Governance Side Agreement.

	2021/22 £m	Comments
Funding ongoing safeguarding pressures	6.8	includes £2.6 million for 2020/21 pressures, and reflects a 5% increase in numbers and inflation
SEND and Home to School Transport	0.6	Includes £0.6m for demand increases
Pay inflation	0.1	Whilst a pay freeze was announced by the Chancellor there are still additional costs for staff paid less than £24,000 who receive £250 increases, as well as pay increment changes.
Prices Inflation	0.2	Contracts inflation
Gross Total	7.7	
<i>Less</i>		
Savings	(3.0)	A review of back office posts and vacancies is forecast to yield £0.650m. Ongoing consultations with staff to be carried out in accordance with our HR policies; The in-sourcing of school improvement has enabled us to grow our traded element and we forecast to seek an additional £0.6m in 2021/22. Finally, a range of service reviews have begun to seek efficiencies, and this will focus on removing £1.75m.
Net change	4.7	

- The full-year WCF budget is currently £127.4m gross, of which over half is the 'demand led' budgets of Placements and Home to School Transport.

Budget 2021/22	£000's
Employees	42,444
Premises	752
Transport	16,797
Placements & Provison	51,937
Other Expenditure	15,513
Gross Expenditure	127,443
Sales, Fees and Charges	-1,995
WCF Budget / Contract Price	125,448



- There is a risk on placements could exceed the budget for 2021/22 of up to £2m and this will be mitigated by the £1.1m risk reserve and close monitoring will be required during the year and prompt action will be needed if performance and forecasts vary materially from budget.

It should be noted that the £106.583m budget for WCF is the Council's base budget contribution to the total running costs of WCF. The gross expenditure budget and therefore WCF contract value also includes specific funding passed through, such as grants or CFC reserves used to fund WCF activity:

	£000's	£000's
2021/22 Gross Expenditure Budget		127,443
Non-WCC Sales, Fees and Charges	1,995	
WCC Gross Contract Sum		125,448
Funded By:		
	Dedicated Schools Grant	6,745
	Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant	850
	Other Grants	7,415
	Other Income	168
	HTST Income	1,596
	Capitalised Revenue	608
	Funding from Reserves	1,484
	Total non-base budget funding passed through Council	18,865
Total External Funding		20,860
Council Base Budget 2021/22		106,583

Page 12

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Indicative WCF 2020/21 Contract Value} &= \text{Council Base Budget} + \text{Other Funding passed through} \\
 &= \text{£106.583m} + \text{£18.865m} \\
 &= \text{£125.448m}
 \end{aligned}$$

Add the £1.995m SFC income that WCF should collect, and WCF gross expenditure budget is therefore £127.443m

The table below shows how the Company has budgeted to spend £127.443m in 2021/22:

	Employees	Premises	Transport	Other Non-staffing	Total Expenditure	SFC	Company Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
WCF Board & Senior management	621	0	5	73	699	0	699
Training	32	1	0	158	191	13	178
Resources Teams	2,187	0	7	812	3,006	17	2,989
Support service payments	0	0	0	7,345	7,345	0	7,345
Bus, Comm & Traded svcs	709	0	2	193	904	39	864
Resources	3,549	1	14	8,580	12,144	69	12,075
CSC Safeguarding services	11,585	192	276	1,382	13,435	0	13,435
Integrated Family Front Door	4,805	0	142	194	5,141	124	5,017
CSC Placements & Provision	7,198	302	156	49,476	57,132	15	57,117
Worc Safeguarding Childrens Bo	120	0	2	61	183	93	90
CSC Through Care	3,331	0	100	779	4,210	156	4,054
CSC Targeted Family Support	1,687	0	34	46	1,767	0	1,767
Social Care	28,726	494	710	51,937	81,867	387	81,480
Quality & Improvement	1,967	0	23	230	2,220	648	1,571
Early Help & Partnership	1,788	257	37	1,810	3,892	0	3,892
SEND & Vulnerable learners	6,127	0	517	1,980	8,624	890	7,733
Education and Early Help	9,882	257	577	4,019	14,735	1,539	13,196
Home to School Transport	287	0	15,496	2,407	18,190	0	18,190
Home to School Transport	287	0	15,496	2,407	18,190	0	18,190
Youth Offending Services	0	0	0	507	507	0	507
Youth Offending Services	0	0	0	507	507	0	507
TOTAL	42,444	752	16,797	67,450	127,443	1,995	125,448

The table below shows the Gross DSG blocks (Prior to Academy recoupment) for 2021/22, based on the Provisional Settlement from the DfE, this reflects DfE NFF Year 4:

DSG Block	2020-21 Latest Nov 2020 £000's	2021-22 Initial December 2020 £000's	Variance 2020-21 to 2021-22 £000's
Schools	339,667	369,495	+29,828
Pupil Growth Fund	2,319	1,908	-411
Sub Total Schools	341,986	371,403	+29,417
Central Services	3,515	3,377	-138
High Needs	60,182	68,401	+8,219
Early Years	35,963	36,476	+513
TOTAL	441,646	479,657	+38,011

Schools Block

Mainstreaming of specific former grants for pay and pensions of +£16.3m.

Change in pupil numbers October 2019 to October 2020 of +199 (Primary -141.5; Secondary +340.5).

Pupil Growth Fund

Reflects DfE NFF and change in pupil numbers between October 2019 and October 2020.

Central Services

Reflects further 20% reduction in Historic Commitments (EIFS) of -£0.24m.

Mainstreaming of specific former grants for pay and pensions for centrally employed teachers of +£0.027m.

Effect of increase in pupil numbers for central block NFF +£0.075m.

High Needs

Mainstreaming of specific former grants for pay and pensions of +£2.2m.

Increase in academy recoupment of £8.319m to £8.582m – 2020-21 Gross £60.182m; Net £51.863m and 2021-22 Gross £68.401m; Net £59.819m.

Early Years

Reflects an increase to the allocated hourly rates for 2 year olds +£0.08 and 3&4 year olds +£0.06.

- The High Needs Block includes an additional allocation of £8.2m in 2021-22 (includes £2.2m for former specific grants for pay and pensions) which is Worcestershire's share of the national £730m announced in November 2020 to address pressures being experienced in all LAs.
- This will support some of the ongoing significant cost pressures in the High Needs DSG, however this will not eliminate the deficit of around £10.5m which will need to be carried forward into 2021/22.
- The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England), (Amendment) Regulations 2020 prescribed accounting treatment for DSG overspends that were accruing to an increasing number of Councils. The Regulations require that the overspend be shown as a negative reserve and that this is not the responsibility of the Council. However, this is only for a time-limited period and after three years, any residual deflection the DSG overspend will revert to the Council.
- The Council with CCN / SCT / f40 continue to lobby and assess actions to address this area of spend.
- The Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) met on 15 September and on 5 November 2020 and endorsed the proposals for the LSFF for 2020-21 and approved as required for 2021/22, under their responsibilities in the School Forum Regulations. Cabinet approved the mainstream local funding formula for 2021-22 on 10 December 2020.
- The WSF met again on 21 January 2020 to consider the School Funding Settlement 2021/22, the LSFF for mainstream schools and the required submission of the LSFF to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) during January 2021.

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Appendix 3 – Period 8 Budget Monitoring Update 2020/21

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel 29th January 2021

As at Period 8, the forecast expenditure on Dedicated Schools Grant budget is £224m – a forecast overspend of £4.63m

Overspends	
R	Over 5%
A	1% to 5%
G	0 to 1%

2020/21 Budget Monitoring Period 8 - November 2020	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	%
Schools DSG Block	128,344	128,344	0	0.0%
High Needs DSG Block	51,863	56,492	4,629	8.9%
Early Years DSG Block	35,963	35,963	0	0.0%
Central DSG Block	3,515	3,515	0	0.0%
DSG	219,685	224,314	4,629	

- 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 – at the current forecast, the deficit at year-end will be around £10.5m. A statutory instrument is 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 goes towards our pressures but as the forecast position shows, is not enough to keep ahead of our growing demand.
- High needs funding is increasing by a further £730m, or 10%, in 2021-22 – for Worcestershire this represents an increase of £7.8m which will help to keep pace with demand as it continues to rise. This is detailed in the 2021/22 Budget slides.

Remaining CFC Budgets in the County Council

Service	2020/21 Net Budget (£)	2020/21 Forecast (£)	Variance After Adjustments (£)	Variance (%)
SENDIASS	95,083	95,288	205	0.2%
Children's Commissioning & Partnership	348,957	348,310	-647	-0.2%
Historic ChS	379,751	356,993	-22,758	-6.0%
Children's S75	1,511,989	1,511,989	0	0.0%
Total	2,335,780	2,312,580	-23,200	-1.0%

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

All areas are broadly forecasting to spend to budget as at P8. The underspend in 'Historic ChS' relates to inherited pension liabilities. This is a budget that will underspend (and subsequently decrease) a little year-on-year until such a time as it is no longer required.

At the end of June, WCF is forecasting a overspend of £0.35m or 0.3% – 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 OLA’s are experiencing significant demand increases and pressures on budgets.

Worcestershire Children First Budget Monitoring Statement - by Expenditure Type

	Latest Budget £000	YTD £000	Full-year Projection £000	Variance £000	Variance %	Change since last month £000
Contract Income	119,598	99,156	119,598	0	0.00%	0
Government Grants	0	479	0	0	0.00%	0
Interest	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Covid-19 Costs from WCC	0	636	636	636	0.00%	0
Sales, Fees and Charges	1,324	1,357	1,606	282	21.26%	-86
Total Income	120,922	101,627	121,839	917	0.76%	-87
<i>less expenditure</i>						
Employees	42,019	24,908	40,366	-1,653	-3.93%	-641
Premises	737	237	619	-118	-16.06%	37
Transport	15,999	7,725	16,096	97	0.61%	-31
Supplies & Services	16,423	7,817	16,010	-413	-2.52%	-243
Third Party Payments	45,744	28,735	49,096	3,353	7.33%	772
Transfer Payments	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Education Payments	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Reserves	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Support Services	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Total Expenditure	120,922	69,422	122,187	1,265	1.05%	-107
Projected Surplus/(Deficit) before Corporation Tax	0	32,205	-348	-348		20

November Monitoring by Service WCF

	Latest Budget £000	YTD £000	Full-year Projection £000	Variance £000	Variance %	Change since last month £000
WCF Management & Board	692	400	660	-33	-4.69%	-5
Training	178	19	178	0	0.00%	0
Resources Teams	4,399	1,913	4,349	-50	-1.14%	-5
Support Service Payments	7,324	3,662	7,324	0	0.00%	0
Resources	12,593	5,995	12,510	-83	-0.66%	-10
CSC Safeguarding Services	14,679	8,568	14,010	-669	-4.56%	-129
Integrated Family Front Door	4,430	2,680	4,233	-198	-4.47%	155
Placements & Provision	50,821	31,925	53,418	2,596	5.11%	89
Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board	86	-24	86	0	0.00%	0
CSC Through Care	4,034	2,505	3,911	-123	-3.05%	17
CSC Targeted Family Support	1,734	964	1,554	-180	-10.38%	-7
Social Care	75,784	46,618	77,211	1,427	1.88%	126
Quality and Improvement	1,871	807	1,764	-107	-5.72%	-55
Early Help & Partnership	3,875	2,026	3,748	-128	-3.30%	-40
SEND & Vulnerable learners	7,553	3,616	7,427	-126	-1.67%	-39
Education and Early Help	13,299	6,449	12,938	-361	-2.72%	-134
Home to School Transport	17,415	8,426	17,415	0	0.00%	0
Home to School Transport	17,415	8,426	17,415	0	0.00%	0
Youth Offending Services	507	127	507	0	0.00%	0
Youth Offending Services	507	127	507	0	0.00%	0
TOTAL	119,598	67,614	120,581	983	0.82%	-20
Contract Income	119,598	99,156	119,598	0	0.00%	0
Covid Costs from Council	0	636	636	636	0.00%	0
Projected Surplus/(Deficit) before Corporation Tax	0	32,177	-348	-348		20

Since P2, potential in-year savings on staffing and non-staffing have been identified this has brought the Resources Directorate to a small underspend position.

Following P8 monitoring, HMRC have agreed with WCF/WCC on the trading relationship between the two entities. The result is that WCF Corporation Tax for 2019/20 has reduced from £122k to £41k. This £81k saving will be reflected in the P9 forecast for the Resources Directorate.

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, largely due to vacancies being held where possible. 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. COVID-related additional costs and lost income in are estimated at up to £3.1 million in 2020/21. WCC has received a specific grant to support these costs (£1.025m), alongside the general COVID-19 Grant. Therefore the forecast position in WCF is on budget.

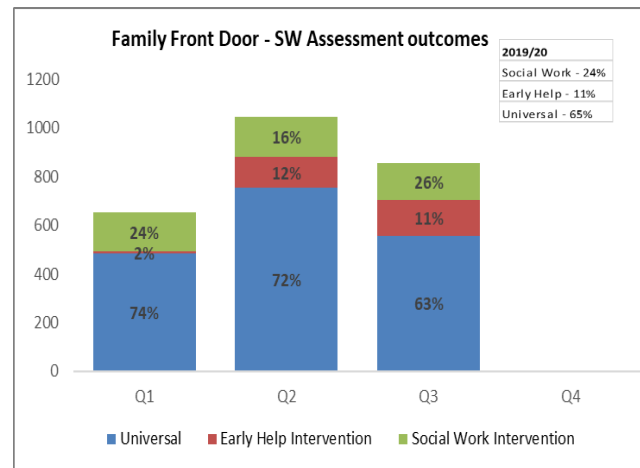
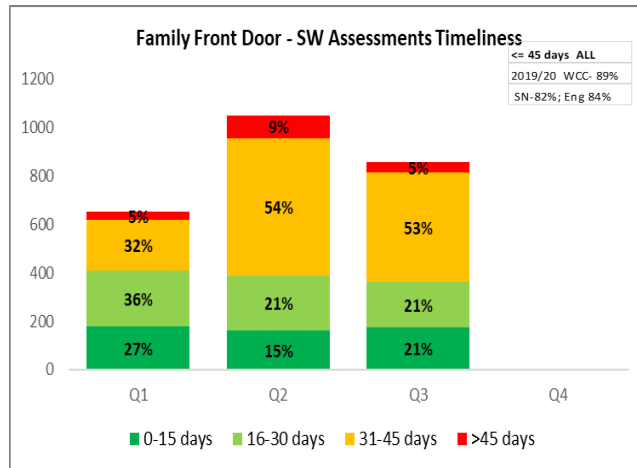
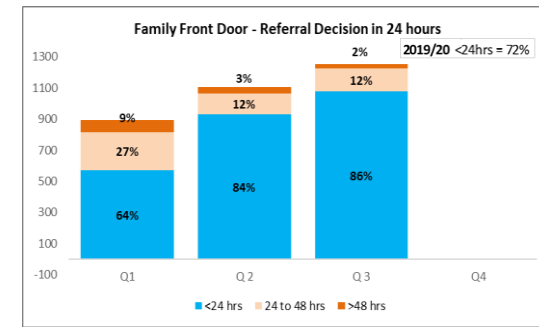
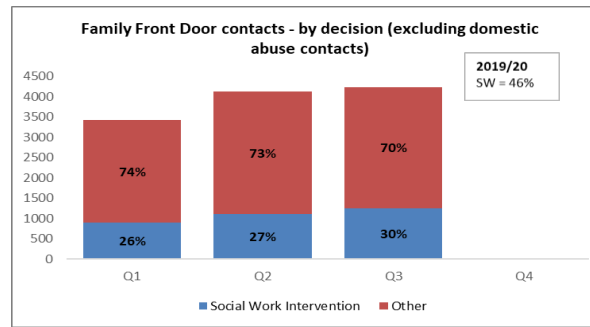
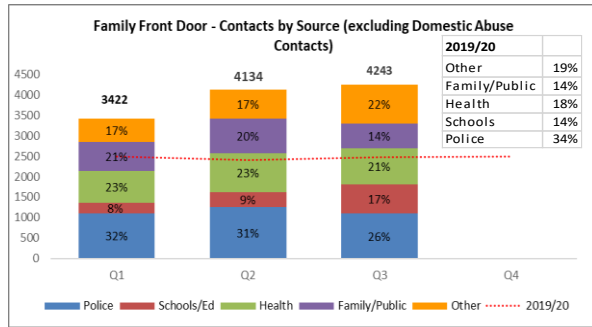
Risk Management – To mitigate the risk and volatility on placements a specific reserve of £1.1m was set up as part of the 2019/20 Budget process.



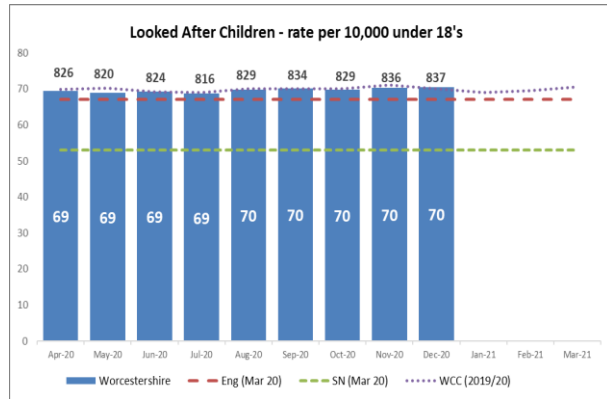
Page 22

Any questions?

Family Front Door



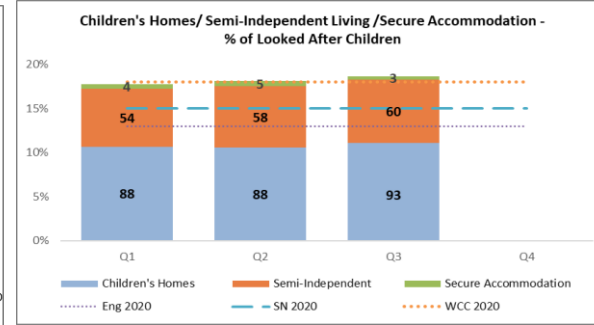
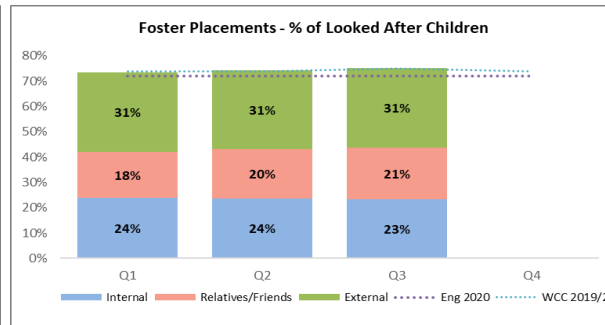
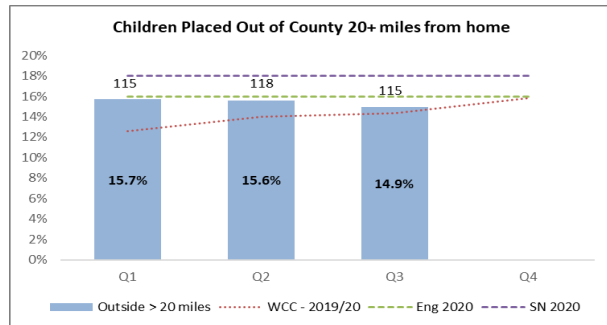
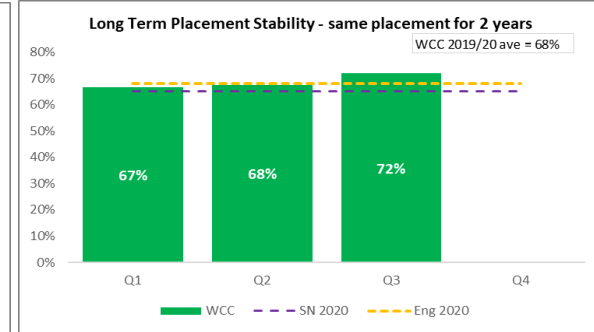
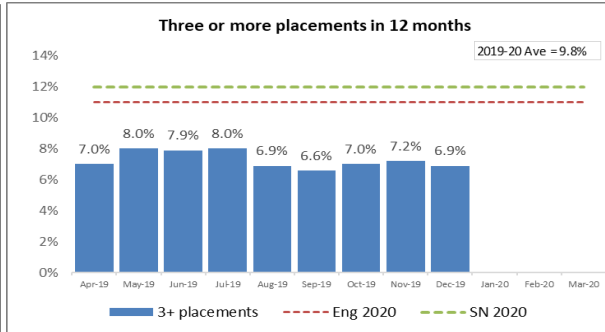
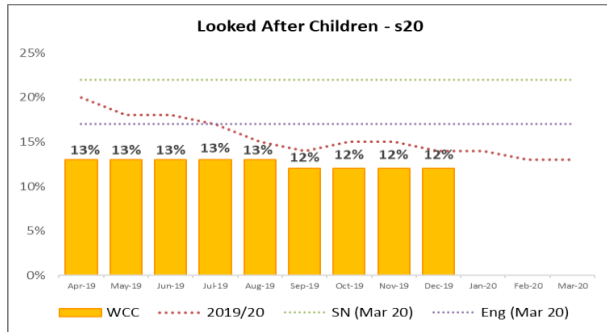
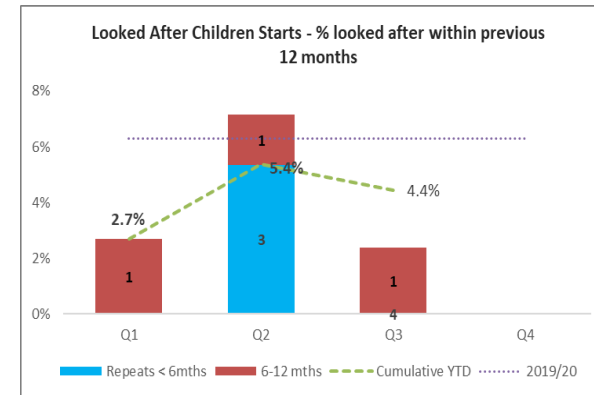
Through Care - Looked After Children and Care Leavers

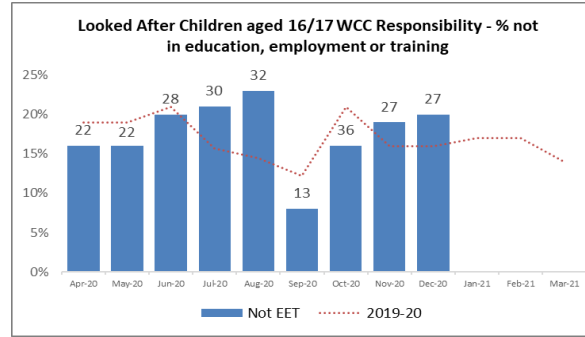
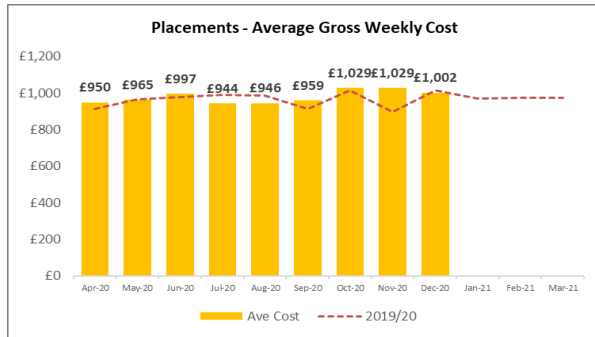


Looked After Children - Starts and Ceases

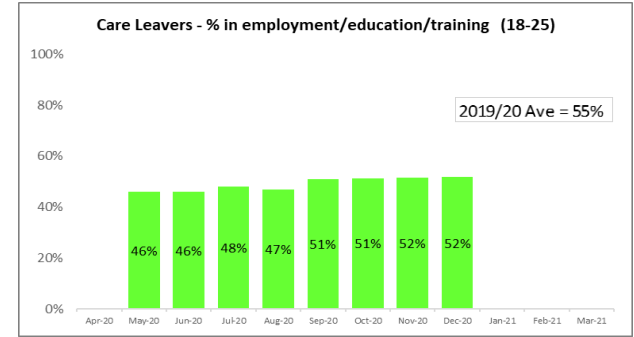
		Number (Rate per 10k)		
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Starts	Worcestershire	281 (23.8)	243 (20.4)	220 (18.5)
	SN Ave	309 (19.8)	308 (19.6)	293 (20.9)
	England	32,190 (26.9)	31,680 (27.8)	30,970 (27.2)
Ceases	Worcestershire	255 (21.6)	207 (17.4)	235 (19.8)
	SN Ave	264 (16.9)	289 (18.4)	271 (18.7)
	England	30,050 (25.1)	29,460 (25.8)	29,590 (25.9)

		2019/20		Q1 2020/21	Q2 2020/21
		Number	Rate per 10k	Rate per 10k	Rate per 10k
Starts	West Midlands	3,150	24.9	25	23.4
	Worcestershire	220	18.5	17.3	16.9



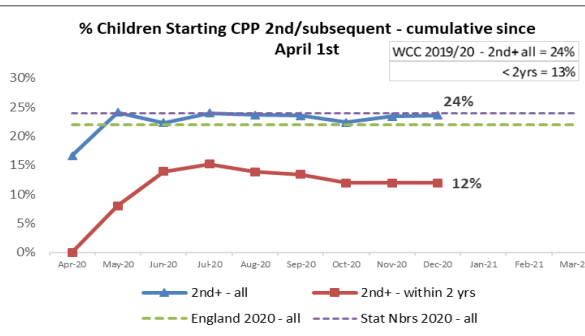
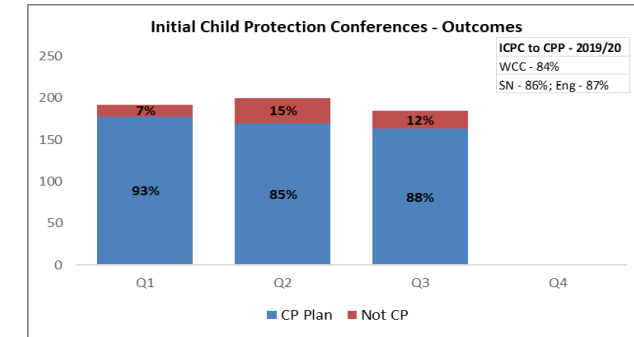
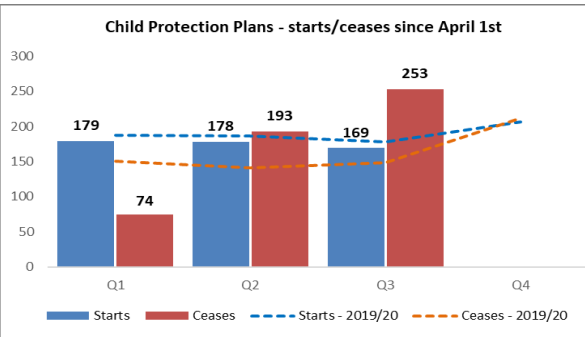
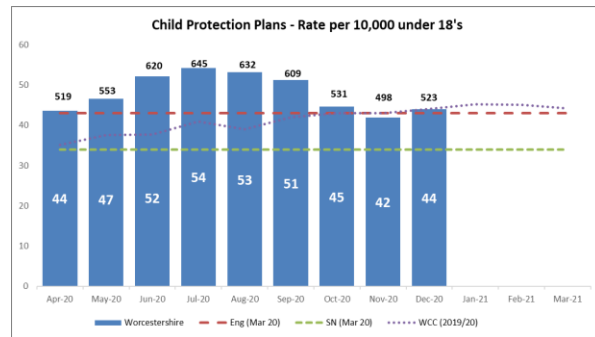


No comparator data is available for this indicator

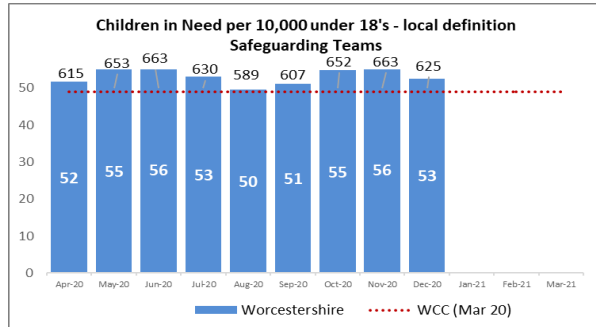


Care Leavers 19-21 in Employment, Education or Training as at 31 Dec 2020: **48%**. Latest comparative figure for age 19-21 using national annual snapshot methodology (2019/20) - Statistical Neighbours: **54%**, England: **53%**

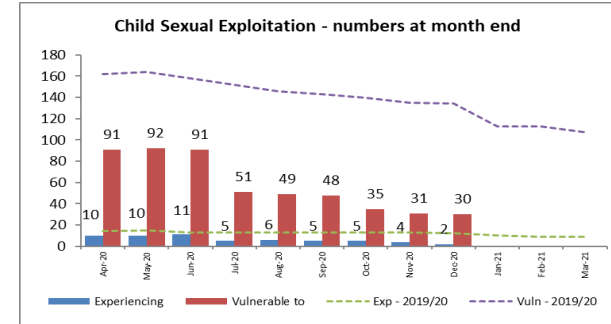
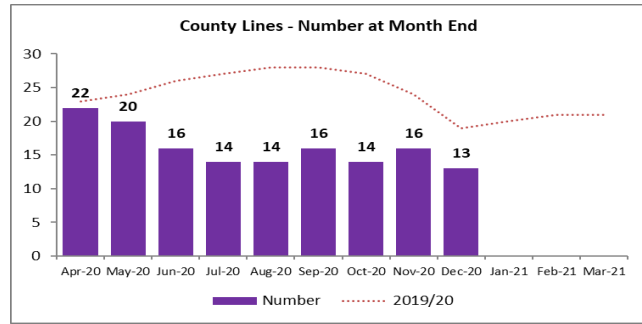
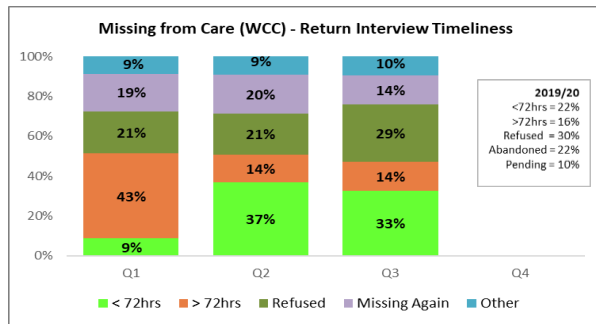
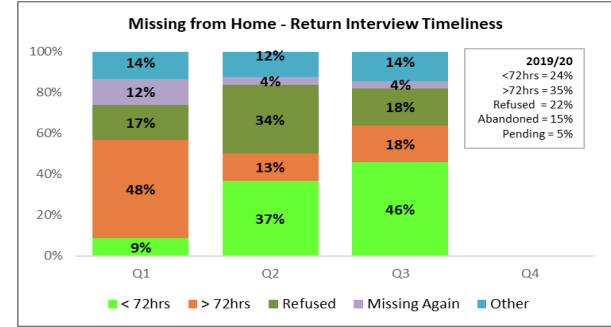
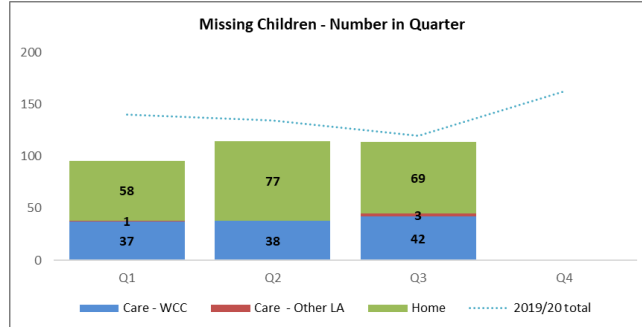
Child Protection



Children In Need

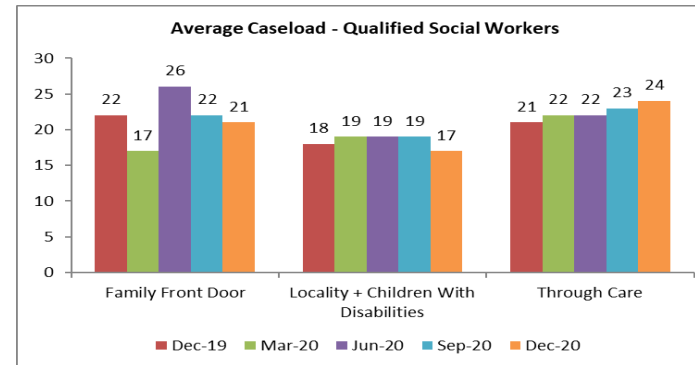
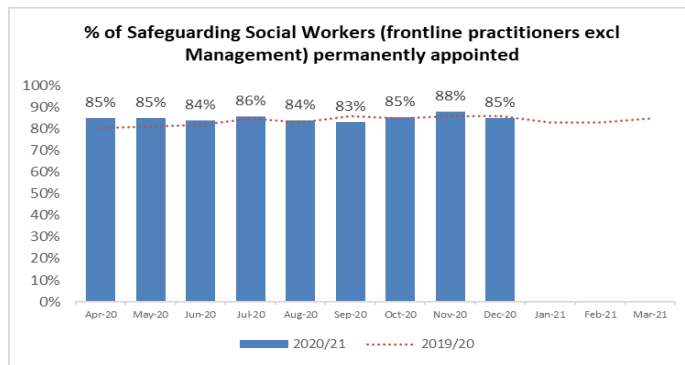


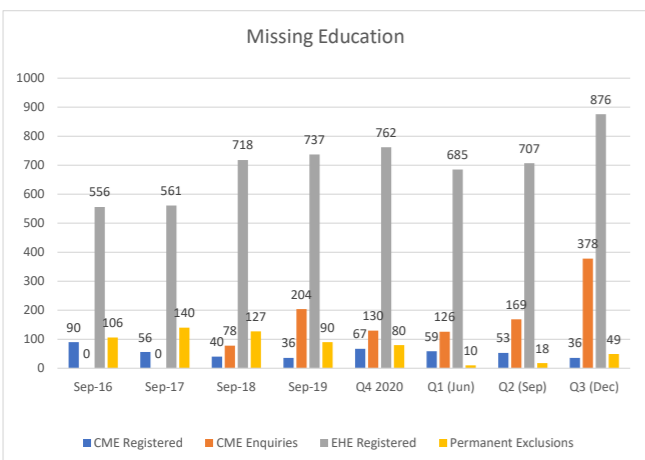
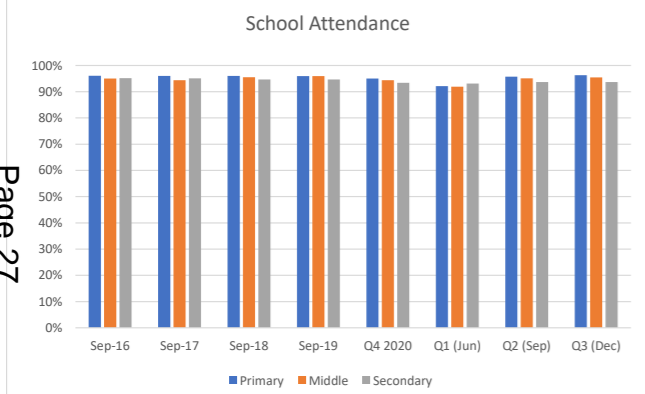
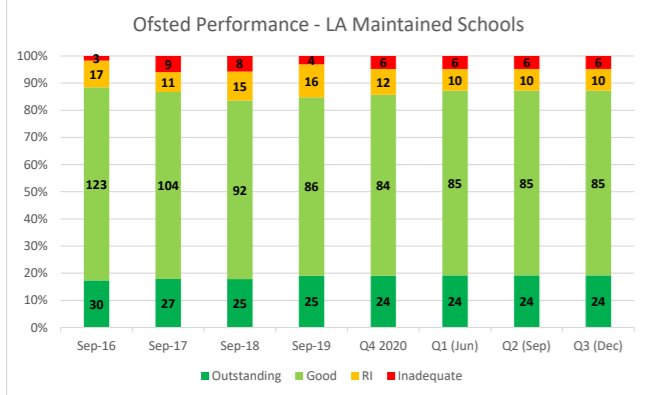
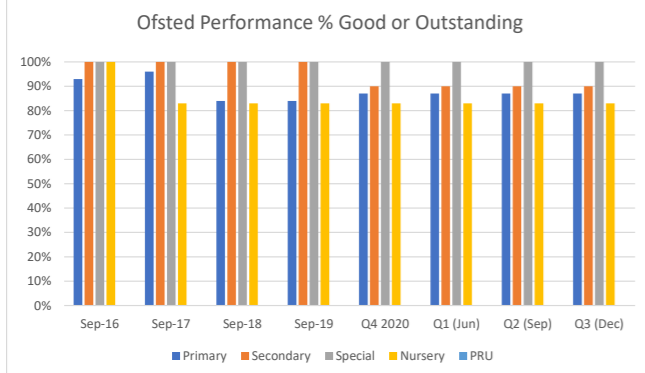
Child in Need Census (wide definition) - rate per 10,000 at 31 March 2020 - WCC= 275; Statistical Neighbours = 291; England = 324



Page 26

Staffing





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

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
Primary	89%	88%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
Secondary	93%	96%	84%	84%	87%	87%	87%	87%
Special	100%	100%	100%	100%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Nursery	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
PRU	100%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
All Worcs. England	90%	90%	86%	84%	84%	84%	84%	84%
	89%	89%	84%	86%	86%	86%	86%	86%

Ofsted grades - LA Maintained Schools

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
Outstanding	30	27	25	25	24	24	24	24
Good	123	104	92	86	84	85	85	85
RI	17	11	15	16	12	10	10	10
Inadequate	3	9	8	4	6	6	6	6
Total	173	151	140	131	126	125	125	125
% O & G	88.4%	86.8%	83.6%	84.7%	85.7%	87.2%	87.2%	87.2%

Ofsted grades - Free Schools and Academies

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
Outstanding	17	21	22	20	17	17	17	17
Good	43	62	66	73	77	77	77	77
RI	2	2	6	8	9	10	10	10
Inadequate	1	2	9	11	13	14	14	14
Total	63	87	103	112	116	118	118	118
% O & G	95.2%	95.4%	85.4%	83.0%	81.0%	79.7%	79.7%	79.7%

School Attendance

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
Primary	96.1%	96.0%	96.0%	96.0%	95.1%	92.1%	95.7%	96.3%
Middle	95.0%	94.4%	95.5%	96.0%	94.4%	91.9%	95.1%	95.4%
Secondary	95.2%	95.1%	94.7%	94.7%	93.4%	93.1%	93.7%	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

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
CME Enquiries	n/a	n/a	78	204	130	126	169	378
CME Registered	90	56	40	36	67	59	53	36
EHE Registered	556	561	718	737	762	685	707	876
Permanent Exclusions	106	140	127	90	80	10	18	49

Commentary -Ofsted Performance - Nikki Jones

Due to Covid no Ofsted inspections have been undertaken since early March 2020. Hence the outcomes remain unchanged since reporting in quarter 1. Monitoring inspections of schools judged inadequate and some schools judged as 'requires improvement' will commence 18 January. There were 18 Ofsted visits in the Autumn term but these do no result in a judgement, and so have no impact on the data.

Commentary - School Attendance - Matt Pooler

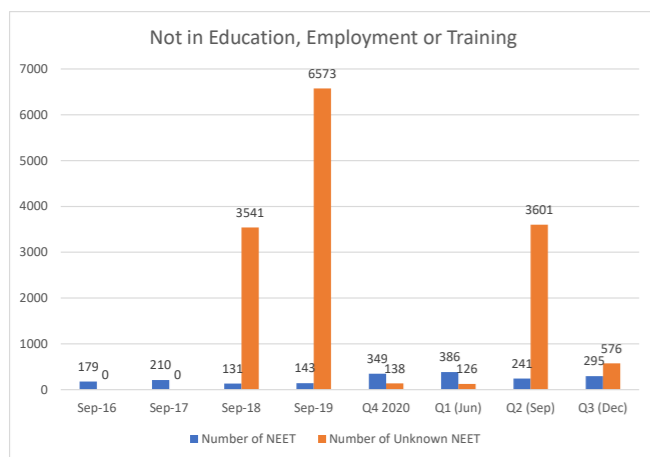
Year on year, attendance has previously been the same or better for each phase and this is also reflected in National figures. The Q1 2020 figures are showing a drop due to the pandemic but by Q2 the figures had improved greatly due to wider school-reopening, supported by WCF, and are close to pre-pandemic levels. This improvement has continued into Q3.

Commentary - Missing Education - Michelle Fowler/Sarah Flanagan

There are currently 36 Children registered as CME, a reduction from previous quarters. CME enquiries have increased and are currently at the highest they have been since recording started as schools/external agencies have been encouraged to use the centralised hub to provide details for the LA to track, monitor and action CME as required. Covid had lessened initial CME enquiries compared to expected levels in Q1 and Q2 however, reporting has now resumed at pace in Q3. CME officers continue to track all enquiries to ensure education is secured for each child. The new Fair Access Protocol process has started to expedite the placement of many CME registered pupils.

Numbers of Electively home educated children continue to increase and currently stands at 876. Anxieties around Covid19 have had an impact on the number of children coming out of School to be registered as Elective Home Education, particularly between Sept and Dec when Schools re-opened for the Autumn Term. Ongoing casework for EHE continues with officers fulfilling their responsibility to intensively check EHE education, linking in with the CME team where this is not deemed to be satisfactory.

Worcestershire's overall Permanent Exclusion rate increased over the Autumn Term, as schools re-opened following the lockdown period, however numbers are lower than the same period in 2019-20. Permanent exclusion numbers will inevitably decrease as Schools remain closed to the the majority of their students during the current pandemic. There is no verified data available regarding 2019-20 national exclusion rates however we are on trajectory to fall in line with the national average. The Exclusions and AP review references the Education and Skills Strategy Aim of reducing permanent exclusions.

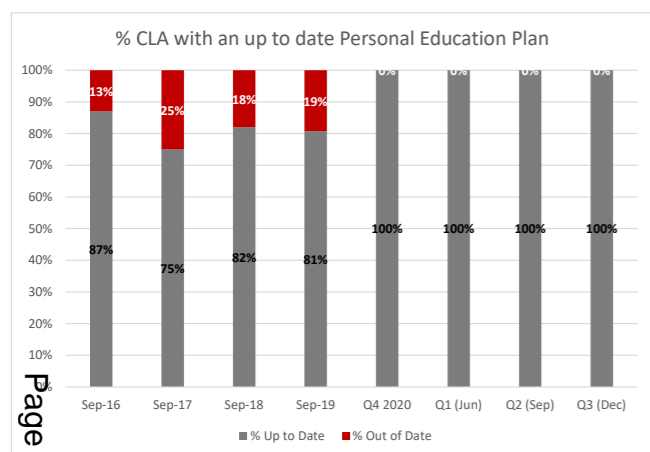


Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET - 16 to 18 Year olds)

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
Number of NEET	179	210	131	143	349	386	241	295
Number of Unknown NE	n/a	n/a	3541	6573	138	126	3601	576

Commentary - NEET - 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. Although there has been an increase in NEET this year, caused by the pandemic, it has been far smaller than anticipated and the team continue to minimise this increase as much as possible. This is by working 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.



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

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
% Up to Date	87%	75%	82%	81%	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Out of Date	13%	25%	18%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Commentary - % Looked After Children with up to date PEP - Colette Maynard-Bond

Statutory School Age Personal Education Plan

All pupils in Reception Year to Year 11 receive an on-site Personal Education Plan (PEP) visit from a PEP Co/Area Learning Advocate once a year and a PEP phone consultation twice a year (non Covid-19 practice). The Designated Teacher and Social Worker (in consultation with the carer) are expected to upload relevant information to the (PEP) prior to the meeting and attend the meeting/consultation call. 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 (VS) and support / guidance offered by (VS) staff which impacts on the quality of information shared in the (PEP) process.

Post 16 (PEP) completion

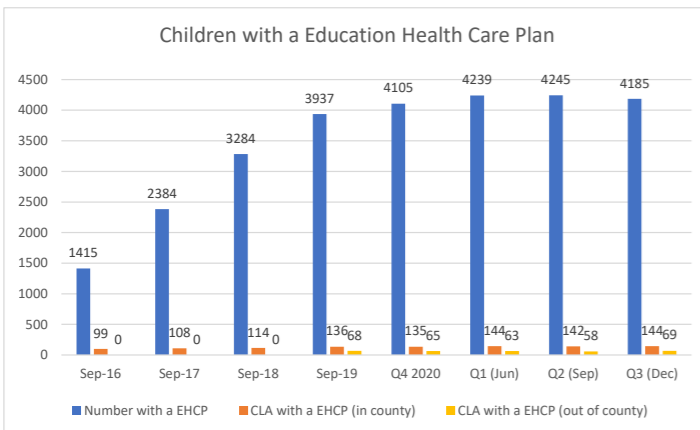
Post 16 (PEPs) are completed by social workers and are 'signed off' by (VS). The completion rate and quality still requires significant improvement. The (VS), in partnership with social care, is currently piloting a new PEP 'Personal Progression Plan (PPP).

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 within the (VS), these focus on pupils who are not making progress against their own challenging targets and those not who have a negative approach to their learning. The discussions result in individual plans of action for prioritised CLA.

Quality Assurance

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

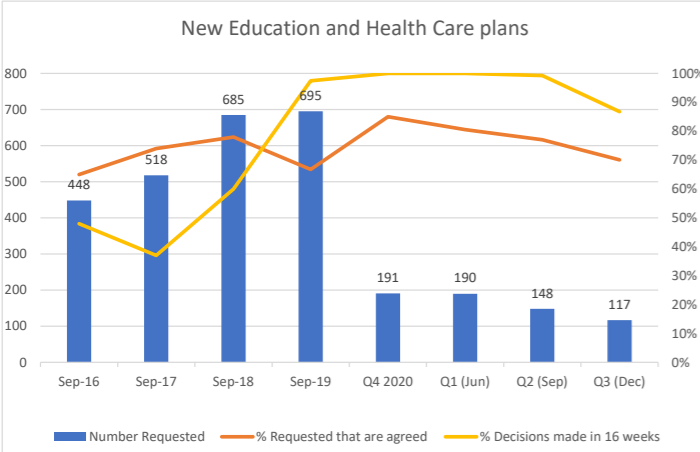


Children with a Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
Number with a EHCP	1415	2384	3284	3937	4105	4239	4245	4185
CLA with a EHCP (in county)	99	108	114	136	135	144	142	144
CLA with a EHCP (out of county)	n/a	n/a	n/a	68	65	63	58	69
CIN with a EHCP	n/a	n/a	n/a	74	103	88	113	89
CPP with a EHCP	n/a	n/a	n/a	16	17	18	22	20
EH plans with a EHCP	n/a	n/a	n/a	43	60	0	0	37

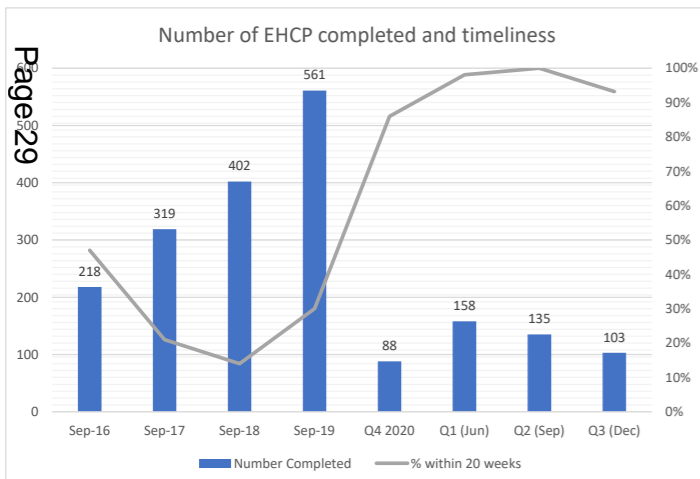
Commentary - Children with a EHCP - Gabrielle Stacey

The number of CYP with an EHCP has reduced slightly in Worcestershire in the last quarter. This is likely to reflect the slowing of the increase in numbers over the summer due to the Covid-19 pandemic and a number of young people with EHCPs leaving education at the start of the new academic year. 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 further education in the number of requests for assessments during the last quarter. Not all students with SEND support attended school during the summer period which would have impacted on settings' ability to put in place support through the graduated response and subsequent decision making about whether a request for a needs assessment would be appropriate. Decision making about whether an EHCP is required within 16 weeks has decreased in the last quarter to 87%. Monthly monitoring will be resumed from January to track compliance with timescales across the teams as a result of this decline.



New Education and Health Care Plans

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
Number Requested	448	518	685	695	191	190	148	117
% Requested that are agreed	65%	74%	78%	67%	85%	81%	77%	70%
% Decisions made in 16 weeks	48%	37%	60%	97%	100%	100%	99%	87%

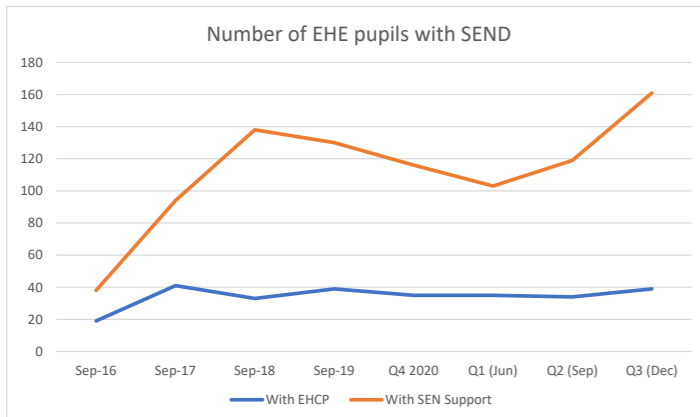


Number of EHCPs completed and % within 20 weeks

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
Number Completed	218	319	402	561	88	158	135	103
% within 20 weeks	47%	21%	14%	30%	86%	98%	100%	93%

Commentary - EHCPs completed and % within 20 weeks-Gabrielle Stacey

Excellent improvements in performance have been made over the last two years resulting in 100% of EHCPs being completed with 20 weeks within quarter 2. Strategic developments in the team are now focused on annual reviews and the quality of EHCPs. In the last quarter this compliance has reduced to 93%, which remains a high level of performance however monthly monitoring will be resumed from January to ensure this higher rate of compliance is sustained.



Number of EHE pupils with SEND

	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Q4 2020	Q1 (Jun)	Q2 (Sep)	Q3 (Dec)
With EHCP	19	41	33	39	35	35	34	39
With SEN Support	38	94	138	130	116	103	119	161

Commentary - Number of EHE Pupils - Gabrielle Stacey

The number of children with an EHCP who are EHE has increased in the last quarter. This parallels the national picture and increases in the number of families generally who are choosing to home educate. Discussions with families indicate that many families choosing to home educate remain anxious about a return to school as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Others have enjoyed the experience of home educating during the summer months and found this to be a positive experience for their children.

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

29 JANUARY 2021

COVID-19 EDUCATION UPDATE

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills and the Director of Children's Services have been invited to the meeting to update the Panel on developments relating to the:
 - a) national lockdown and implications for Worcestershire settings and schools from 4 January 2021, specifically in relation to remote learning; and
 - b) handling of Covid-19 cases and mass testing in settings and schools.

Background

2. The Panel requested an update at its January meeting on the work being carried out to support Education settings and schools during the Covid-19 period.
3. Schools remained open to all pupils until the end of the Autumn term.
4. Schools with secondary aged students and Further Education (FE) colleges received information and instruction regarding Covid-19 testing over the Christmas period. Additional meetings with headteachers have been held since the announcement in relation to the implementation of testing in schools and will continue whilst it remains helpful and will be broadened as and more is learnt about the roll-out of testing for the primary school sector.
5. On Wednesday 6 January, the Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson MP) made a [statement to Parliament on closure of education settings during national lockdown](#).
6. Education Incident Planning meetings have continued from the Autumn term as a mechanism to receive feedback and discuss the challenges that schools and settings are facing in managing the impact of the national lockdown.

Overview of national lockdown for education provision

7. On the 5 January, the Government announced a period of national lockdown. During this period schools, alternative provision (AP), special schools, colleges and wraparound childcare and other out-of-school activities for children were advised that they should restrict attendance to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers only. All other pupils and students should not attend and should learn remotely until February half term.

8. Early years provision should continue to remain open and should continue to allow all children to attend full time or their usual timetable hours. This includes early years registered nurseries and childminders, maintained nursery schools, as well as nursery classes in schools and other pre-reception provision on school sites.

9. Of the 497 funded providers, there are currently 7 that have made the decision to close until at least half-term; these are primarily childminders who are either extremely clinically vulnerable themselves or live with someone who is.

10. The criteria for vulnerable learners was extended to also include those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study) and all children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Schools have been advised to review all children receiving Special Educational Needs (SEN) support to monitor whether they should be offered onsite school provision rather than remote learning. The critical worker list refers to children with at least one parent or carer who is listed as a critical worker being eligible for a place. It is not necessary for both parents to be critical workers. In addition, the list has been updated to include new workforces whose work is critical following the end of the EU transition period.

Attendance Rates

11. Year on year, mainstream school attendance has previously been the same or better for each phase and this is also reflected in national figures (approximately 94-96%). June 2020 figures showed a drop due to the pandemic but by the end of December, the figures had improved greatly due to wider school-reopening, supported by Worcestershire Children First (WCF), and are now similar to pre-pandemic levels (96% for Primary, 94% for Secondary).

12. During December, data was collected by the Department for Education (DfE) daily. Of the Worcestershire schools reporting to the DfE that they had opened, 99% reported as being fully open, the same as the national average in December. Headteachers across both maintained schools and academies reported high levels of attendance, and the DfE reporting figures show an attendance rate of 89.5% in Worcestershire schools compared to a national average of 84.1% in December.

13. Special schools reported a lower return for children with very complex needs (81% attendance rate in December) as may be expected. A multi-agency approach will be taken, including intensive planning and support, to get children into school and ensure provision of education is appropriate.

14. School attendance reporting to the DfE resumed from 11 January. Restricted attendance is resulting in significantly lower attendance than last term. At the time of reporting, there is approximately 15% attendance compared to a national attendance figure of approximately 13%.

15. At the end of the first week of the Spring Term, over 80% of early years providers had reopened as normal, without any restrictions to attendance. According to the weekly attendance data collection, this is expected to rise to 88% by the end of week 2. The numbers of children attending an early years setting remains similar to that found in the Autumn Term. This indicates an overall drop in attendance which is to be expected; some parents/carers are choosing to keep their children at home.

16. We are working very closely with Special Schools as all children who attend Special Schools are categorised as vulnerable. Regular conversations are ongoing, especially regarding the challenges for making education provision. We recognise the complexity of the issues faced and the need to prioritise students on the basis of risk assessments and capacity available in special schools.

Remote Learning

17. Approximately 85% of our school pupil population are being supported with remote learning from home.

18. The temporary continuity direction makes it clear that schools have a duty to provide remote education for state-funded, school-age children. Further clarification about what remote learning is has also been published, including:

- Remote education: a broad term encompassing any learning that happens outside of the classroom, with the teacher not present in the same location as the pupils.
- Digital remote education: often known as online learning, this is remote learning delivered through digital technologies.
- Blended learning: a mix of face-to-face and remote methods. An example would be the 'flipped classroom', where main input happens remotely (for example through video), while practice and tutoring happen in class.
- Synchronous education: this is live; asynchronous education is when the material is prepared by the teacher and accessed by the pupil at a later date.

19. The national guidance for remote education states that the remote education provision should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and will include both recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. The amount of remote education provided should be, as a minimum:

- Key Stage 1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
- Key Stage 2: 4 hours a day
- Key Stages 3 and 4: 5 hours a day

20. Previous guidance stated that primary schools should set work totalling around three hours a day, and four hours at secondary.

21. Further support to schools was published by Ofsted on 11 January to describe [What's working well in remote education](#).

22. The Worcestershire School Improvement Team are working with schools to develop further written guidance and CPD for remote learning in the current Lockdown context to support schools in the following areas:

- Models of provision
- Encouraging access and engagement, parents, staff and pupils
- Developing pedagogy best suited to remote learning and the needs of learners
- Quality Assurance processes and safeguarding

Remote learning for Vulnerable Learners

23. For any pupil with an EHCP not attending onsite provision in mainstream schools during the period of lockdown, remote learning should be in place to ensure continuity and progression. Current guidance from the DfE is available (attached at Appendix 1). Updated guidance is expected shortly.

24. It is important to note that at present there has been no change to the law in regard to the provision of special educational provision outlined in EHCPs. This means that schools will need to consider carefully how they will differentiate the remote learning experience for individual children and young people with EHCPs. Where schools are concerned about their ability to provide for learners this should be noted in individual risk assessments and raised with the SEN team.

25. For Children Looked After (CLA) who are learning remotely, the Virtual School have put into place 'Keeping in Touch' contacts with schools, in addition to the termly Personal Education Plan meeting. These meetings review the levels of engagement and progress for each individual CLA. In addition, a focus is given to the child / young person's social, emotional and mental health needs.

IT Devices including Laptops

26. During the Summer Term 2020, Worcestershire County Council (the Council) and WCF teams started the distribution of laptops to particular groups of disadvantaged pupils, in line with DfE guidance.

27. The following criteria were used to check requests from schools and families:

- a) Children open to Social Care – they must have a Child in Need Plan, a Child Protection Plan or be looked after. 850 laptops have been provided to date for this group of learners, and requests are still being processed as they are received
- b) Last academic year's year 10 pupils at a maintained school and eligible for Free School Meals. 150 devices were distributed and the criteria does not apply to this academic year, in line with guidance.

28. In addition, each Worcestershire school has access to the DfE's IT device roll out programme. This has been available during the autumn term to support children who were learning at home when self-isolating.

29. During the latest national lockdown, the DfE had invited schools to request the devices they need and the information to date indicates that secondary and middle schools have either placed orders or have already received devices. Latest guidance from DfE is that primary schools and other settings including special schools, alternative provision and PRUs will be invited to order by 22 January, starting with the most disadvantaged areas in England. The DfE will contact each school as soon as they can order. Most orders will be delivered within 2 working days of an order being placed, and DfE will aim to deliver all within 5 working days.

30. Last term, WCF and the Council set up a process to contact all schools that were supporting pupils through remote learning as a result of being a close contact of a positive case of Covid in school. One of the questions schools were asked was about the availability and access to devices for remote learners. The majority of schools advised that they had enough devices, and where there were issues, they were provided with the DfE contact details for follow up. Additionally, some schools have provided their own devices or had support from local businesses to purchase additional equipment for distribution.

31. This term, pupils who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study) are included in the list of vulnerable children and young people who may attend school.

32. The DfE has this week launched a Scheme which temporarily increases data allowances for mobile phone users on certain networks. This is so that children and young people can access remote education if their face-to-face education is disrupted. Schools can request mobile data increases when they report a closure or have pupils self-isolating, including those pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable. Schools can request mobile data increases for children and young people who:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education.

33. Children with access to a mobile phone on certain networks might be able to benefit. The DfE is also providing internet connections where they are needed.

34. In summary, schools can help disadvantaged pupils to get online using free mobile data increases or 4G wireless routers provided by the DfE. Schools can request this support if each of the following applies:

- a) the school is experiencing disruption to face-to-face education;
- b) the disadvantaged pupils in the school do not have access to the internet at home;
- c) the school has been invited to order laptops and tablets.

35. Parents, carers and pupils cannot apply for digital devices or internet access through this scheme themselves. They should contact their school to discuss requirements for accessing remote education.

36. Schools and settings are kept up to date on all announcements via planning meetings and a regular bulletin.

Free School Meals

37. Schools have the following options for Free School Meals provision for pupils not attending school during the lockdown period.

38. From now up to Friday 12 February:

- a) Schools should continue to use the same process that they have used last term (i.e. for pupils who have been self-isolating) and use this for all eligible pupils.
- b) The Edenred system that schools used for issuing vouchers for the Christmas holiday period is available to be used. This system is initially funded by the Council and schools will be recharged for any vouchers they order.

39. For February half term week 15 to 19 February:

- a) Schools should repeat what they did for the Christmas period which is preferably to use the Edenred system. Further information will be provided w/c 1 February and schools will be advised when orders for vouchers for the half term week can be placed on the system.
- b) If schools used a different process during this time and wish to do this again they have been asked to notify WCF with details.

Ofsted

40. Ofsted will inspect schools of any grade, where it has significant concerns about safeguarding or the quality of remote education being provided.

41. Ofsted will no longer be undertaking school visits as described in the autumn term. Eighteen visits took place in the autumn term, nine to maintained schools and nine to academies.

42. In December, it was announced that while Ofsted's routine graded inspections remain suspended, inspectors will, during the spring term, conduct monitoring inspections of schools most in need of challenge and support ie those previously judged to be providing an inadequate education and some previously judged to require improvement. Those inspections will provide assurance that pupils in those schools are receiving the best possible education, whether through classroom teaching or remote education.

43. Ofsted will not be conducting regular or assurance inspections for early years settings during the first half of the Spring Term. They will continue to register new provision and carry out regulatory work.

Examinations

44. All external examinations have been suspended for 2020/21 academic year.

45. Although the Phonics Screening Check, KS1 and KS2 statutory assessment and moderation have all been cancelled for 2021, schools will still need to make robust teacher assessments for end of Key Stage judgements.

46. The School Improvement Team will be offering virtual courses to support standardisation, moderation and how to accurately assess different standards, as well as CPD on effective sequences to generate writing opportunities. In addition, specific sessions targeted at those staff new to Year 2 and Year 6 will be offered, as well as sessions on writing assessment across years 1, 3, 4 and 5 as writing skills suffered as a result of Lockdown 1.

47. Whilst a final decision on Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Baseline assessments is still awaited, the School Improvement Team are also developing a support package to support professional development and accurate moderation.

48. GCSEs, A and AS level exams will not go ahead this summer. The Secretary of State for Education has asked Ofqual to consult rapidly on an approach for alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly.

49. School and college performance tables will not be published based on exams and assessments from summer 2021

Risk Assessments for schools and settings

50. Guidance received from the DfE on 7 January included a legal requirement for schools to revisit and update their whole school risk assessment. As a part of the continued offer of support for all education settings across the county, all schools have received a checklist to support the review of their risk assessment and an invitation to attend a webinar led by Public Health on 13 January. The webinar included use of the checklist, extra control measures and learning from cases in schools during the autumn term and amendments to processes. Maintained schools are asked to return their updated risk assessment and checklist as an exception report, for Council/WCF assurance.

Risk Assessments for individual pupils

51. Mainstream schools will need to revisit and update risk assessments for any pupil with an EHCP who is not attending onsite educational provision as a result of parental preference. Schools should also revisit risk assessments for pupils with EHCPs who are attending more than one provision (for example those who have a dual placement in a mainstream and special school). At present there is no guidance from the DfE suggesting that these placements should cease. However, given the increased risk of transmission due to the new Covid-19 variant, schools should reconsider whether it is possible to meet EHCP outcomes in one setting only in the short term and identify any additional preventative measures which can be put in place to reduce risk where dual placements need to continue.

The handling of outbreaks in schools and other education settings

52. The Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT) changed its opening hours to allow time for LORT staff to manage cases and is now open 7 days a week from 9am to 5pm.

53. The LORT recruited extra staff to manage capacity from schools, care homes and workplaces. The November lockdown saw a reduction in cases in educational settings however, since the beginning of January, cases have increased again and even with attendance in schools being restricted, cases in schools and early years settings continue.

54. A key role of the LORT is to support schools in the event of a positive case. However, many schools that have experienced multiple positive cases and are now able to take action immediately on notification of a positive case (staff or pupil).

These schools can identify the close contacts and arrange for them to start self-isolation. These schools complete a LORT checklist and return it to the LORT for confirmation of action taken or further advice and guidance is provided. For some schools and early years settings the LORT supports the completion of this checklist. Feedback from schools and settings about support from the LORT has been good.

Testing in schools

55. All schools with Year 7 pupils and above have been requested by the DfE to set up testing for their staff and pupils. The planning and guidance for this began before the Christmas break and has developed and amended as the new term has got underway and the impact of the new strain of the virus has been understood and impacted.

56. Schools with Year 7 pupils have received deliveries from central government of testing equipment and supplies.

57. Where schools have received incorrect deliveries, or there are items they need for testing set up which they do not have, the Council/WCF Covid Response Project Management and Logistics Team are working with schools to ensure issues are resolved. Particular issues being addressed are missing items, such as testing supplies, PPE, clinical waste bags, which can be provided by the Council's Logistics Team; issues with clinical waste collection, where schools have been sent a named provider who can support if their usual waste collection service is unable to meet the demand; and flooring where a contact details for a supplier of linoleum flooring has been shared to enable schools to purchase if the flooring for their proposed testing site is not clinically compliant.

58. Schools have been reminded of the importance of following the process set out in the 'How To Guide', Clinical Standard Operating Procedure and the online training to ensure that the tests are carried out accurately and safely. To support with Quality Assurance of testing sites, WCF are working with the Council to identify Testing Managers who can conduct sites visits to schools. Solutions are being progressed at pace.

59. Concerns from Early Years providers and Primary Schools around availability of testing for staff have been fed back to the DfE and further information and guidance is awaited.

60. Testing for primary school staff and school nursery staff is expected to begin from next week utilising a home testing kit procedure. Early Years staff from the wider early years sector will be included as critical workers and prioritised through community testing facilities. Other options to support this group of critical workers through the local testing strategy are being explored.

61. The existing insurance policies that protect the Council and schools remain in place for schools' role in the testing activity. This is subject to Government guidelines being followed together with suitable Covid protections being in place. Schools are reminded to complete risk assessments and ensure clinical compliance of testing sites.

Supporting space capacity in schools

62. Work to increase storage space in schools via the use of storage containers has been extended into this term along with a further project to increase space particularly on secondary school sites to extend outdoor dining areas, covered outdoor space through the provision of marquees. So far, a total of 31 schools have taken up this offer. It is anticipated that all marquees will be delivered to schools during week commencing 18 January 2021. Once delivered, a local contractor will be assisting in erecting the marquees in a suitable position agreed with the school. This is expected to be before February half term.

Education Transport

63. Home to School Transport is being provided for those pupils who meet the criteria under the government guidance. WCF has worked closely with all schools to identify their transport requirements and the team have ensured that the continued provision of dedicated home to school transport is safe, available and compliant with the most up to date guidance issued by both the Department for Education and the Department for Transport. The additional local bus services that were introduced to cope with the capacity constraints due to social distancing have been temporarily suspended.

64. In the first Lockdown the majority of contracts across all areas of provision for Children's Services were suspended. During this second lockdown a greater number of contracts are operating.

Wellbeing in Education

65. The Wellbeing for Education Return provides funding and resources to train and support education settings to respond to the wellbeing and mental health needs of pupils and students.

66. This project is being delivered through WCF Education Psychology Team in liaison with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and will seek to build on training already provided to schools, target schools identified as needing to develop inclusion strategies and support the development of local supervision groups for schools.

67. 15 courses (30 sessions) have taken place or are planned from November 2020 to February 2021, this includes 5 specific courses for Alternative Provision and Colleges/Sixth Form providers. Currently 110 people are booked to attend, but because the courses are train the trainer courses, the reach to staff is much greater. There has been extra demand for schools, therefore extra sessions have been facilitated. To develop links with Worcester University, Post-graduate Psychology students have been invited to be part of courses.

Anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance: Meeting the Needs of Anxious Pupils in our Schools training

68. The Educational Psychology Team secured funding from the NHS to deliver the Anxiety and Emotionally based school avoidance training free to all schools in the county. 10 courses are planned between January and March 2021, (5 for those

working with Primary School aged children and 5 for those working with Secondary aged children). Currently 108 people are booked to attend the Primary courses and 32 the Secondary courses. At least 2 further courses will be delivered to Further Education providers. Approximately 5 further courses will be delivered to specific settings in conjunction with the Complex Communication Needs (CCN) Team, most probably all schools with Autism bases. There is a limited amount of NHS funding.

69. During this lockdown, more schools have requested follow up to anxiety support. The Anxiety and Emotional based school avoidance training course has been written and is being trialled w/c 21 January. It has three strands for:

- a) Individual schools;
- b) Further Education providers; and
- c) working with the WCF Autism Team, schools with high prevalence of children and young people with Autism (e.g. Autism Bases).

70. The Educational Psychology Team have also developed a webinar to support parent/carers with primary children with SEND on how to adapt home-schooling. Presented by Dr Laura Jellicoe, from Worcestershire Children First's Education Psychology Team, the video offers parents of primary children with additional needs or special education needs some ideas to support them in home educating their children (<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/WCFEducationServices/info/1/support-services/4/educational-psychology>). The team are also being proactive in supporting cases from SEND Team or Virtual School, where parent/carers are identified as having difficulties accessing remote support.

Early Years Sustainability

71. There is an increasing concern from providers about their ongoing financial viability. The financial guidance issued by the DfE indicates that providers should be paid as normal for the Spring Term, based on actual children attending. However, to support ongoing sustainability, the Council has made the decision to support the sector by funding open providers for all registered (eligible) two, three and four-year-old children, irrespective of whether the child takes up their place. For providers who choose to close, other than due to a positive Covid-19 case, funding will not be paid. This is different to the Summer Term arrangements which reflected the DfE guidance at the time and paid all providers for their funded children even when they were closed.

72. In addition, the Council is providing supplementary funding in the Spring Term to support providers whose numbers are significantly lower than in previous years. This was also paid in the Autumn Term and is intended to support ongoing sustainability. Financial support continues to be available for providers with collapsed bubbles and/or short-term financial concerns; this is awarded through an application process as required.

Purpose of the Meeting

73. The Panel is asked to:

- consider and comment on the updates provided by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills and the Director of Children's Services; and

- determine whether any further information or scrutiny on a particular topic is required.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Full guidance regarding [vulnerable learners and critical workers](#) (updated on 5 January 2021)

Contact Points

Alyson Grice/Alison Spall, Overview and Scrutiny Officers Tel: 01905 844962/846607
Email: 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:

[Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Thursday 15th October 2020](#)
[Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Tuesday, 8th September, 2020](#)
[Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Friday, 17th July, 2020](#)

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

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
PANEL****29 JANUARY 2021****WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21**

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 2020 and agreed by Council on 10 September 2020.

Dates of Future Meetings

- 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

Alyson Grice / Alison Spall, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, Tel: 01905 844962 / 846607
Email: 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 Council 10 September 2020](#)
- [Agenda and Minutes of OSPB 22 July 2020](#)

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

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

Date of Meeting	Issue for Scrutiny	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
29 January 2021	Scrutiny of 2021/22 Budget, In Year Budget Monitoring and Q3 PIs		
	Covid Education Update		Including detailed update on remote learning
16 March 2021	Supporting Families First	17 July 2020	Including update on Family Safeguarding Innovation Project
	Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report	11 September 2019 (WSCB Annual Report)	
	Educational Outcomes for Children in Worcestershire 2020	9 October 2018 7 February 2018 17 July 2019 14 February 2020	
	New Model of Delivery for Medical Education Provision	23 January 2020 16 June 2020 15 November 2020	To be considered by Cabinet on 18 March 2021
16 July 2021	Children's Centres		Update
12 November 2021	Update on 0-19 Starting Well Partnership	11 January 2019 10 May 2019 14 February 2020	Panel requested an update in 12 months (Nov 2020)

		15 November 2020	
	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 CFOSP 25 Sept 2019 15 November 2020	Panel requested an update in 12 months (Nov 2020)
Possible Future Items			
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 4 June 2019 25 September 2019 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"> • Performance and In-year Budget Monitoring • Quality Assurance • Safeguarding • Budget Scrutiny Process 	Jan/March/July/Sept/Nov	
Scrutiny Champions	Safeguarding – Cllr Tom Baker-Price Education – Cllr Steve Mackay Looked After Children - Cllr Fran Oborski Finance/budget – Cllr Pat Agar		

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