

Agenda

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 24 May 2023, 10.00 am
Council Chamber, County Hall, Worcester

All County Councillors are invited to attend and participate

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DISCLOSING INTERESTS

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

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

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

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

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

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

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

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

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

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

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

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

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

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

DON'T FORGET

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

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 24 May 2023, 10.00 am, Council Chamber, County Hall, Worcester

Membership

Councillors:

Cllr Steve Mackay (Chairman), Cllr David Chambers (Vice Chairman), Cllr Dan Boatright, Cllr Kyle Daisley, Cllr Nathan Desmond, Cllr Matt Jenkins, Cllr Jo Monk, Cllr Tony Muir and Cllr David Ross

Co-opted Church Representatives (for education matters)

Mr T Reid

Parent Governor Representatives (for education matters)

Mr M Hughes

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 both the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case 23 May 2023). Further details are available on the Council's website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone number/e-mail address listed in this agenda and on the website.	
4	Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting (previously circulated)	
5	Update on Worcestershire's Get Safe (Indicative timing: 10.05 to 10.55am)	1 - 14
6	Update on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Accelerated Progress Plan and Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with SEND 2023-26 (Indicative timing: 10.55 to 11.45am)	15 - 72

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

Item No	Subject	Page No
7	Worcestershire Children First Independent Fostering Service Ofsted Inspection (Indicative timing: 11.45am to 12.10pm)	73 - 82
8	Work Programme (Indicative timing: 12.10 to 12.20pm)	83 - 88

NOTES

Webcasting

Members of the Panel are reminded that meetings of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel are Webcast on the Internet and will be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website. Members of the public are informed that if they attend this meeting their images and speech may be captured by the recording equipment used for the Webcast and may also be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

24 MAY 2023

UPDATE ON WORCESTERSHIRE'S GET SAFE

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families, the Independent Chair of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) and the Director of Early Help, Children in Need and the Family Front Door have been invited to the meeting to update the Panel on developments relating to GET SAFE.

Background

2. Criminal exploitation of children and young people is a serious form of harm and abuse that has a lifelong impact on them. It also affects the safety of our communities. As part of identifying, tackling and disrupting this form of harm and abuse we need strong partnership working. This report provides an overview of Worcestershire's partnership approach to GET SAFE and the progress made in the last year.

The GET SAFE Partnership Group

3. GET SAFE is the Worcestershire name for the multi-agency support and protection for children and young people at risk of exploitation. The GET SAFE Partnership Group is a subgroup of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership and is chaired by Superintendent Rebecca Love, South Worcestershire Local Policing Commander (West Mercia Police).
4. The 2020 - 2021 yearly report identified the following areas of focus for the GET SAFE Partnership Group for 2022:
 - i. Our partnership approach to prevention, protection, and pursuit in relation to online exploitation across Worcestershire.
 - ii. Mapping out all diversionary activities available to victims or those that are at risk of exploitation, to ensure that the different agency offers provide efficient and comprehensive support across all age groups.
 - iii. Ensuring all recommendations from the 'Sarah' Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) are embedded in practice. This will include an audit of cases discussed at Missing Intervention or Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) to ensure that where a young person meets the threshold for child protection, the appropriate processes are used.
 - iv. Providing continuous professional development for practitioners around changing and emerging risks, local problem profile findings, the national picture of exploitation and the voice of the child.

- v. Ensuring all identified Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) concerns are shared via the GET SAFE Portal and so contribute to our local understanding of risk and harm.
- vi. Strengthening the influence of children and young people's views on GET SAFE services with a particular focus on commissioning processes.
- vii. Ensuring that the GET SAFE approach is fully supported and embedded within other local partnership groups where their priorities and activities contribute to keeping children and young people safe from exploitation.

Progress and Achievements

5. In relation to the areas of focus for this reporting period, the achievements of the GET SAFE Partnership Group are set out below.

Our partnership approach to prevention, protection, and pursuit in relation to online exploitation across Worcestershire.

6. Via the GET SAFE Partnership Group, Police, Education and Young Solutions have worked together to produce an action plan to strengthen the approach in this area. This includes the development of guidance for staff on what they should know in relation to their role in keeping children safe online, and guidance on messaging to parents, children and young people. The latter is to be supported by consultation with young people via Young Solutions. There is already guidance for parents, carers and young people on staying safe online within both the GET SAFE and GET THERE websites, and schools across Worcestershire provide education and support on this subject through their curriculum content, internal policies and staff training. During the 2022/2023 period the Partnership would like to explore the extent to which children and young people find this information both accessible and useful, and if not, how partners can make the help offered more relevant to their needs.
7. Processes for the sharing of information by Police with Children's Social Care prior to enforcement action, normally the execution of a warrant at a home address, have been reviewed and support systems developed for children and parents after online Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) warrants have been completed. This is to minimise the potential impact on innocent occupants who do not have access to the Criminal Justice care process. Police representatives provided an update to the GET SAFE Partnership Group in July 2022 during which they highlighted that it would be preferable for them to be engaging with social services earlier in the process when taking enforcement action. This has led to Police changing their operating procedures so that strategy discussions are taking place sooner. This has been supported by the development of an information sharing protocol between the Police and Worcestershire Children First (WCF) to cover these specific circumstances.
8. Police have also reported that further challenges identified around online safety are that a significant proportion of all offenders coming to the notice of Police are under the age of eighteen and are linked with watching extreme online content, and that there continues to be an increasing demand generally across all forms of online exploitation and abuse.

9. The need to build confidence in professionals when talking to children and young people about sexual relationships and pornography has also been identified, and the setting up of a Digital Safety Conference that would cover online exploitation/fraud/sexting etc to support this is being explored by Police.

Mapping out all diversionary activities available to victims or those that are at risk of exploitation, to ensure that the different agency offers provide efficient and comprehensive support across all age groups.

10. This work has been progressed via the GET SAFE Partnership Group action plan. Young Solutions has been commissioned to complete a piece of work which will contribute to this mapping exercise, looking at the services that could be in place in September 2023 under the newly commissioned Youth Offer for Worcestershire (formally the Positive Activities programme). This work is ongoing.
11. On a more tactical level, the GET SAFE Operational Group has developed an easy-to-use guide for practitioners from all agencies which introduces the GET SAFE Team and their contact details and sets out the GET SAFE and GET THERE external services for children and young people across Worcestershire. This is further supported by a breakdown by district of a list of diversionary activities which can be accessed via the GET SAFE website.

Ensuring all recommendations from the 'Sarah' Child Safeguarding Practice Review are embedded in practice. This will include an audit of cases discussed at MACE to ensure that where a young person meets the threshold for child protection, the appropriate processes are used.

12. The Child Safeguarding Practice Review 'Sarah', published in August 2021, made a number of recommendations, the majority of which have been followed up within the Quality Assurance Practice and Procedures (QAPP) Group, and further details of that work is provided within the QAPP Group section of this report.
13. It was agreed however that the response to one of the key recommendations would be led by the GET SAFE Partnership Group, this being that the WSCP should seek assurance from relevant partners that child protection procedures are being followed and strategy meetings are convened appropriately, with health, police and children's social care in attendance as a minimum, as well as other agencies who should be included. The use of MACE meetings must not be used in place of child protection procedures.
14. The review made clear that where a child has reached the threshold for statutory intervention then child protection procedures in line with the Children Act 1989 should be used.
15. It was agreed that the effectiveness of the multi-agency response to this recommendation would be assessed through the 'deep dive' auditing of cases. The aim of the audit was to provide reassurance to both the GET SAFE Partnership Group and the wider WSCP that the practice concerns identified in the 'Sarah' case review had been addressed through the development and introduction of the GET SAFE approach, which followed the death of Sarah. An

audit tool was developed and used by representatives of WCF, West Mercia Police and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (HWHCT) to examine whether child protection procedures were being used in cases where child exploitation was the primary concern and the threshold for statutory intervention had been reached. A random selection of ten red (high risk) pathway children were used. The cohort audited had a range of children and young people who were already within the child protection process or categorised as a Child in Need or a Child Looked After. Ages ranged from 11 years to 17 years, and a range of exploitation concerns including child sexual exploitation, multiple missing episodes, county lines, and gang and weapon carrying were included.

16. The key findings from this audit are set out below:

- The audit highlighted that child protection strategy discussions and section 47 enquiries were being used across all ten cases as appropriate. There was evidence in one case of information shared in a MACE meeting being escalated up into a review strategy discussion which is good practice.
- For some of these children multiple strategy meetings were held, highlighting that the MACE process was not used instead of a strategy meeting but as well as. It was also noted that strategy meetings feed in well to MACE meetings.
- The audit highlighted consistent partnership engagement, and that information sharing was appropriate and evidenced in all ten strategy discussions and review strategy discussions.
- Good practice was noted in the breadth of partners being invited to strategy discussions. Police, Health and Education were part of all the strategy discussions and additional partners such as Youth Justice, SEND Team and community paediatricians were invited where appropriate.
- The WCF GET SAFE team were also shown to be regularly invited, attending and contributing to the contextual safeguarding information in these cases. This was highlighted as invaluable in terms of information they held about associates of concern and links to other young people at risk of exploitation.
- The cases all had the correct GET SAFE flags attached so identifying the exploitation risk and vulnerability. From a Health perspective, all ten sets of records had the correct exploitation alert attached.
- Cases had MACE meetings and evidence of reviews as appropriate or were too early in the assessment process for MACE to have yet happened, so demonstrating that child protection and GET SAFE procedures are understood and in practice are being run concurrently.
- Children and young people's vulnerabilities were discussed and shared in the strategy discussions, and this ranged from school attendance to health concerns and protective factors. Capacity and consent however were not a focused conversation in the strategy discussion.
- In none of the cases audited was the child found to have been left unsafe, and no immediate remedial actions were needed.

17. As with all detailed reviews of individual cases, areas were identified which can be used to improve our practices. **The following are some examples of learning from this audit.**

- The partnership needs to better identify trafficking as part of harm and abuse and the need to agree in the action plan who will complete/lead on the National Referral Mechanism. The first opportunity to do this may well be within the strategy discussion.
- The interim safety plans were not consistently evidencing partnership actions for all partners. Actions were predominantly Childrens Social Care and section 47 focused in terms of joint or single agency enquiries.
- Consent was not routinely considered or discussed in strategy meetings. This could be due to the risks to the young person overriding the need to gain consent. However, it could possibly have been an identified action from the meeting that the young person would receive feedback as to the decisions taken.
- Mental capacity should be considered in all strategy meetings where there are concerns about exploitation and consent. This also needs to be recorded to evidence professionals have considered it.
- Action Plans need to be SMART with the timescales recorded for all professionals, and all agencies attending should be clear about when the actions they are recommending are to be implemented.

18. In conclusion, the audit demonstrated that child protection procedures are followed, and strategy meetings are convened appropriately, with Health, Police and Children's Social Care representatives in attendance as a minimum, supported by other agencies as required, and that missing intervention or MACE meetings are not being used in place of child protection procedures, but instead are being used to complement those procedures. When the risk to the child from exploitation has reached threshold for child protection then the appropriate processes are being used.

19. Learning from this audit has been passed to the GET SAFE Operational Group to progress, and a short briefing has been produced and circulated to practitioners. It has also been made available on the WSCP website and can be viewed here: [GET SAFE - Using Child Protection Procedures in Child Exploitation Cases \(office.com\)](#)

Providing continuous professional development for practitioners around changing and emerging risks, local problem profile findings, the national picture of exploitation and the voice of the child.

20. The Exploitation and Vulnerability training, which continues to be funded by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, is the primary source of multi-agency professional development on child criminal exploitation. The report on this training for 2021/2022 showed that Worcestershire has contributed 41% of all attendees to this training, which is available to all areas across West Mercia. During that period 2681 delegates from Worcestershire representing 69 different organisations attended 106 sessions. Worcestershire's continued positive engagement with this training has been made easier by the excellent working relationships developed between key individuals within the various partner

agencies as well as the many administration officers who have marketed and distributed the training. Learning has also been shared from the work on exploitation and the recommendations of the 'Sarah' child safeguarding practice review as opportunities to develop the content of the course.



Final Figures for Worcestershire

Number of	Worcester 2021/2022												Year End
	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	
Delegates	429	333	95	28	73	214	259	225	172	310	231	312	2,681
Sessions	9	10	8	4	9	9	14	4	3	17	8	11	106
Organisations	9	9	7	4	3	5	9	3	2	4	7	7	69

Ensuring all identified Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) concerns are shared via the GET SAFE Portal and so contribute to our local understanding of risk and harm.

21. The development of the GET SAFE dataset during this reporting year has supported the understanding of the areas in which child criminal exploitation concerns are being identified and by which agencies, and so where best to focus effort. This is an area of work which is also regularly reviewed by the Operational Group. Now the GET SAFE Partnership Group has this overview of reporting both on a district and agency basis, the next step is to understand how effectively that information is being used to match local resources and responses to emerging themes and need. This is an area that the GET SAFE Partnership Group will be exploring in greater detail in the coming reporting period.
22. The multi-agency child exploitation dataset has been further enhanced in this reporting period by the work undertaken by Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. In support of GET SAFE, this team undertook a review of their systems and processes in place to identify any opportunities to make the identification of children and young people presenting to their services with GET SAFE vulnerabilities more robust. This has led to the development of the WREN report which identifies key words such as 'gun', 'gang', 'weapon', 'knife', 'overdose' etc in the attendance of the child /young person at a Trust facility. (WREN is a reporting system.) This report is then reviewed daily to ensure that all respective safeguarding actions and referrals have been completed for the child /young

person. The aim of this intense review and scoping is to ensure no child or young person attending 'slips through the net'. During 2021/22 over 3000 children on the WREN report were reviewed, and the data and themes identified from this report are shared with GET SAFE Partnership Group on a quarterly basis, so adding an additional dimension to the multi-agency picture.

23. The GET SAFE portal is also being promoted via the Exploitation and Vulnerability training package as highlighted above, and via schools and colleges by the Education Safeguarding Team. Further, within the QAPP Group 'Sarah' CSPR review, single agencies have been asked for and provided details of how they have promoted the use of the GET SAFE risk assessment tool within their own organisation. Details of this and some examples of those responses from partners are provided within the QAPP Group section of this report.

Strengthening the influence of children and young people's views on GET SAFE services with a particular focus on commissioning processes.

24. Direct engagement activity with children and young people is covered later in this report. The GET SAFE Partnership Group has not been involved in any commissioning of services during this reporting period.

Ensuring that the GET SAFE approach is fully supported and embedded within other local partnership groups where their priorities and activities contribute to keeping children and young people safe from exploitation.

25. The three safeguarding partners wrote to the Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Chairs to seek assurance on how both the North and South Worcestershire CSPs were considering the need to safeguard children and young people within their current priorities and any future priority setting. The following assurance was provided.

South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (SWCSP)

26. Protection and safeguarding of children, young people and adults features in a number of the key priorities within the South Worcestershire Community Action Plan 2021-2024.
27. In relation to modern slavery, exploitation and child exploitation the SWCSP support the delivery of the Serious and Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG) through increased understanding of structures, objectives and providing a support provision against these. We consider actions and outcomes from SOCJAG and Serious and Organised Crime focus groups to identify and provide support when appropriate from SWCSP. All partners and front-line staff receive a basic level of training and awareness.
28. SWCSP actively contributes to multi agency tasking and enforcement activity. This is measured by the number of positive enforcement actions taken. SWCSP is also supporting, promoting and delivering SCWSP funded GET SAFE and adult exploitation projects and representatives attend and contribute to GET SAFE strategic and operational meetings.

29. The SWCSP also provides youth mentoring and intervention in schools and out in the community with the aim of prevention, or to divert and raise awareness to ensure children and young people are safe and are given the right information to make their own informed choices. We work with and for young people and provide intelligence on local concerns for a number of issues including vulnerability and possible safeguarding concerns.

North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP)

30. The protection and safeguarding of children and young people features in a number of the key priorities in the NWCSP Plan 2021-2024.
31. NWCSP has identified Reducing Violence and Abuse as a priority with specific reference to reducing sexual violence against women and girls and child sexual exploitation. Further, within this priority the Community Safety Partnership has a commitment to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour and nuisance particularly focusing on work with young people on the street in local neighbourhoods who are at risk of being victims of crime or drawn into criminality.
32. NWCSP has also identified Protecting Vulnerable Communities as a priority, which includes a focus on reducing child criminal exploitation, county lines and modern slavery. As part of this priority the Partnership also has a focus on preventing violent extremism and the radicalisation of young people and vulnerable adults.
33. To support actions around these priorities NWCSP has allocated between £60 - £70,000 per year to projects and initiatives to protect children and young people from harm and deter them from being drawn into crime. These initiatives include commissioning outreach and detached youth work, delivering group work with at risk young people, providing therapeutic 1-2-1 mentoring, working in schools, delivering awareness raising assemblies and targeted youth club sessions.
34. NWCSP is represented on the GET SAFE Strategic and Operational groups and is also represented at the North Worcestershire Serious and Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG) Focus Group and the Worcestershire Channel Panel.
35. The District Council safeguarding leads are also members of NWCSP and ensure partnership co-ordination and co-operation across all safeguarding forums and multi-agency groups across the county.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board

36. Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) has recently introduced a Complex Adult Risk Management (CARM) process which provides a framework to facilitate effective working with adults where certain criteria apply, for example where they are at risk of harm due to their complex needs, but where the risks cannot effectively be managed via other processes or interventions, such as a section 9 care and support assessment or a section 42 safeguarding enquiry under the Care Act 2014. Further information on the CARM process can be found here: <https://www.safeguardingworcestershire.org.uk/documents/carm-final-v2-aug-2022-2/>

37. It is known that exploitation does not end when people reach 18, and some young adults will continue to experience exploitation or have vulnerabilities and need ongoing support from professionals post-18 years and longer term. Further, previous national learning has shown that the transition point for young people who are at risk of, or suffering, exploitation from child safeguarding processes to adult services can leave that young person at increased risk. Members of the GET SAFE Partnership Group are currently working with representatives from the WSAB to ensure that the GET THERE and GET SAFE processes are harmonised with the CARM framework to ensure there is a smooth transition of the management of risk between child and adult safeguarding services.
38. There is a new practice “**Get Safe and Get There and CARM process**” which was completed in December 2022 and outlines the transition process from a child, young person and adult multi agency plan. Details are included as Appendix 1.

Further child sexual exploitation partnership development

39. WCF have led on a development with West Mercia Online Child Sexual Exploitation team (OCSET) intelligence team in tackling online sexual exploitation of children. This piece of work looked at how police and children’s services can work together dynamically on intelligence and identification of perpetrators of online child sexual exploitation. This new protocol will build on good practice and support the effectiveness of both agencies in tackling this form of harm and abuse and protecting children. West Mercia police are wanting to now take this forward with the other three West Mercia children’s services which will further strengthen protection for children.

Evidence of Impact

40. During this reporting period, through the work of the GET SAFE partners, systems have been developed to minimise the potential impact on children and their carers who do not have access to the Criminal Justice care process after online Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) warrants have been completed.
41. The understanding of the profile of child criminal exploitation across Worcestershire has also been developed through the introduction of a multi-agency GET SAFE dataset to the Partnership Group.
42. The GET SAFE Partnership Group has also secured assurance that when a child criminal exploitation risk reaches the appropriate threshold, then that child/young person’s safety will be managed through the appropriate child protection procedures. This is evidence of significant progress in the development of the approach to child exploitation involving the risk of significant harm to that child or young person, which in turn reflects very positively on the collective effort and response made by partners since the GET SAFE approach was introduced in 2019.
43. In addition to the direct engagement with children, young people and families which takes place within the Child Protection and MACE processes, there have been a number of different initiatives organised during this reporting period

designed to engage with young people on GET SAFE and GET THERE. In March 2022 there was a successful event run at the Malvern Theatre in support of the GET THERE programme. Over 100 children and young people attended, and opportunities were provided for these young people to speak directly to staff members and discuss the issues highlighted.

44. A production was also arranged at the Swan Theatre in Worcester by the GET SAFE Team working with Ready Steady Worcestershire, who provide activities over the school summer holiday period. This production used the story of a young girl being groomed for sexual exploitation and the young people in the audience provided feedback both before and after as a means of highlighting how their understanding of the risks had changed. Further events are currently being planned for the Summer holiday period across Worcestershire.
45. Engagement has also been more targeted. Following the tragic stabbing incident outside Asda, Redditch in March 2022, outreach workers were deployed to engage with youth groups in the area to provide reassurance and an opportunity for any concerns to be raised and discussed.
46. The Steer Clear initiative has been launched across Worcestershire by West Mercia Police and this has been supported by the GET SAFE Operational Group. This initiative delivers engaging workshops to young people and their families about the dangers of carrying knives. The Knife Angel, which is the National Monument Against Violence and Aggression, has been on tour in towns and cities across the UK since 2018. Worcester City Council and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion arranged for it to be displayed in the city in support of the Steer Clear message. To further support the Steer Clear programme, inputs to over six thousand Year 9 and Year 10 pupils are being planned. This will include a lived experience talker attending schools to talk to pupils in assembly. The aim is to be delivering these inputs throughout the 2022-2023 reporting period.



47. The GET SAFE Team have also been taking part in the Anti-Violence Bee tour of Worcestershire, which is an initiative aimed at educating and engaging with young people about the dangers of carrying weapons. The Anti-Violence Bee visited areas across the county throughout November 2022.



Areas for Future Focus

48. During the forthcoming reporting period the GET SAFE Partnership Group will be:

- Working to understand how effectively the information received from individual agencies via the GET SAFE portal, crime recording, and other single agency systems is used to influence local multi-agency responses to emerging themes and need.
- Working with WSAB to ensure that the GET THERE and GET SAFE processes are harmonised with the CARM framework to ensure there is a smooth transition of the management of risk between child and adult safeguarding services.
- Exploring the extent to which children and young people find information in relation to online safety both useful and accessible, and where needed how partners can make the help offered more relevant to their needs.
- Ensuring that any learning from the recommendations within the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in Telford (published July 2022) has been captured where relevant to Worcestershire.

49. This is GET SAFE's fourth year and the annual partnership campaign week starts 19 June 2022. The GET SAFE operational group is planning a weeklong awareness raising campaign with different themes each day including social media posts raising the public's awareness of the different forms of Criminal exploitation. Both Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Children First website will have these campaigns.

Purpose of the meeting

50. The Panel is asked to:

- consider and comment on the content of the assurance report
- agree any comments to highlight to the Cabinet Member
- determine whether any further information or scrutiny on a particular topic is required.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - GET SAFE and GET THERE CARM support and disruption process.

Full information on the GET SAFE and GET THERE programmes can be found via the following links:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/getsafe>
[Get There | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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 background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

[Agenda for Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Tuesday, 10th May, 2022](#)

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

GET SAFE, GET THERE and CARM support and disruption process

Introduction

GET SAFE is the overarching term used by Worcestershire to focus the identification, risk management and support to **children and young people** who are identified as vulnerable to; or experiencing child criminal exploitation. This approach includes how we as partners work together, identify locations and the ever-changing approaches of this form of harm and abuse; how we educate and raise awareness across our communities and our workforce and how we work together to prevent and disrupt perpetrators.

GET THERE was developed in 2022 by the GET SAFE partnership in recognition of the changing needs and transition period to adulthood for 16- to 25-year-olds who are vulnerable or experiencing criminal exploitation. This approach continues to use the contextual safeguarding model but recognises the autonomy and decisions for young people with the aim to support them with their transition into adulthood; recognising that their support network will naturally change over time.

GET THERE specifically supports 18 – 25years that fall within the following cohort: Care leavers and SEND young adults where the Local Authority continues to have a statutory duty to them.

For young people who become 18years old and no longer access children’s social care then the adult’s exploitation pathway would be followed.

POST 18-year-olds who don’t meet GET THERE Criteria.

Adults who are being criminally exploited: For those adults who are or continue to be exploited post 18 years old, the adult safeguarding procedures should be followed by partners and a referral made under Section 42 of The Care Act 2001, to Worcestershire’s adult’s social care.

Where the adult is identified as having vulnerabilities to exploitation or needs ongoing support from professionals as a result of their needs or experiences then the CARM process should be considered.

CARM stands for “**Complex Adult Risk Management**”. We know that exploitation does not end when people turn 18 years old, and some young adults will continue to experience exploitation or have vulnerabilities and need ongoing support from professionals post 18 years and longer term.

The adult’s process for CARM is:

<https://www.safeguardingworcestershire.org.uk/documents/carm-final-v2-aug-2022-2/>

This involves coming together to hold a meeting to identify a support plan with a lead professional. Adult social care may or may not be invited but the plan should be shared with them via: CARM@worcestershire.gov.uk so that the CARM plan is held on record and recorded.

The GET SAFE Multi Agency process for children, young people and young adults

STEP 1) For children, young people and young adults in Worcestershire the **GET SAFE Risk Assessment** must be completed when you have concerns that they are vulnerable to or being exploited. This risk assessment can be completed by any agency or professional.

STEP 2) The GET SAFE risk assessment should be submitted to the **Multi Agency GET SAFE Portal** and the case will be discussed by partners in the Tuesday GET SAFE meeting as per the terms of reference for that meeting. The GET SAFE portal is accessed via the Worcestershire County Council website.

STEP 3) The **Multi Agency GET SAFE meeting** will share partnership information and determine the appropriate pathway response for that individual and agree the identified form(s) of exploitation and ensure all the multi-agency **GET SAFE** warning flags are added to their multi agency records and set the review dates.

STEP 4) The **RED, AMBER** or **GREEN** (RAG) pathway will have been identified in the **Multi Agency GET SAFE meeting**. For those who have been identified as needing either **RED** or **AMBER** response they will require a Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation, (MACE) meeting. **GREEN** pathway is the Early Help and Diversionary pathway and does not require a MACE meeting.

For 16- 18year olds this will be the current **GET SAFE MACE** procedure.

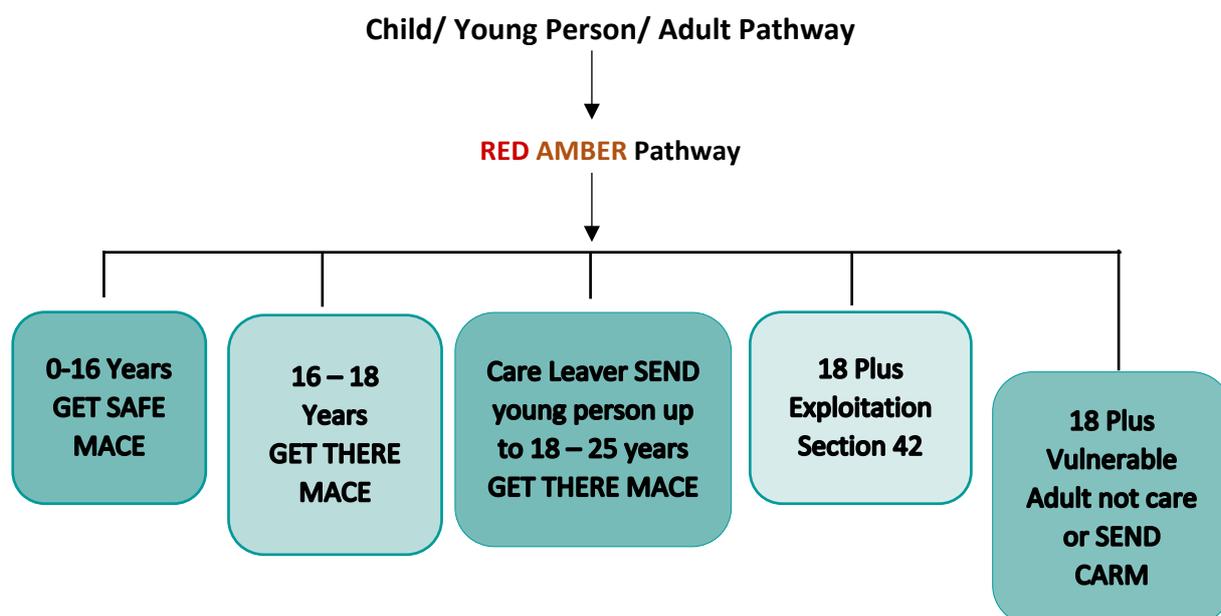
For 18–25-year-olds (Care Leavers or SEND criteria) their meeting will use the **GET THERE, MACE** template but follow the usual MACE process.

For 18 years plus and not meeting the **GET THERE**, criteria (care leavers or SEND) it will be either the **Adult Safeguarding referral procedure** or the **CARM support plan**.

The **CARM support plan template** is within this link

<https://www.safeguardingworcestershire.org.uk/documents/carm-final-v2-aug-2022-2/> and once completed it can be shared with adults social care and document as in place for that adult via: CARM@worcestershire.gov.uk

The GET SAFE process flow chart



Pathway completed by: Emma Brittain, Director of Early Help, Children in Need, Family Front Door

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

24 MAY 2023

UPDATE ON THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) ACCELERATED PROGRESS PLAN AND WORCESTERSHIRE STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND 2023-26

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and the Director of All Age Disability have been invited to the meeting to:
 - update the panel following the Department for Education (DfE)/NHS England (NHSE) 12-month review of the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) that took place on 29 March 2023.
 - update the panel on the Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023-26.

Update on the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan (APP)

2. In November 2022 the Panel received a report on the DfE/NHSE monitored APP following the 6-month review by the DfE and NHSE. This served to update on progress made against the four remaining areas of weakness identified in the November 2021 SEND Local Area reinspection of the SEND Written Statement of Action.
3. The November 2021, reinspection identified that progress had been made in addressing eight of the significant weaknesses identified at the initial inspection and four significant weakness remained outstanding. An outcome of this revisit inspection was that the Local Area was required by the DfE and NHSE to produce an APP to demonstrate how the remaining areas of weaknesses would be addressed.
4. The APP sought to address the four remaining areas of weakness as follows:
 - The variation in the skills and commitment of some mainstream schools to provide effective support for children who have SEND.
 - The lack of suitable specialist provision to meet the identified needs of children and young people.
 - Fragile relationships with parents and carers and a lack of meaningful engagement and co-production and collaboration.
 - The poor quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) and limited contributions from health and social care along with the process to check and review the quality of EHC plans.

5. Since the implementation of the APP, the progress of the 4 workstreams has been carefully tracked. A recent summary of the progress to date was presented to DfE/NHSE colleagues during the 12-month review held on 29 March 2023 (attached as Appendix 1). This outlined the progress reached at the 12-month review stage.
6. In addition to the 6-month and 12-month review stages, the Local Area SEND and All Age Disability Partnership Board meets monthly. Alternate meetings are attended by the DfE and NHSE and used to 'Deep Dive' into workstream progress; what is working well and what else needs to change. The Director of Children's Services also meets regularly with workstream leads to monitor and oversee progress.
7. The outcome of this latest review stage has resulted in a letter sent by the DfE SEND Regional Lead to the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of the Integrated Care System for Worcestershire. This letter (attached as Appendix 2) recognises the "vast amount of work that has taken place" and the value of the contributions particularly from parent carers and school representatives. The letter includes the detail of evidence that demonstrates accelerated and continued improvement. The outcome of this letter is that the DfE have included a range of further evidence they would like to be presented to demonstrate further development and embedding of change. A further review meeting is scheduled for September 2023.

Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with SEND 2023-26

8. Local Authorities and partners must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015) which provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations. It relates to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabled children and young people up to the age of 25.
9. The previous Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with SEND 2017-2021 was approved by Cabinet on 8 February 2018.
10. The purpose of Worcestershire's SEND Strategy is to deliver the local partners' statutory duties by setting out a case for change and improvement. This refreshed Strategy (attached as Appendix 3) has been co-produced with the SEND and All Age Disability Partnership Board including the Parent Carer Forum. Workshops were also held with school children to inform the priorities.
11. Six Strategic Priorities were identified as part of the development of the latest SEND Strategy and they are:
 - i. Identification and assessment of SEND is timely and effective
 - ii. There is sufficient and effective SEND provision
 - iii. There is awareness and understanding of SEND within local communities

- iv. Outcomes for young people with SEND are improved as a result of effective planning, preparation for adulthood and better coordination of service delivery to ensure positive transitions as they progress through their education
- v. Children and young people (CYP) with autism achieve positive outcomes and the support required to enable this is in place
- vi. Emotional health and wellbeing is actively promoted for CYP with SEND and their families and effective targeted and specialist support is available for those CYP at risk of, or experiencing difficulties

12. These priorities form part of a plan to drive a programme of work that will be overseen by representatives of the accountable bodies through the SEND and AAD Partnership Board reporting to Children and Young People's Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Purpose of the Meeting

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

- Consider and comment on the information provided in respect of the outcome of the latest review of the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan
- Consider the SEND Strategy
- 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

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - WCF Accelerated Progress Plan – 12-month overview

Appendix 2 - DfE letter following the 12-month review of SEND APP

Appendix 3 - Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023-2026

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

Mel Barnett, Director for All Age Disability

Tel: 01905 643969

Email: mbarnett1@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Sarah Wilkins, Director of Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Place Planning

Tel: 01905 846082

Email: swilkins@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Mari Gay, Managing Director NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire marigay@nhs.net

Background Papers

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

[Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 8th February, 2018](#)

Agendas and Minutes of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 August 2018, 6 March 2019, 13 November 2019, 16 June 2020, 23 February, 3 November 2022.

[Agendas and Minutes for Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel are available on the Council's website here](#)

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

Worcestershire Local Area Accelerated Progress Plan 12 Month Review

Wednesday 29th March 2023



Key Concern 1:
The variation in the skills
and commitment of
some mainstream
schools to provide
effective support for
children who have SEND

Approach

- Secure commitment of stakeholders to build more inclusive cultures
- Address the variation by designing mechanisms to:
 - monitor and evaluate the quality of provision
 - support and challenge ineffective practice
 - broker and deliver high quality training
 - share and accredit good practice
 - build capacity

Key Outcomes - 1

Monitor and evaluate the quality of provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School profile analysis tracker to identify inclusive practice• Evaluating and refreshing Inclusion Support Service offer• SEND audits and reviews undertaken by a range of providers• Review of OFSTED reports related to SEND and inclusion
Improve systems to share good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-launch of SENCo Network: - 130 schools with SLA (48%), new SENCo website and toolkit, involvement of DCO• Sharing of Ofsted findings related to inclusion: Sept 21/ July 22: 38 (67%) +ve and -ve 11 (19%) Sept 22/ Mar 23: +ve 40 (73%) -ve 3 (5%)
Support/challenge ineffective practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring of KPIs and School Profile Analysis Tracker support/challenge• Provision of SEND reviews to 45 schools (17%) – targeted support and training• COMF deployed to increase Speech and Language therapy to Nurseries/Reception

Outcomes - 1 (Cont'd)

Broker and deliver training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 56 schools engaged in SEND in mainstream classroom training (21%)• 159 Mental Health Leaders trained (59%)• 132 Trauma Informed Schools (49%)• Additional 14 SENCo leaders training
Build Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional 12 schools supported to achieve IQM accreditation by July 2023• SENCo toolkit and Parent Engagement toolkit• Focused Action Learning Groups – RSA Exclusion and RE-Engage

Key Concern 1: Next Steps

Next Steps

- Integration with SEND Strategy
- Continue to develop and embed monitoring and evaluation systems
- Working groups to focus on key issues, e.g. transition
- Locality Hubs development

Key Concern 2
-The lack of suitable specialist provision to meet the identified needs of children and young people

Approach

- Developed the annual commissioning cycle for school places to systematically and regularly collect and analyse child need and place level data to inform short, medium and long term needs
- Used this to assess for sufficiency by forecasting and creating additional places and prioritising commissioning of new provision that is presented in detailed public reporting
- Joint commissioning approach includes schools and settings, NHS partners, finance and commissioning to moderate findings and with parent carer involvement developing the Local Offer descriptions of provision for children and young people.

Key Outcomes - 2

Successful application to DfE Free School Wave – 120 place school for children with autism	Children with new EHC Plans being placed in Mainstream has increased from baseline (65% Jan 2023)	130 further special school places planned with schools for 2023
47 additional mainstream autism places 2022-23 including commissioning for SaLT provision	Review of special school nursing has resulted in investment in additional capacity for special schools, increasing capacity for training, skill capacity, competency and confidence	Leaders understanding and oversight of children identified for special provision is monitored and prioritised on a regular and systemised basis and linked to commissioning

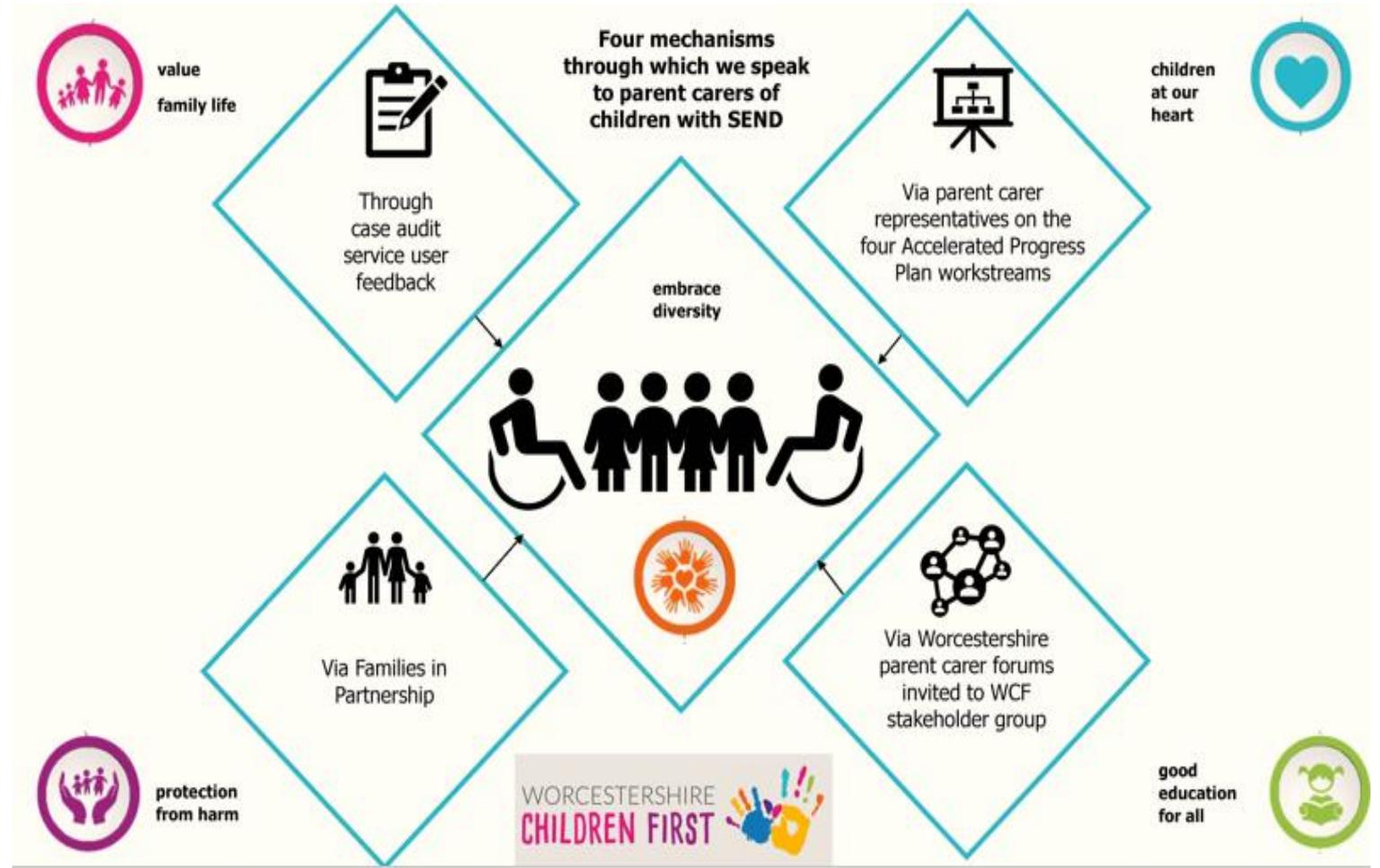
Key Concern 2

Next Steps

- Build on descriptions of provision for Local Offer
- Transform Workstream 2 stakeholder group to Provision Plan Reference and Steering Group
- Award and implement Post 16 provision tender to create places and environment for local provision
- Confirm SEMH needs and provision planning
- Confirm and implement early years provision
- Implement and increase Supported Internship places in partnership with education and employment partners
- Unity Academy Free School Alternative Provision will open in September 2023
- Balance System review for OT and Physio to ensure effective and sustainable provision

Key Concern 3
- Fragile relationships
with parents and carers
and a lack of
meaningful
engagement, co-
production and
collaboration

Approach



Key Outcomes - 3



11 SEND stakeholder meetings



46 Workstream meetings, with 2 or more parent/carer representative groups in attendance



9 Different parent carer representative groups in attendance across stakeholder meetings and workstream meetings



215 responses to the SEND parent carer survey which informs next steps and future planning



Improved Local offer design and navigation



Mandatory coproduction training for all designed and soft launch taken place



Increasing trend of compliments being received quarter on quarter

Key Outcomes – 3 (Cont'd)

- ❖ Overarching trend in the 64 compliments from parents relate to effective communication (53%), issuing EHCPs or quality of EHCPs/professional reports (27%), working collaboratively (11%), and satisfaction with school placement (6%). The remaining compliments were general comments and thanking staff.
- ❖ Co produced local offer redesign
- ❖ Publication of winter update of SEND Parent Carer Survey 2022 Summary Report
- ❖ Publication of the Local Offer Feedback Report 2020-22: You Said We Did
- ❖ Coproduced parent/carers engagement in schools toolkit
- ❖ 550 children and young people are currently on the CWD Register and we are able to communicate and share information with them via regular newsletters

Key Concern 3

Next Steps

- To reach a wider audience of parent/carers with children who have a broader spectrum of needs
- Utilise FIP in representing the wider community to inform planning and development and to share information with the community.
- Continued focus on obtaining the voice of children and young people
- Continued Local Offer content development

Key Concern 4

The poor quality of EHCP's and limited contributions from Health and Social Care, along with the process to check and review EHCP's.

Approach

- Quality Assurance and Audit programme
- Service User Feedback
- Closing the Loop activity
- Increasing capacity in the WCF workforce
- Increasing capacity in the Health workforce
- Introduction of a new Case Management System

Key Outcomes - 4

Review of processes has resulted in improvements in the workflow of EHCNA

Regular feedback mechanisms to embed our learning through audits, service user feedback and learning reports

Improved timeliness in advice being received by Education Psychologists. Health timeliness moving to a positive trend and sustained timeliness in receiving social care advice.

Identification of learning needs within the workforce and commissioning training dependent on role e.g. IPSEA training for SEND Case Work Officers and Managers

Development of a seven step guide on learning to support the journey of continued service developments

New processes within SEND services is in place : tracking of annual reviews developed

Backlog of Annual Reviews pre September 2022 have been actioned total of 1993.

Key Concern 4

Next Steps

- WCF Appointment of Senior Manager of Business, Quality Assurance and Finance – adding managerial capacity and focus in improvements in SEND
- Develop our approach to gathering the Children and Young People Voice and experience – use this to inform Operational and Strategic developments
- Continue to develop and improve the quality of advice and plans
- Develop an agreed programme of Multi Agency Audits
- Embed the new process of monitoring and tracking annual reviews
- Evaluation of the Joint Assessment Meeting Process (JAM) to inform future multi agency developments
- Implementation of the Parent Portal which will enable real time tracking of dates and next steps. Parents will also be able to receive documentation and make contact with Case Work Officers
- Work with the Research and Improvement for SEND Excellence (RISE) to develop our Preparation for Adulthood (due to start April 2023)

Complaints and Compliments- Service Quality Assurance

Approach

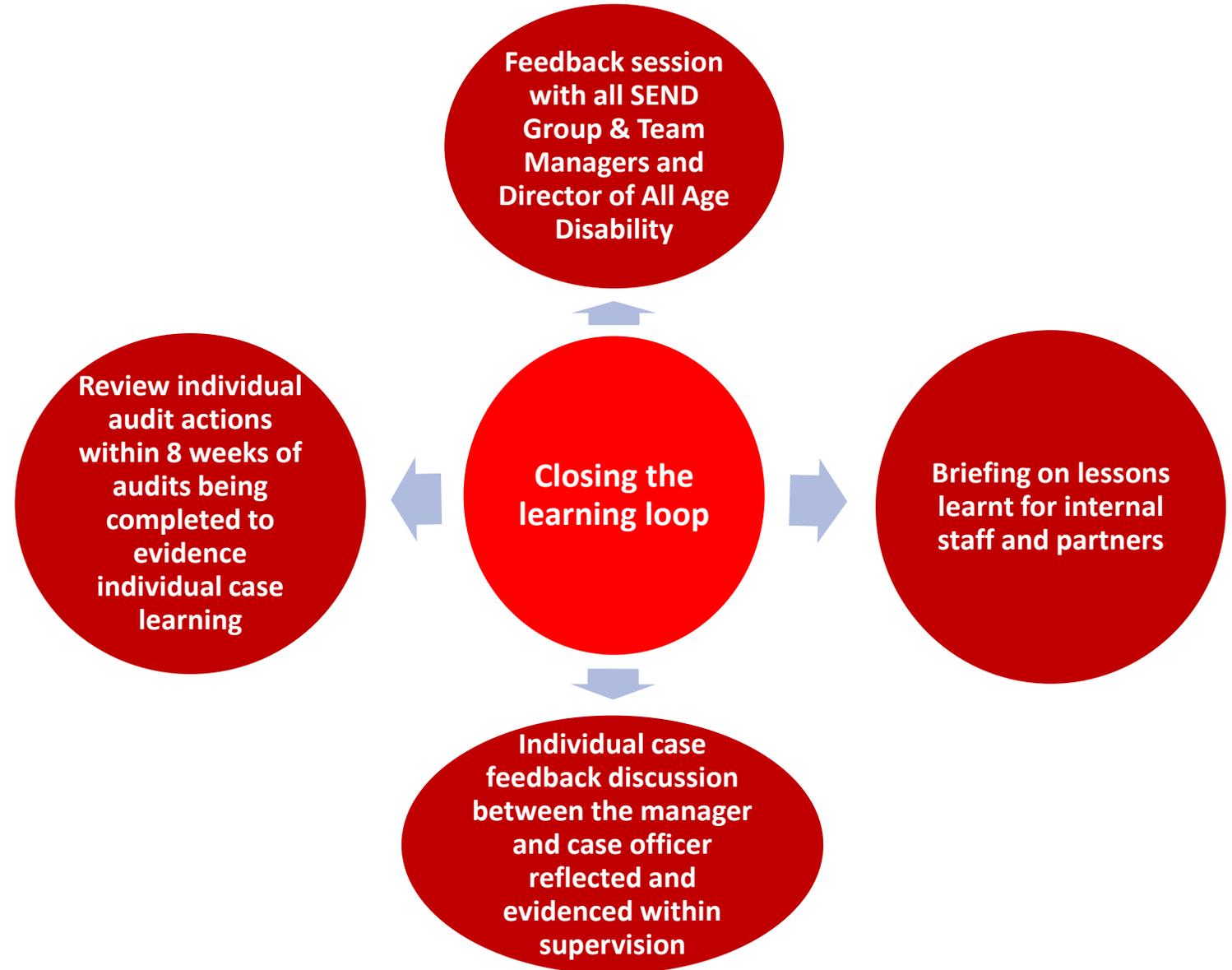
- Dedicated SEND Complaints Officer appointed April 2022.
- Meeting with WCF and Health to agree joint approach in managing complaints with Health Services and Children's Social Care.
- Development of quarterly reports and tracker to give information and analyse the timeliness and content of complaints for quality assurance and learning.
- In cases where a complaint is also about a school, this is fed back to Education services and to the school to work together.
- When complaints are partially upheld, we are recognising the person's experience. We acknowledge we could have done something better to support the parent /carer experience.
- Started tracking and analysing compliments.
- Use the information from compliments and complaints to identify good practice

Key Outcomes - SQA

- Main theme of **complaints** relate to communication, however there has been an increase in the number of these complaints not being upheld across the three quarters – 31% down to 20% Evidence that effective communication is taking place but we need to do more on agreed expectations.
- Complaints around children not having provision that meets needs is the second main theme. The work being done proactively in service has been recognised in our investigations, Stage 2 and LGO review; the challenge remains to find a suitable placement in a timely way that meets needs.
- **Complaints and audit issues are addressed directly on cases** as well as building our picture
- Learning briefings with SEND Services to disseminate themes and next steps from complaints.
- 66% of compliments came from parent carers and 26% came from schools. The remainder came from other professionals and children.
- The main themes from **compliments** were effective communication (55%), working collaboratively with families and settings (19%), issuing EHCPs or the quality of EHCPs/professional reports (16%), and satisfaction with school placements (7%). The remainder of compliments were general comments and thanking staff.

Key Outcomes – SQA (Cont'd)

Closing the learning loop from Quality Assurance Activity is key to ensure we improve our services; we will undertake the following activities to support learning journey:



Complaints and Compliments

Next Steps

- At the beginning of working with families, establish what a reasonable frequency of communication is for them - support staff with workload and to meet expectations.
- Work with Health and Education providers to share learning and identify and improve where the multi agency working together is impacting on the delivery of services
- Continue quarterly analysis and learning briefs.
- Embedding the use of the Portal for families to access their own information – ensure the Portal is developed so that all information is available and accessible.
- Appointment of new Finance and Business Manager who will be the lead for Quality Assurance.

APP / SEND Partnership Business Improvement Plan Next Steps

- Develop a 23/24 business improvement plan from outcomes of APP
 - Continue our journey of developments and improvements
- Continue with current Governance Structure and measures to oversee progress
- Continuation of Measures and Service Leads Reports
- Development of the Multi Agency Quality Assurance Framework
- Continue developments with Families in Partnership to include reaching more parents of children with diverse backgrounds and needs
- Ensure reflection of the new activity associated with Delivering Better Value (DBV)
- Develop and reform our approach aligned to the Dfe SEND and AP Improvement Plan
- Continue development of the WCF 0-25 service
- Continue implementation of the Health transformation plan
- Continue with the Workforce Strategy to support and upskill staff.
- Develop resilience and stability in the Workforce

SEND Strategy 2023 – 2026 Priorities

Identification and assessment of SEND is timely and effective	There is sufficient and effective SEND Provision	There is awareness and understanding of SEND within local communities
Outcomes for young people with SEND are improved as a result of effective planning, preparation for adulthood and better coordination of service delivery to ensure positive transitions as they progress through their education	CYP with autism achieve positive outcomes and the support required to enable this is in place	Emotional health and wellbeing is actively promoted for CYP with SEND and effective targeted and specialist support is available for those at risk of, or experiencing difficulties



Tina Russell, Director of Children's Services, Worcestershire Children First
Simon Trickett, Chief Executive, Integrated Care System (ICS) Lead Herefordshire & Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB)

19 April 2023

Dear Tina and Simon,

Re: TWELVE MONTH PROGRESS REVIEW AGAINST YOUR ACCELERATED PROGRESS PLAN (APP)

Thank you for meeting with DfE SEND and NHS England officials on 29 March 2023 to review the progress you have made against your APP over the last six months.

We are particularly grateful for the contributions from your Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and school representatives. It was clear that a vast amount of work has taken place. The local area has a tangible commitment from stakeholders, willing to build more inclusive cultures to improve its SEND services for the children and young people in Worcestershire.

The evidence provided, alongside the feedback from partners, demonstrated the range of actions in place to continue and accelerate improvement. These included:

- Clear articulation of the positive cultural change being experienced in schools.
- The increased staffing in the Local Authority (LA) of Educational Psychologists and case workers, along with the increased workforce in health services such as, special school nursing and therapy services.
- That the ICS is addressing quality and timeliness through improved systems and improved parental engagement and feedback.
- The positive work being undertaken to address the weakness around the lack of suitable specialist provision to meet the identified needs of children and young people. This includes the development of mainstream autism provision and the approval of a 120-place special free school.
- The establishment of trackers, audits, and reviews to capture and analyse data and feedback.
- The co-produced "Engaging with Parent Carers for school's toolkit" provides a practical handbook with links to further information and resources. Monitoring and evaluation of its implementation will provide further learning in this key area.
- The re-launch of the SENco network.

The LA has clearly demonstrated its willing to engage in offers of support which includes:

- Its inclusion of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) project.
- Securing support through the RISE consortium to review and improve the preparing for adulthood agenda.
- Accessing the regional RISE EHC training and support package.

In relation to the work around co-production, over the last twelve months there has been an increase in parental representation across the various workstreams and participation in engagement events, to shape service delivery. We heard from the PCF an increasingly positive view of the area, which is beginning to filter through to other parents. We understand Worcestershire Children First (WCF) will continue to work closely with the PCF to establish clear targets around increased membership, better parental representation, and community engagement.

In September 2022, school representatives felt they were included in the work streams, and it was recognised that there had been a positive shift in working relationships between WCF and partners. These relationships were reaffirmed by the work being led by schools in partnership such as, the Wyre Forest Project, improving engagement with local GPs and the regularly held Headteacher briefings.

As the improvement work continues, we would like to see further evidence of:

- How the local area is embedding the changes into its policies and processes. Further work is needed to build on the early signs of impact and improved outcomes along with a clear understanding of how these improvements will be evidenced and sustained.
- The processes being used to facilitate and coordinate the gathering of education, health, and social care advice to secure good EHC plans. Attention needs to be given to join up approaches across the partnership, evidence the impact of actions undertaken, and how these will be sustained.
- How the local area continues to develop and embed monitoring and evaluation systems to demonstrate oversight, actions, and impact on the experience of children and young people who receive SEN support or have an Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP).
- The work being undertaken to develop the leadership of SEND and inclusion. The improvement work should reflect an inclusive culture in all learning environments. The evidence could be captured by showing how many schools are engaging in the school inclusion project, particularly those where engagement has been problematic.
- Building on the work which has already taken place through the production of “You Tube” videos and sessions developed to close the gap in early years settings.

- Engagement with children and young people with SEND to allow for their voices to be heard.
- How the school's toolkit is being developed to reflect a multiagency approach across all services to demonstrate how they all work with CYP and families.
- The risk register being used to ensure sustainability of improved practise going forward.
- Partnership led communication, such as newsletters, to showcase the multi-agency work being undertaken to give confidence to the wider community.

At your next review meeting, I would like to hear of continued evidence of the further developments outlined above. Your next six-month review meeting will take place in September 2023.

In the meantime, SEND and NHS England Advisers, Pat Tate, and Debbie Ward, along with Deanne Michie as your DfE Case Lead, will continue to provide you with support and challenge. If you have any questions or need any further support, please contact either party in the first instance.

We are copying this letter to Simon Geraghty, Leader of the Council, to Mel Barnett (Director of All Age Disabilities (0-25)), Andre Imich (DfE Lead Professional Adviser), Pat Tate (DfE Adviser), Lorraine Mulroney (National Specialist Advisor-SEND, NHS England), Deborah Ward (NHS England Adviser), Nicola Wesley (NHSE) and Deanne Michie (DfE Case Lead).

Yours sincerely,

K. Moore

Katie Moore
Regional Lead
West Midlands Vulnerable Children's Unit

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Working Together

Improving the lives of children and young people

in Worcestershire

Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023-2026

DRAFT



**Herefordshire and
Worcestershire**



Document Control

Version Control

Version	Who	Date	Amendments
0.1	NaJo	06.07.21	Draft to Stakeholders
0.2	SaWi	31.08.22	Minor amendments - draft to stakeholders
0.3	MeBa	30.10.22	Minor amendments following September partnership board
0.4	RaWa	04.11.22	Minor amendments – comments from stakeholders
0.5	MeBa	28.12.22	Minor amendments – comments from stakeholders
0.6	SaWi	17.01.23	Governance and delivery plan P 16 including input from stakeholders
0.7	SaWi	6.02.23	Inclusion definition added as appendix 1 Delivery Plan outcomes added
0.8	MeBa	14.03.23	Reference to National SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan.
0.9	SaWi	14.03.23	Added Worcestershire Carers Partnership to Governance Chart and updated outcome measures.
0.10	MeBa	24.03.23	Amendments and update following March Partnership Board
0.11	MeBa	03.05.23	Update for lead persons on associated strategies.

Document Control

Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

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Foreword

Welcome to the Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023 - 2026.

This updated Strategy will drive an ambitious programme of work overseen by the All-Age Disability and SEND Partnership Board to change how we work with children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers.

We recognise the need for improving our offer and ways of working to ensure the support we provide to families across Worcestershire is more effective and meets the needs of all children and young people with SEND. This will enable them to be truly seen and respected as individuals and to be the best they can be.

We have implemented a new Quality Assurance Framework in SEND. This is now enabling us, across our multi-agency SEND partnership, to have a regular overview, not only of key performance indicators, but also of the experiences of parents and carers and the quality of the assessments and plans created. We have received some very positive feedback, but we recognise this is not the experience of all parents and carers and we remain committed to making it the experience for all.

Parents and carers are critical to the success of this Strategy and our All-Age Disability and SEND Partnership Board will continue to work with them to support the goals for their children to enable them to grow into independent adults that are given the opportunity to be able to make positive contributions to society.

Through our SEND Parent Stakeholder Group, we are engaging with a range of organisations to access a wider community of views and experiences, to take forward and to represent in SEND services.

We will continue to work closely with our schools, colleges, and early years settings to provide children and young people with SEND the best support possible, ensuring that they receive a good quality level of education, whilst also feeling included in their local community.

We need to recognise and build on our strengths that work well for families. This Strategy sets out our partnership duties and will be delivered through an action plan that will be overseen by the All-Age Disability and SEND Partnership Board.

We will review the Strategy Action Plan on an annual basis to ensure we remain focused on the right things and improve outcomes for all children and young people with SEND in Worcestershire.

Cllr Tracey Onslow
Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education

INTRODUCTION

Worcestershire is ambitious for all children and young people and has set out a challenging agenda through its Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2022- 2024: 'Putting children at the heart of everything we do'. Taking the lead from the CYPP, the vision is for 'Worcestershire to be a wonderful place for all children and young people to grow up'. We believe it is important that all children and young people:

- Have the best start in life.
- Are safe from harm.
- Can access emotional health, wellbeing, and mental health support.
- Have access to the right education, health, and social care intervention.

In Worcestershire we recognise the significant challenge in ensuring these aims are met for our children and young people (CYP) with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and are committed to ongoing improvements to realise this aspiration. We believe that every Worcestershire child and young person with SEND matters and should be supported to achieve their potential and enabled to make a positive contribution to society. This requires us to take a proactive approach to inclusion, where the rights of CYP to live and be educated alongside their peers needs to be promoted through the identification and removal of barriers to achieving this aim. All CYP with SEND should have their needs met, as far as possible, in the local community, within local early years providers, schools, further education colleges and workplaces. We also believe that they should have access to high quality provision which ensures good health, care, and educational outcomes including, where possible, living independent lives and contributing positively to the local community.

We know that by working together as partners we can deliver an effective approach for SEND. This will include early identification of need, outcome focused assessment and the right provision at the right time, which will ultimately improve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND in Worcestershire.

On 29 March 2022, the Government published the SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time, a consultation on the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision system in England. The consultation set out proposed reforms to the SEND and alternative provision (AP) system that seek to address the following three key challenges:

- Poor outcomes for children and young people with SEN or in alternative provision.
- Navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for children, young people, and their families
- Despite unprecedented investment, the system is not delivering value for money for children, young people, and families.

The development of the Worcestershire vision for SEND, changes needed, and priorities reflect the challenges highlighted by the SEND Review and the subsequent SEND and AP Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time published on March 2nd, 2023.

VISION AND PURPOSE

The consultation activity we have carried out in producing this Strategy has led to agreement of the following vision for SEND:

In Worcestershire we want all children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities to be truly seen and respected as individuals and to be the best they can be.

The purpose of this Strategy is to set out how we plan to deliver this vision through six key priorities. It will drive an ambitious programme of work that will be overseen by representatives of the accountable bodies through the All-Age Disability and SEND Partnership Board which reports to the Worcestershire' Health and Wellbeing Board. The Partnership Board will carefully monitor progress against the Strategy and related action plans which will outline the activity needed to realise our aspirations. We will also ensure that parent, carers, children, and young people are invited to comment on our progress on an annual basis throughout the period covered by the Strategy.

The Strategy will change the ways in which we work with children and young people with SEND and parents/carers. It will involve greater integration of services and co-production of developments that will effectively:

- Identify children and young people with SEND
- Assess and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, through the Graduated Response and Education Health and Care Needs Assessment for those who need it
- Provide support and services that effectively meet needs and improves outcomes of those with SEND

WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

In producing this Strategy, we have reflected on information from the following sources:

- Feedback following the SEND revisit in November 2021
- The Local Area SEND Written Statement of Action
- Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) six-month review in September 2022, and
- User feedback (parent carers, children and young people and educational settings)

We have also ensured that the priorities outlined in this Strategy align with other strategies describing work and developments across the local area partnership.

Impact evaluation

Worcestershire's Local Arrangements for SEND were inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in November 2021. Twelve key concerns were identified in the inspection

undertaken in May 2018. The Local Area was required to produce a Written Statement of Action detailing how these concerns would be addressed. This inspection increased and added to our understanding of our strengths and weaknesses, including the five priorities outlined in the SEND Strategy 2017/21:

- **A Person-Centred Approach** – putting children and young people at the centre of planning and decision making about their own care and support
- **Integration and Operational Delivery** – coordinating services across education, health, and care to improve the Education Health and Care Plan process
- **Early Intervention** - allowing families to be able to access information and support that can be helpful at an early stage as soon as problems or concerns arise
- **Preparation for Adulthood** – creating a whole life approach to improve the personal transition experience and journey to adulthood
- **Workforce Development** – developing a multi-agency workforce that understand SEND and works together to achieve good outcomes

Through impact evaluation we have identified the following principles:

- Commitment to listening to and working with children and young people with SEND and their families to further improve, develop and innovate our SEND Strategy and the delivery of support and services.
- Recovery from the pandemic. We must understand the impact for CYP and continue to adapt to support and prevent lasting effect.
- Taking an all-age disability approach within our SEND Local Offer. This will ensure a seamless experience for CYP from 0-25 with SEND and their families.
- Commitment to the effective and efficient use of resources. This will support early intervention prevent escalation of need and promote inclusion

To enable our joint principles and vision for this Strategy is a co-produced definition of the term **inclusion**. Worcestershire Children First have worked with a range of stakeholders, including children and young people, families, and educational settings to develop a definition of inclusion that is specific for educational settings in Worcestershire – see appendix 1.

Improvements achieved to date and further areas for development for each of the 2017-21 priorities are as follows:

A Person-Centred Approach

Improvements

- Parent carers feel better engaged and informed.
- Professionals embed co-production with parent carers in the design of services and processes impacting on families.
- Improved relationships and joint working with parent carer groups
- Consultation about SEND provision and Strategy.

Areas for development

- Strengthen co-production across all services in education health and social care.
- Support educational settings with parent carer engagement and develop further guidance to support this work.
- Ensure engagement and person-centered approaches with CYP and ensure the voice of the child is central to casework and strategic decision making.

Integration and Operational Delivery

Improvements

- Services work in partnership across the local area to agree priorities for funding and action.
- A joint commissioning Strategy is in place which clearly defines the roles of partners and processes for decision making.
- The Designated Clinical Officer role is well embedded and ensures SEND and health needs of CYP are prioritised.
- Service integration impacting on CYP with SEND has been reviewed and improved through the formation of Worcestershire Children First, Starting Well Partnership and Hereford and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board.
- Improvements in the Education Health Care Needs Assessment process impacting on timeliness and quality.
- Outcomes achieved for CYP by SEND are actively tracked and monitored and actions taken to improve these.

Areas for development

- Deliver commissioning intentions described in Joint Commissioning Strategy through Joint Commissioning Group activity.
- Implement and enhance Joint Commissioning Quality Assurance Framework.
- Improvement of the annual review process for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) including the multiagency response and continue to make improvements to the quality of EHCPs following initial needs assessment.
- Focus on improving attendance of students with SEND where possible.

Early Intervention

Improvements

- Better understanding and monitoring of the 'Graduated Response' described in the SEND Code of Practice (2015) in mainstream schools and partner organisations.
- SEND provision reviewed across education and short breaks to strengthen early intervention and improve outcomes for CYP.

Areas for development

- Implementation of the Exclusions and Alternative Provision plan.
- Further review and improvement of the Preschool Forum to ensure early identification of need and effective multiagency support to settings and families.
- Focus on meeting needs of CYP with autism.
- Coordinated approach to concerns about CYP's mental health in schools.
- Implementation of SEND provision plan to ensure local effective places and provision are available to meet need.

Preparation for Adulthood

Improvements

- Preparation for Adulthood pages on the SEND Local Offer map pathways into adulthood
- Increased joint working between Education, Health and Social Care including the Young Adults Team.
- Publication of Post 16 Graduated Response guidance.
- Improved tracking of outcomes for post-16 learners indicates reduction in young people aged 19-25 who are not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) and increase in uptake of supported internships.

Areas for development

- Improve consistency and breadth of tracking of outcomes for Post 16 young people with SEND.
- Develop the annual review process to have a greater emphasis on Preparation for Adulthood from Year 9.
- Progress an 'All Age Disability' approach to SEND focusing on the experiences of CYP and their families from 0-25.

Workforce Development

Improvements

- Workforce training implemented across SEND services in education, social care, and health.
- SEND Training and Development network undertook needs analysis and planning for educational settings.
- E-Learning modules developed to support understanding of SEND and Inclusion.

Areas for development

- Development and delivery of targeted training packages for educational settings in response to needs analysis, feedback, and evaluation.

- Develop improved approaches to sharing existing effective practice in educational settings through the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) network and Early Years and School Inclusion Forum.
- Creation of SEND champions across social care to support the development of effective SEND practice.
- Continued improvement in understanding of SEND across local area partnership workforce.

User feedback

Since our last Strategy, we have worked closely with parent carers, CYP and partners to understand what needs to change regarding our approach to SEND to improve in Worcestershire. We have embedded co-production in our approach to SEND strategic change and have consulted to agree the priorities for the next three years. As such, we have listened carefully to the experiences of our service users to ensure it is their experiences which determine our next steps.

Parent carer feedback

Since 2020 Worcestershire has surveyed the views of parent carers of children and young people with SEND on an annual basis to understand what is working well and what needs to improve. This adds to our understanding of the priorities for Worcestershire from regular coproduction activity and incidental parent carer feedback.

Analysis has indicated that there are times when parent carers are happy with and appreciative of the support they receive. Positive feedback has been received about different services, settings and professionals across health, social care, and education.

The need for improvement has been identified in the following areas:

- Communication with parent carers, CYP and between agencies including educational settings
- Early intervention and support for families including support for CYP in educational settings and from specialist services.
- Development of more Specialist Provision.
- Understanding by professionals about disabilities and their impact on the children and their families
- Clear information and advice about how to access services and support (Local Offer)
- Inclusive schools and the graduated response
- Timescales and waiting times.
- Co-producing services, systems, and support to meet need

Feedback from educational settings

Feedback has been gathered from educational settings from surveys, this is in addition

to incidental feedback. This feedback has provided information about what is going well and what needs to improve.

What is going well?

- Settings find the Graduated Response guidance clear, concise, and informative.
- Settings feel supported and held to account by Worcestershire Children First (WCF) services and guidance.
- Liaison from partners with SENCOs through networks and regular communication is effective.
- Settings experience opportunities to collaborate, share good practice and shape provision for SEND.
- Communication with the SEND casework team has improved and there is increased support for placements.

Areas for improvement

The following areas have been noted as having improved; however further improvements are needed:

- The SEND training offer has increased and improved however further development opportunities are required in some areas for schools, parent carers and health professionals.
- The SEND Local Offer.
- Communication and coproduction with parent carers.
- Timeliness of the EHC needs assessment process and quality of EHCPs

Further identified improvements needed:

- A focus on long-term sustainability within the SEND Strategy and plans, describing how things link together
- Increased and improved access to the Educational Psychology Service
- Increased support for schools through mental health networks and improvements in CYP's access to appropriate Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Services to meet need.
- Multiagency involvement in annual reviews followed by timely amendments to EHCPs
- Ensuring that funding in educational settings for CYP with SEND is sufficient
- An effective and clearly articulated continuum of provision for CYP with SEND which addresses gaps, celebrates good practice, and ensures provision is made in a timely manner

CYP feedback

To ensure this Strategy is underpinned by the views of those who will be most impacted we engaged with CYP through educational settings to understand their experiences and aspirations. CYP were supported by setting staff to provide their views about education, health, and their communities.

Education

- The majority of CYP like and enjoy going to school and college and feel safe in their settings.
- CYP feel education is important because it helps them build skills and knowledge and allows them to socialise with their peers.
- In addition, CYP with SEND would like education to be a place where they feel supported, included, and accepted, be listened to, and have fun.

Health

- The majority of CYP with SEND felt that health services were able to help them.
- Aspirations of CYP in relation to health were for them to be able to feel good about themselves, to be happy and confident, active, and healthy, to know who to go to for help and feel able to talk to someone.
- They suggested that health services could improve by:
 - Reducing waiting times
 - Increasing awareness of SEND with health professionals
 - Providing key workers

Community

- The majority of CYP with SEND want to and feel included in their community. They generally feel like Worcestershire is a nice place to live and most feel safe.
- Some CYP would like to see a reduction in bullying and criminal behaviour in communities as it makes them feel unsafe.
- CYP take part in a variety of activities in their local communities. The most popular are shopping, seeing family and going to parks.
- Within their communities CYP with SEND also want to feel trusted, respected and included. They want equal opportunities in their communities including access to employment.

Feedback from multi-agency partners (SEND Strategy steering group)

Our multi-agency SEND Strategy steering group have the following aspirations for CYP with SEND:

- To ensure we have effective provision which is timely.
- To work together and collaborate to ensure processes are simple and consistent
- To communicate with parent carers and families throughout their journey
- To offer clarity to young people about their preparation for adulthood

- For CYP with SEND to feel safe and valued in their communities and learning environments as they make a positive contribution as citizens
- To ensure transition points for CYP are smooth
- To enable CYP to live and learn in their local communities wherever possible
- To continue to embed coproduction and ensure the child's voice is central to our decision making
- We support value and address diversity of children in the criminal justice system who have SEND needs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Based on our self-evaluation and stakeholder engagement in Worcestershire our strategic priorities are to ensure that:

- Identification and assessment of SEND is timely and effective
- There is sufficient and effective SEND provision
- There is awareness and understanding of SEND within local communities
- Outcomes for young people with SEND are improved as a result of effective planning, preparation for adulthood and better coordination of service delivery to ensure positive transitions as they progress through their education
- CYP with autism achieve positive outcomes and the support required to enable this is in place
- Emotional health and wellbeing is actively promoted for CYP with SEND and their families and effective targeted and specialist support is available for those CYP at risk of, or experiencing difficulties

How will we achieve these priorities?

Identification and assessment of SEND is timely and effective

Our development work in the next three years aims to ensure that effective identification and assessment of SEND takes place as early as possible, so that appropriate support can be put in place, enabling CYP to achieve the best possible outcomes. ***We will achieve this by:***

- Monitoring waiting times for professional assessments through our SEND Strategy board and putting in place robust recovery plans where there is an impact on early identification of needs.
- Focusing on identification and assessment of CYP with social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) through our exclusions and alternative provision implementation plan.
- Embedding the mental health support team approach, encouraging schools to participate in senior mental health lead training and expanding our mental health leads networks to include all phases of education.
- Improving our care needs assessment pathways for children with disabilities.

- Ensuring that annual reviews for CYP with EHCPs accurately identify needs as they grow and develop.
- Working with educational settings and other professionals to ensure that effective practice in early intervention using the assess plan do review cycle is shared, understood, and embedded.
- Coproducing guidance and information for parent carers so that they understand how SEND is identified and assessed and how and when they should ask for help if they are concerned about their child.
- Identifying and tracking children in the youth justice system to ensure that information is shared in a timely manner, that needs are known and met and there is effective planning.
- Strengthening links between our approaches to early help and SEND to improve our identification and assessment of need.
- Providing the right support at the right time.
- Co-design early childhood identification and support to ensure families are supported at the right time with the right community and professional support

There is sufficient and effective SEND provision

Our strategic approach over the next three years aims to improve existing and develop new provision for CYP with SEND. This provision will improve outcomes for learners, offer value for money and ensure CYP are able to live and learn in their local communities wherever possible. This approach relies on CYP being able to access the right provision at the right time and is dependent on a shared understanding of our SEND local offer. ***We will achieve this by:***

- Implementing our SEND provision plan which considers the need for specialist placements for CYP with EHCPs.
- Updating our SEND joint strategic needs assessment and SEND sufficiency report annually and ensuring these are understood by stakeholders including parent carers.
- Embedding and refining our approach across education, health, and social care to joint commissioning for CYP with SEND through our Joint Commissioning Strategy.
- Establishing regular and effective good practice sharing between educational settings and partner organisations.
- Ensuring short breaks and community activities for CYP with SEND meet need and promote inclusion.
- Implementing placement plans for CYP accessing specialist education placements to improve monitoring of outcomes and to inform action planning for CYP as their needs change and they require increased or decreased support.
- Focusing on improving attendance of CYP with SEND in educational settings through agreed multi-agency pathways and decision making.
- Ensure the Family Hub approach and early childhood services provide access to information, advice, and guidance to support babies and young children with additional needs.

There is awareness and understanding of SEND within local communities

Worcestershire aims to ensure our CYP with SEND grow up in inclusive communities working together to create social cohesion. A socially cohesive community is defined as one which 'works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility.' In the next three years. ***We will achieve this by:***

- Ensuring information relating to community activities and short breaks for CYP is easily available, meets need and promotes inclusion.
- Working at a district level to ensure community safety initiatives and leisure facilities ensure CYP with SEND feel safe and included.
- Increasing employment opportunities for CYP with SEND as they prepare for adulthood and move out of education.
- Working with housing providers to ensure that safe and welcoming living opportunities are available within local communities.
- Ensuring that the provision for children is effective.

Outcomes for young people with SEND are improved as a result of effective planning, preparation for adulthood and better coordination of service delivery to ensure positive transitions as they progress through their education

As CYP with SEND grow and develop, they and their families are likely to experience several transitions between educational settings. Our aspiration is that these transitions are seamless, and that new provision builds on previous support and outcomes through careful information sharing and planning which is responsive to individual needs. From Year 9 (when CYP reach age 14), all planning and provision for SEND must include a focus on preparing for adulthood. Approaches need to be better coordinated to ensure that transitions from children to adults' services are smooth and planned well in advance. ***We will achieve this by:***

- Refreshing our guidance and support offer to EY settings, schools, and colleges regarding effective transition between educational settings.
- Making decision making processes about educational placements for CYP with EHCPs more transparent and ensuring that the lived experience of families of these decisions is as positive as possible.
- Ensuring that information about access to services for CYP with SEND is clear on the SEND Local Offer.
- Reviewing the experiences of transitions between services supporting CYP with SEND with parent carers and CYP.
- Embedding longer term planning for CYP into processes.
- Strengthening person centered planning across services working with CYP with SEND from Year 9 upwards.
- Developing and describing Preparation for Adulthood pathways by focusing on outcomes in four key areas:

- Independent living
 - Employment
 - Community inclusion
 - Living healthily
- Improving transition and annual reviews for CYP with EHCPs in Year 9 and above to ensure they include effective and responsive planning for adulthood based on young people's aspirations.
 - Ensuring there are robust pathways and processes in place with local authority adult social care to ensure timely assessment of need as highlighted in the Care Act 2014.
 - Improving transitions between health services as young people move into adulthood and reviewing commissioned services to ensure they meet the health needs of young people with SEND from the age of 18.
 - Ensuring there is consistent understanding and implementation of the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberties duties across professionals working with CYP with SEND.

CYP with autism achieve positive outcomes and the support required to enable this is in place

Over the next three years we aim to ensure that we better understand and overcome the barriers to CYP with autism achieving good outcomes as active participants in education, families, and communities. This will involve working closely with families, education settings and support services to understand our current strengths and to identify and make changes where we need to improve. ***We will achieve this by:***

- Ensuring there is alignment between the priorities in Worcestershire's All Age Autism Strategy with the National Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults, and the transforming care agenda.
- Improving and clarifying the intervention pathway for CYP with autism and emotional health and wellbeing needs across universal, targeted and specialist services.
- Improving and clarifying the autism pathway in adults' social care.
- Working with Schools and settings to support them to achieve the Autism Friendly Schools Standard to ensure they have a whole school approach to CYP with autism.
- Ensure clear and effective support for early childhood diagnosis and support.

Emotional health and wellbeing is actively promoted for CYP with SEND and their families and effective targeted and specialist support is available for those CYP at risk of, or experiencing difficulties

As we move on from the Covid-19 pandemic, our ongoing priority is to ensure that the emotional health and well-being needs of CYP are met. We recognise the need to promote good mental health for CYP with SEND within their educational settings, families, and

communities. ***We will achieve this by:***

- Acknowledging the importance of CYP's emotional health and wellbeing post pandemic and developing and improving universal, targeted and specialist support in response to these changing needs.
- Developing 'place-based' partnerships as part of the development of Integrated Care arrangements.
- Implementing Herefordshire and Worcestershire's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Analysing the impact of mental health support for CYP with SEND and using this information to develop priorities for improvement and joint commissioning.

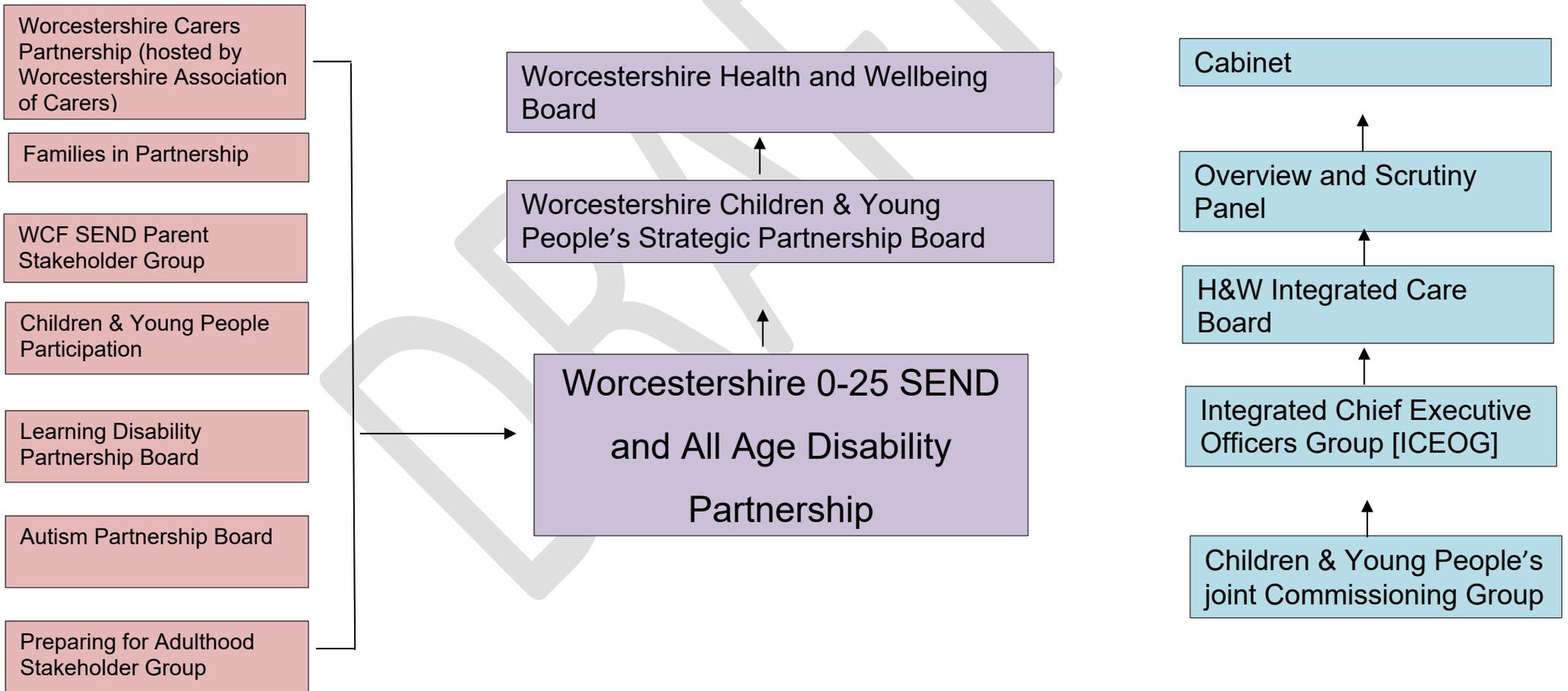
HOW DO WE KNOW IF THIS STRATEGY IS BEING IMPLEMENTED AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE AND HOW WILL WE REVIEW THIS? (GOVERNANCE AND MONITORING)

The SEND and All Age Disability Partnership Board will oversee the implementation of this Strategy and review annually the Delivery Plan. Board meetings will include regular monitoring of the Key Performance Indicators, evaluation including child young person and family voice and experiences and impact of the actions and activity provided by Delivery Leads that assist in implementing this Strategy.

GOVERNANCE

*Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People
with Special Educational needs and Disabilities [SEND] 2023-2026*
Governance

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Worcestershire SEND Strategy (2023 - 2026) DELIVERY PLAN
SEND STRATEGY PRIORITIES

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6
Identification & Assessment of SEND is timely and effective	There is sufficient and effective SEND provision	There is awareness and understanding of SEND within local communities	Outcomes for young people with SEND are improved as a result of effective planning, preparation for adulthood and better coordination of service delivery to ensure positive transitions as they progress through their education	CYP with autism achieve positive outcomes and the support required to enable this is in place	Emotional health and wellbeing is actively promoted for CYP with SEND and their families and effective targeted and specialist support is available for those CYP at risk of, or experiencing difficulties

TRANSFORMATION PLANS AND THEMED STRATEGIES THAT ARE ADDRESSING THE SEND STRATEGY PRIORITIES

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Partnership Review of Pre-School Forum and Pre School-Assessment (2022/23)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years children in any part of the County consistently have needs identified • An operating model of nursery assessment that reaches children in a consistent way and promotes inclusion 	<p>Accelerated Progress Plan: Mainstream Inclusion Quality of EHCP's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an effective inclusion offer and training offer is available and taken up by education settings and partner agencies • Timescales of completion of EHC Needs Assessments 	<p>Herefordshire and Worcestershire CYP Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Local Transformation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to services including waiting times to diagnostic services • Mental Health Support Teams in Schools Programme • Improve access to diagnostic services and support 	<p>Not in Employment, Education or Training [NEET] Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the most vulnerable • Reduce young people who have an EHCP and are NEET • Supported Internships • Youth Employment 	<p>Worcestershire County Council's School Organisation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual specialist education sufficiency report and plan for delivery of new or different provision • SEND Specialist Provision Plan: Capacity and need for mainstream autism bases

<p>Attendance Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to improve attendance for children with SEND Support and EHCPs 	<p>Learning Disability Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Place to Live, a Home • Communities which Include Everyone • Purposeful Days • Being Healthy, Body and Mind • Life Changes • Being Safe • The Right Support for Family Carers 	<p>Autism Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society • Improving autistic children and young people's access into education and support positive transitions into adulthood • Supporting more autistic people into employment • Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people • Building the right support in the community • Improving support in criminal and youth justice systems • Staying safe 	<p>All Age Carers Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised and valued • A life of my own • Supported to be physically and mentally well • Staying Safe 	<p>Early Help Strategy 2022- 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed Early Help across all agencies, partners and our workforce • Engagement of parents/ carers/ children and young people in the multi-agency early help offers of help and support • The development of a coherent start for life offer for all families. • An effective Holiday Activity and Food programme for children with SEND • The development of Family Hubs and co-located services.
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OUTCOME MEASURES

Outcome Measure 1	Outcome Measure 2	Outcome Measure 3	Outcome Measure 4	Outcome Measure 5
<p>Partnership Review of Pre-School Forum and Pre School-Assessment (2022/23)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Offer that describes how children under 5 have their needs identified and how needs are met Increase the % of EY with first time EHCPs going into mainstream reception as they transfer to statutory schooling 	<p>Accelerated Progress Plan: Mainstream Inclusion Quality of EHCP's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Schools actively involved in the EEF (Education endowment foundation) project - making a difference for pupils with SEND % of EHCP decisions made in 16 weeks (minus exceptions) % of EHCPs issues within 20 weeks. Increase the % of children with new EHC Plans that are placed in mainstream schools 	<p>Herefordshire and Worcestershire CYP Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Local Transformation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesigned pathways for assessment and diagnostics Improved feedback from Children, Young People and their families Completion of wave 8 of the programme and wave 9 and 10 project plans accepted by NHSE Meeting national targets and standards for access and waiting times 	<p>Not in Employment, Education or Training [NEET] Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the Numbers of young people with EHCPs who become NEET aged 16-24 Grow the number of supported internships in the county – baseline of 45 from 2020/21 to 90 by 2025 Ensure all SEND Schools and mainstream secondary meet the number of assigned Provider encounters for young people as measured by the Careers and Enterprise Company (Provider Access legislation) 	<p>Worcestershire County Council's School Organisation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the % of new CYP going to into independent provision Decrease the number of children awaiting a specialist placement who are not on a school roll Decrease the number of children awaiting a specialist placement who are on a school roll following a review that has confirmed specialist placement is needed
<p>Attendance Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve overall attendance for CYP with EHCP's Improve overall attendance for CYP with SEND Support Reduce Severe absence for children with EHCP's Reduce Severe absence for children with SEND Support 	<p>Learning Disability Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone should be able to live in a place they feel is their home, which is suitable for their individual needs and where they feel safe. People with Learning Disabilities should be able to contribute to and be fully part of society, whether through community activities, 	<p>Autism Strategy</p> <p>Success measures for CYP will be updated by the end of Q2 2023/24.</p>	<p>All Age Carers Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Carers are recognised and supported in their caring role Young Carers are recognised and supported in their caring role Success measures will be described through the Local Area Joint Commissioning Group and WCP. 	<p>Early Help Strategy 2022- 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the % of training undertaken by individual agencies Impact of the Early Help in the community events. Take up of the Holiday Activity and Food programme for children with SEND Numbers of Family Hubs and co-located services.

	volunteering or paid employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want people with Learning Disabilities to have a positive experience of major life changes, including the transitions from childhood to adulthood. 			
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Associated Strategy	Lead person
Partnership Review of Pre-School Assessment	Sarah Wilkins/Mel Barnett
Accelerated Progress Plan	Mel Barnett
School Organisation Plan	Sarah Wilkins
NEET Strategy	Judy Gibbs
Attendance Strategy	Sarah Wilkins
EH Strategy	Liz Altay
Learning Disability Strategy	Fran Kelsey
Autism Strategy	Laura Westwood/Bernadette Louise
All Age Carer Strategy	Sarah Rothwell
Herefordshire & Worcestershire Transformation Plan	Anne-Marie Dolan

NEXT STEPS

An action plan describing the activity, timelines and outcomes for the actions needed to progress these priorities will be developed. This plan will clearly indicate how we will measure the success of our activity and the awareness raising and workforce development which will be put in place for priority areas. The action plan will reference aligned strategies, which will provide more detail regarding the context and ways of working. The SEND and All Age Disability Partnership Board will oversee the implementation of this Strategy and report annually to stakeholders on progress against the action plan. This will be informed by self-evaluation, stakeholder feedback, monitoring, and analysis of data.

DEFINITIONS / GLOSSARY

All-age Disability Service: The number one priority for Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Children First is for children and young people within the County to have the best outcomes in life. This includes those who face the additional challenges of having a disability. The All-age Disability Service seeks to improve both the experiences of support and co-ordination, along with improved outcomes through a joined up 'offer' for children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs.

Annual review: The review of an EHCP which the Local Authority must make as a minimum every 12 months.

Assess, Plan, Do, Review: Also known as the Graduated Response, this is a guide which enables educational settings to plan and implement support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.

Autism: Autism is a developmental disability affecting how people communicate and interact with those around them. Autistic people may have difficulties with social communication/interaction, display repetitive and restrictive behaviour, display, and over/under sensitivity, have highly focused interests, have anxiety, and shutdowns/meltdowns.

Care Quality Commission: The CQC registers, monitors, inspects, and regulates health and adult social care services in England. They ensure services meet government standards for quality and safety.

Co-production: Co-production is a way of working which builds on the strengths of families, communities, and services, and involves everyone from the beginning as equal partners. Worcestershire Children First are committed to working in partnership with families, and other agencies, to create effective services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.

DCO: Designated Clinical Officer: The officer supports Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group to meet its statutory duties for children and young people with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities. They also support the agreement of health services as part of an Education, Health, and Care Plan.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS): These relate to those aged 18 or over, who lack

mental capacity, and require treatment or care through a care home or hospital. If a person required continuous supervision and control, then a DoLS authorisation may be required, and can be applied for by a managing authority such as the hospital or care home.

Early help: Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Early Years Provider: A provider of early education places for children under five years of age. This can include state-funded and private nurseries as well as child minders.

Education, Health, and Care plan (EHCP): An EHCP details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has SEN or a disability. It is drawn up by the Local Authority after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.

EHCNA: Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessment. Worcestershire Children First will carry out an EHCNA when more specialist help is required to support children with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities. The assessment will be turned into an Education, Health, and Care Plan.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing: The government established a task force in 2015 to promote, protect and improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. In collaboration with the CCG Worcestershire Children First developed the transformation plan to improve services within the County, providing advice, support, and training.

Exclusions and Alternative Provision Implementation Plan: Local and national context highlighted the need for Worcestershire Children First to carry out a review of their approach to exclusions and the use of alternative provision settings. As a result of this review the Implementation Plan was created with a focus on five key areas: Exclusion prevention by mainstream schools, The exclusions and AP pathway, Communication and collaboration between settings, Integrated service approach, and Equity and strategic clarity in commissioning arrangements and processes.

Further Education (FE) College: A college offering continuing education to young people over the compulsory school age of 16. The FE sector in England includes general further education colleges, sixth form colleges, specialist colleges and adult education institutes.

Graduated Response: A model of action and intervention in early education settings, schools, and colleges to help children and young people who have special educational needs. The approach recognises that there is a continuum of special educational needs and that, where necessary, increasing specialist expertise should be brought to bear on the difficulties that a child or young person may be experiencing.

Health and Wellbeing Board: A Health and Wellbeing Board acts as a forum where local commissioners across the NHS, social care, and public health work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities. The boards are intended to increase democratic input into strategic decisions about health and wellbeing services, strengthen working relationships between health and social care and encourage integrated commissioning of health and social care services.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy: This Strategy sets out how Worcestershire County Council

will support Worcestershire residents to be healthier, live longer, and have a better quality of life. Targeted at those who's health is currently the poorest.

Here2Help: Here2Help is a community action scheme which was originally dedicated to helping those in need of support during the CV-19 pandemic. The service has been expanded offering advice, support, and help to organisations and people of all ages within Worcestershire.

HWHCT: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust. The main provider of mental health and learning disability services across both counties, across a range of settings. Additionally, they provide community hospital, neighbourhood teams, and community nursing services across Worcestershire.

Integrated Care Board (ICB): An integrated care board (or ICB) is a statutory NHS organisation which is responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the population, managing the NHS budget and arranging for the provision of health services in a geographical area. ICBs were legally established on 1 July 2022, replacing clinical commissioning groups (or CCGs), taking on the NHS planning functions previously held by CCGs (as well as absorbing some planning roles from NHS England).

Joint Approach to Commissioning: The NHS, Worcestershire Children First, and Worcestershire County Council have adopted a coproduction approach to commissioning SEND provision. This applies to the design, development, and commissioning of new services, projects, and programmes, working with and abiding by the principles outlined within the Worcestershire SEND Charter.

Joint Strategy Needs Assessment: This is a continuous process which provides information on health and well-being to support decision making. The process improves health and well-being, reduces inequalities, and determines the actions local authorities, the NHS and other partners will make to best meet people's health and social care needs.

Local authority: An organisation responsible for the delivery of public services, and for providing facilities within a certain area.

Mental Capacity Act: The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a legal framework to act and make decisions on behalf of those, aged 16 and over, who lack the mental capacity to make their own decisions in relation to care and treatment.

NEET: Not in Education, Employment, or Training. It is the law for 16-year-olds leaving school to participate in further education or training until the age of 18. The Post-16 NEET Team at Worcestershire Children First offer advice, guidance, and support to those young people who are currently NEET.

Ofsted: Ofsted inspect and regulate services who provide training, education, and care within England. Their aim is to promote improvement, ensuring high quality service is provided to children and young people.

Preparation for adulthood: As part of the Worcestershire Children First SEND Strategy there is a focus on Preparation for adulthood, with the aim of creating a whole life approach to improve the personal transition experience and journey to adulthood. A multi-agency approach has been taken to offer a wide range of support to children and young people with SEND to

enable them to achieve their ambitions.

Pre-School Forum: Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities are sometimes referred to Pre-School Forum for additional support. This could be through extra Early Years provision, specialist placement, transition support when moving to school, or through the implementation of an EHCP.

SEMH: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health. This is a type of special educational need where children have difficulties managing their emotions and behaviour due to Social, Emotional, and/or Mental Health needs.

SENCo: Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. Every school in the UK is required to have a teacher responsible for special educational needs to enable children and young people to achieve the best educational outcomes.

SEND: Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years: The code of practice provides guidance to organisations who work with and/or provide support to children and young people (0-25 years) with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. It outlines legal requirements and statutory duties for schools, academies, early years providers and local authorities which focuses on a family-centered system of care and education and covers four broad areas of support: Communication and interaction, Cognition and learning, Social, emotional, and mental health, and Sensory and/or physical needs.

SEND Local Offer: Local authorities in England are required to set out in their Local Offer information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans. Local authorities must consult locally on what provision the Local Offer should contain.

SEND Sufficiency Report: Worcestershire Children First have a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficiency of school places available to meet the needs of all children and young people within the County, including those with SEND. To ensure the best educational outcomes for all children and young people the report reviews historic demand for school places. This enables future demand to be assessed and monitored to ensure correct provision is in place, to continue to best meet the needs of all children and young people within Worcestershire.

SEND Written Statement of Action: During the 2018 SEND inspection inspectors identified that children and young people with SEND were not being provided with the quality of service and support they are entitled to. In collaboration with the CCG, Worcestershire Children First produced the SEND Written Statement of Action (an action plan) outlining how Worcestershire will tackle the areas of weakness identified during the inspection.

Short breaks: Short breaks provide families of children and young people with disabilities a break from their caring responsibilities. A short break could last a few hours, a day, an evening, overnight, or for a weekend, and can take place within or away from the home. They can range from an afterschool club to an overnight stay with a carer or at a short break unit.

Transforming Care: The NHS England's commitment to improving the care of people with Learning Disabilities, and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder. The aim is to reduce people being

admitted to hospital when they don't need to be, and to encourage early and effective planning to support those leaving hospital.

WCF: Worcestershire Children First. Worcestershire Children First is a not-for-profit company which is 100% owned by Worcestershire County Council. The company is responsible for the delivery of services to children and young people across Worcestershire.

DRAFT

Appendix 1 – definition of Inclusion

In all educational settings in Worcestershire every child and young person has access to the educational provision which provides them with equity of access to the best opportunities, so they are able to achieve, thrive and fulfil their potential. Children and young people learn together, regardless of difficulties or differences they may have, and settings respond to the diverse needs of all individuals to enable this to happen within a nurturing environment where emotional wellbeing is a priority to give them the best life chances.

Every individual in all our educational settings is valued and every person in the educational community feels a sense of belonging and feel they are seen, heard, and acknowledged. All children and young people in our settings have their needs met through quality first teaching, differentiation of delivery, appropriately planned learning objectives, an accessible curriculum and other reasonable adjustments enabling every child and young person to make progress through the curriculum regardless of their aptitude, ability or SEND.

In Worcestershire educational settings, we ensure that we identify and provide effective early support for children and young people identified with additional needs and this support is additional to and different from that which already available, based on need and not labels. There is a clear process in all settings for addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion from education in all its forms. All those involved with children and young people work collaboratively to enable this to happen.

Inclusion in Worcestershire is when all the above is delivered in adherence with the SEND Code of Practice, The Children and Families Act 2014, The Equality Act 2010, Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 24 MAY 2023

WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN FIRST INDEPENDENT FOSTERING SERVICE OFSTED INSPECTION

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families and the Assistant Director of Safeguarding Services have been invited to the meeting to update the Panel on the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection carried out in February 2023.

Background

2. WCF Independent Fostering Agency (WCFF) is an independent Fostering Agency and was registered on 1 October 2019. The Fostering services were previously part of Worcestershire County Council (the Council). However when WCF was formed, the fostering services were required to form as an independent Fostering Agency and as such are subject to a separate Ofsted inspection.
3. WCFF offers emergency, short and long-term foster care placement to children in care. The carers include mainstream carers and connected persons otherwise known as kinship.
4. The agency provides placements to children in the care of the Council/WCF only.
5. During Ofsted Inspections, WCFF as an Independent Fostering Agency must meet the requirements of the Fostering Regulations 2011, and the Fostering National Minimum Standards (NMS) 2011. Ofsted use recommendations to indicate where practice can improve, and these are always related to the relevant NMS and regulation/s mentioned.
6. An Ofsted Inspection of WCFF took place between 20 - 24 September 2021 and received a judgement of 'Requires Improvement'. The inspection identified 9 Requirements and 4 Recommendations that needed to be addressed for WCFF to improve. The Service has since received a further inspection from 6 – 10 February 2023 (the link to the Inspection Report is included as Appendix 1) and is pleased to report that overall, the Inspection judgement given was "Good".

Fostering Service Improvement Plan following the 2021 Ofsted Inspection

7. To address the requirements and recommendations raised in the 2021 Ofsted Inspection report, a Fostering Service Improvement Plan (SIP) was developed. The Level 1 "plan on a page" (attached at Appendix 2) and a more detailed document, the Level 2 Plan sitting below it (at Appendix 3) outlines milestone activity and measures.
8. The SIP was overseen by the Assistant Director - Permanency – Care Proceedings, Fostering & Adoption (Responsible Individual).

9. There were 7 workstreams in the Action Plan:

- Safer Caring Plans and Risk Assessments
- Notifiable Events
- Quality Assurance & Performance
- Safer Recruitment/Foster Carer-Workforce Development
- Voice of the Child and Views and experience of parents
- Foster Care Recruitment, Assessment & Support, and Voice of Foster Carers
- Approval and Matching of Foster Carers

10. A Fostering Team Manager was identified as a Lead for each workstream and all workstreams had a membership to include children, young people, carers and staff.

11. Progress and activity were tracked during a monthly WCFF Fostering Service Managers meeting, where any issues/risks were escalated as required and managed to ensure outcomes and deadlines were met.

12. Progress reports on each of the workstreams were made available to WCF Executive under the monthly executive business planning Programme, and to the WCF Board meetings on a quarterly basis.

13. The Action Plan was completed on 30 November 2021 and was presented by the Fostering Team to all services on 8 December 2021 and to the Corporate Parenting Board on 1 February 2022.

14. The Fostering Plan is not submitted to or agreed by Ofsted. The Ofsted Inspection in February 2023 reviewed recommendations from the September 2021 Inspection as a primary focus but not exclusive focus.

15. A summary of progress can be seen in the table below. All other actions within the Fostering Improvement Plan have been completed.

Workstream (WS)	Completed
WS1: Safer Caring Plans & Risk Assessments	Safer Caring Plans and Risk Assessments data added to the WCFF Performance Dashboard.
WS2: Notifiable Events	Audit completed of active allegations against carers/Schedule 7 events. WCFF current schedule 6/7 notifiable events policy and forms reviewed and updated.
WS3: Fostering Information & Performance Dashboard	Statement of Purpose updated and published. Foster Care Register developed and embedded. Complaints and Compliments Policy updated and published. Complaints and Compliments Tracker developed and embedded.

WS4: Safer Recruitment, Foster Carers & Workforce Development	<p>Safer Recruitment: Audit of all existing WCFF staff HR files to identify gaps/missing information completed.</p> <p>WCFF Safer Recruitment Policy and guidance agreed for implementation.</p>
WS5: Voice of the Child	<p>Quarterly meetings arranged with Who Cares We Care Forum to positively engage with Children and Young People.</p> <p>Practice Standard implemented for Fostering SW to complete regular Direct Work sessions with Children in foster care placements.</p>
WS6: Foster Carer Recruitment, Assessment & Support	<p>Reviewed all marketing and promotional materials hard copies and online.</p> <p>Reviewed current assessment process focusing on the journey of the Foster Carer.</p> <p>WCFF Recruitment Strategy launched.</p> <p>Launched Carer Ambassador Scheme to support Foster Carer's, incorporating the Voice of the Carer.</p>
WS7: Approval & Matching Foster Carers	<p>WCFF Carer Agreement updated and launched.</p> <p>Review the ADM Process completed.</p> <p>ADMs invited to upcoming Fostering Panel as opportunity to observe and learn.</p>

Ofsted Inspection Report 2023

16. During the 5-day inspection in February 2023, inspectors recognised that good progress had been made in areas of the service identified for improvement in the last (and first) inspection in September 2021 and all requirements had been met.

17. Inspectors reported that the overall experiences of children and young people are "Good" and the level at which they are helped and protected were also "Good." The Inspection noted the importance of recruiting a Registered Manager for the independent agency but noted interim management and leadership had been effective and had led to the improvement. The Registered Manager has been recruited to and will be in post in July 2023.

18. The Inspection of fostering services is reviewed in three key areas, and each is graded independently with an overall judgement reached.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account:	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires Improvement to be Good
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Purpose of the Meeting

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

- Note the outcome of the WCFF Fostering Service full Ofsted Inspection (February 2023) and the Worcestershire Children First Fostering Improvement Plan progress.
- Consider whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families; and
- Determine whether any further information or Scrutiny is required.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – WCFF Fostering Ofsted Inspection Report 6 - 10 February 2023
[Link to Inspection report](#)
- Appendix 2 - WCFF Independent Fostering Agency Improvement Level One Plan 2021- 22
- Appendix 3 - WCFF Independent Fostering Agency Improvement Level Two Plan 2021 - 22

Contact Points

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Background Papers

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

[Agenda for Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Wednesday, 23rd February, 2022](#)

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

Worcestershire Children First

Independent Fostering Agency Improvement Level One Plan 2021 -2022

<p>Requirements - Fostering Service Regulations</p> <p><i>Regulation 3.1: Statement of purpose and children’s guide</i></p> <p><i>Regulation 8.1: Registered person – general requirements</i></p> <p><i>Regulation 11 (a): the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times.</i></p> <p><i>Regulation 18.4: A written record is made of any complaint or representation, the action taken in response to it, and the outcome of the investigation.</i></p> <p><i>Regulation 20: Safer Recruitment of Staff and Panel Members</i></p>	<p><i>Regulation 27: Foster Carer approval and agreement meet regulation.</i></p> <p><i>Regulation 31: Register of Foster Carers</i></p> <p><i>Regulation 35: Review and monitoring of quality of care. Voice of the Child. Consultation with Child about the care they receive.</i></p> <p><i>Regulation 36: Notable events. Notification, management, and updates.</i></p>	<p>Recommendations - National Minimum Standards</p> <p><i>Standard 13: Recruiting and assessing foster carers who can meet the needs of looked after children</i></p> <p><i>Standard 15: Matching the child with a placement that meets their assessed needs</i></p> <p><i>Standard 16: Statement of purpose and children’s guide</i></p> <p><i>Standard 21: Supervision and sup</i></p>
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Fostering Improvement Workstreams

<p align="center">Workstream 1</p> <p>SAFER CARING PLANS & RISK ASSESSMENT (Reg 11, 36 & Std 15) LEAD: <i>Team Manager</i> Manager: <i>Team Manager</i></p> <p>Membership: <i>Independent Reviewing Officer, Children and Young People, Foster Carers, Learning and Development</i></p>	<p align="center">Workstream 2</p> <p>NOTIFIABLE EVENTS (Reg 11, 36) LEAD: <i>Team Manager</i> Manager: <i>Team Manager, Group Manager</i></p> <p>Membership: <i>Local Authority Designated Officer, Emergency Duty Team Manager, Business Analyst</i></p>	<p align="center">Workstream 3</p> <p>FOSTERING INFORMATION & PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD (Reg 3.1, 8.1, 18.4, 31 & Std 16) LEAD: <i>Team Manager</i> Manager: <i>Team Managers</i></p> <p>Membership: <i>Independent Reviewing Officer, Children and Young People</i></p>	<p align="center">Workstream 4</p> <p>SAFER RECRUITMENT - FOSTER CARER & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (Reg 20) LEAD: <i>Team Manager</i> Manager: <i>Team Managers/Learning and Development Manager</i></p> <p>Membership: <i>Foster Carer, Through Care Services, Learning and Development Team, WCF Comms Team</i></p>	<p align="center">Workstream 5</p> <p>VOICE OF THE CHILD (Reg 35) LEAD: <i>Team Manager</i> Manager: <i>Team Managers</i></p> <p>Membership: <i>Children and Young People, Independent Reviewing Officer, Foster Carer, Looked After Children Team Manager, Fostering Social Worker</i></p>	<p align="center">Workstream 6</p> <p>FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT (Std 13, 21) LEAD: <i>Team Manager</i> Manager: <i>Team Manager</i></p> <p>Membership: <i>Foster Carer, Children and Young People, Worcestershire Children First Communications Manager</i></p>	<p align="center">Workstream 7</p> <p>APPROVAL & MATCHING FOSTER CARERS (Reg 27 & Std 15) LEAD: <i>Team Manager</i> Manager: <i>Team Manager</i></p> <p>Membership: <i>APPROVALS: Panel Chair and Vice, Chair, Panel Members, Panel Adviser, Agency Decision Maker, Team Managers (Kinship and Mainstream). MATCHING: Team Managers, Children and Families Social Worker</i></p>
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Workstream Membership

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children & Young People • Foster Carers • Independent Reviewing Officer • WCF Safeguarding Social Workers • WCF IFA Social Workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCF Business Team/Liquid Logic • WCF Management Information • WCF Communications Team • WCC Learning & Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCC HR Operational & Delivery Team/Social Work Opportunities • Virtual School Headteacher • SEND and Vulnerable Learners • Fostering Panel Chair & Fostering panel
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Cross Cutting Themes

Safeguarding	Quality Assurance	Communication	Performance and Monitoring
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ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

OUTCOME/PREGRESS MEASURES

<p>WORKSTREAM 1: SAFER CARING PLANS AND RISK ASSESSMENT <i>Work Stream Lead: Team Manager</i> <i>Manager: Team Manager</i> Membership: Independent Reviewing Officer, Children and Young People, Foster Carers, Learning and Development</p>	<p>Workstream 1 Audit of Safer Caring Plans and Risk Assessments by each Team Manager to assure risks are identified, mitigated, and reviewed. Feb 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 1 Work with the WCF Development Team to add the Safer Caring Plans and Risk Assessments data to the WCF Performance Dashboard to allow greater scrutiny, review, and monitoring by Team Managers. Feb 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 1 Review and refresh the Safer Caring Plans and Risk Assessment template, develop Practice Guidance and cascade to WCF via workshop. Feb - Mar 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 1 Develop module and deliver mandatory Core Offer Safer Caring and Risk Assessment Workshop Training to all WCF SW staff. Mar - Apr 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream1 Through the Monthly Audit Programme and Annual Review ensure that; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> every Child and Young Person has a Safer Caring Plan and Risk Assessment in place which contains all the relevant information and are updated to reflect changing needs and risks. every Safer Caring Plan and Risk Assessment contains clear strategies to support Foster Carers in managing risk. Completed</p>
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ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

OUTCOME/PREGRESS MEASURES

<p>WORKSTREAM 2: NOTIFIABLE EVENTS <i>Work Stream Lead: Team Manager</i> <i>Manager: Team Manager and Group Manager</i> Membership: Local Authority Designated Officer, Emergency Duty Team Manager, Business Analyst</p>	<p>Workstream 2 Audit of active allegations against carers/Schedule 7 events by WCF Team Managers to ensure compliance and completion of identified actions. Nov 21 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 2 Review WCF Agency's current schedule 6/7 notifiable events policy and forms. Dec 21 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 2 Develop and embed a Targeted Audit Form of notifiable incidents that can be used as a Quality Assurance tool to capture learning from allegations, complaints, and notifications. Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 2 Audit of Local Authority Designated Officer referrals, allegations against Foster Carers, and notifications within the past 12 months by WCF Team Managers. Identify patterns and trends, recommendations for leaning and service development. Completed</p> <p>Workstream 2 Cascade learning to WCF/WCF. Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 2 Develop process in Liquid Logic to enable effective management of all Notifiable Incidents and allegations made against Foster Carers, with Managers signing off the Form and the Registered Manager has final oversight of all outcomes and incidents. Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 2 Progress request for complaints that can be managed through Liquid Logic. Ongoing</p>	<p>Workstream 2 Through the Monthly Audit Programme, Annual Review and Targeted Audits ensure that; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Schedule 7 events that are required to be reported to Ofsted are in line with Reg 36 Registered Managers will have the ability to audit and monitor notifiable events via Liquid Logic Recommendations and actions are recorded in an auditable manner and the Registered Manager to have final signoff. Completed</p>
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ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

OUTCOME/PREGRESS MEASURES

<p>WORKSTREAM 3: FOSTERING INFORMATION/PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD <i>Work Stream Lead: Team Manager</i> <i>Managers: Team Managers</i> Membership: Independent Reviewing Officer, Children and Young People</p>	<p>Workstream 3 Review and update WCF Agency Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide. Establish a WCF Agency Foster Care Register. Dec 21 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 3 Refresh and Update the WCF Agency Complaints Policy and establish a WCF Agency Complaints Tracker and process of Review. Dec 21 – Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 3 Further develop and launch WCF Agency Quality Assurance Framework. Apr 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 3 Review, update and embed WCF Agency Performance Dashboard, inclusive of Liquid Logic Reporting Function. Mar 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 3 Audit all care placement breakdowns and planned terminations, and review patterns and trends, to identify learning and Service development. Mar 22 – Completed</p> <p>Workstream 3 Prepare and present findings to Team Jul 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 3 Monitor the matters set out in Sch. 6, improving the quality of foster care provided by WCF Agency and complete the Reg. 35 Report. Completed May 22 – Due to be completed w/e 30/09</p>	<p>Workstream 3 Reports to Ofsted and WCF Board WCF Complaints Tracker and Outcomes Report Programme of Audit Activity – Quarterly Reports. Completed Monthly KPI Monitoring</p>
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ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

OUTCOME/PREGRESS MEASURES

<p>WORKSTREAM 4: SAFER RECRUITMENT - FOSTER CARER - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p><i>Work Stream Lead: Team Manager</i> <i>Managers: Team Managers and Learning and Development Manager</i> <i>Membership: Foster Carer, Through Care Services, Learning and Development Team, WCF Comms Team</i></p>	<p>Workstream 4 Audit staff HR records Jan 22 – Completed</p> <p>Workstream 4 Undertake retrospective Safer Recruitment Checks and Risk Assessments in line with the Safer Recruitment Procedure. Mar 22 – Completed</p> <p>Workstream 4 Audit Foster Panel HR records. Jan 22 - Completed Undertake retrospective Safer Recruitment Checks and Risk Assessments in line with the Safer Recruitment Procedure</p> <p>Fostering Panel records are outstanding to be completed May 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 4 Develop and embed a new WCFE Agency Safer Recruitment Guidance and Checklist for Team Managers. Jan 22 – Completed</p> <p>Workstream 4 Develop and deliver Safer Recruitment training module to Team Managers. Feb 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 4 Develop a comprehensive Training Matrix of mandatory and optional training requirements for all staff and Foster Carers, and design and embed training tracker to capture all training completed by staff and Foster Carers, including management specific training. Apr 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 4 Review and evaluate the impact of Foster Carer training to understand the quality of care provided to children and develop an escalation Policy for tackling non-completion of required training by foster carers. Apr 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 4 Undertake gap analysis of Foster Carer training needs through annual reviews and feedback from Fostering Panel and develop a marketing strategy to promote the Foster Carer Training Offer through social media campaigns, articles in the Foster Carer newsletter and via Foster Carer Forums. Start Date Apr 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 4 Team Managers to complete a training gap analysis of specialist fostering training for all WCFE staff. Develop and commission specialist Fostering training core offer for all WCFE SW's. e.g., Fostering Regulations and Fostering NMS, undertaking assessments and supervising Foster Carers. Jun 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 4 Team Managers will have oversight of all training completed and planned by Social Workers and can plan future training needs across the Service, for individual members of the Team and Foster Carers.</p> <p>Social Workers to have oversight of training of Foster Carers.</p> <p>Increased number of Foster Carers completing training in the mandatory timeframes to ensure they have the tools and approaches needed to support a child in their care.</p> <p>Skilled staff greater understanding of the children we look after and how we support them.</p> <p>Numbers of Foster Carers taken through training escalation process. Completed</p>
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ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

OUTCOME/PREGRESS MEASURES

<p>WORKSTREAM 5: VOICE OF THE CHILD</p> <p><i>Work Stream Lead: Team Manager</i> <i>Managers: Team Managers</i> <i>Membership: Children and Young People, Independent Reviewing Officer, Foster Carer, Looked After Children Team Manager, Fostering Social Worker</i></p>	<p>Workstream 5 Set up quarterly engagement meetings with Who Cares We Care Forum to enable sharing of views and feedback from C&YP about how they would like to be supported in their placements, generate ideas, and look at ways of how they would like WCFE Agency to positively engage with them. Jan 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 5 Review, refine and promote Annual Survey to collect Children and Young People's views and feedback to enable us to measure improvement, inform service planning and development. Mar 22 – Completed</p> <p>Workstream 5 Collate and analyse responses Quarterly</p>	<p>Workstream 5 Implement Practice Standard in Direct Work with Children in foster care placements, ensuring that Fostering SW's complete 1 session of Direct Work every 12 weeks with children in WCFE placements, focusing on day to day lived experience and quality of care in placement for C&YP. This activity will feed into the Foster Care Annual Review.</p> <p>Develop WCFE Direct Work case note in Fostering Liquid Logic Pathway.</p> <p>Record feedback, observation, and the feelings of children from Fostering Social Worker reviews. These should be made at least every 12 weeks. Apr 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 5 Review and update WCFE Quality Assurance Framework. This will include looped and themed audit activity, focusing on quality of assessments and the Voice of the Child. Apr 22 – Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 5 Consult and engage with C&YP who were Looked after Children in the development and launch of a WCFE C&YP Quarterly Newsletter. May - Jun 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 5 Themed audit and looped audit activity.</p> <p>C&YP feedback to Foster Carer Annual Reviews.</p> <p>Complaints/Complements received from C&YP.</p> <p>C&YP feedback from WCFE engagement sessions. Completed</p>
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ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

OUTCOME/PREGRESS MEASURES

<p>WORKSTREAM 6: FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT</p> <p><i>Work Stream Lead: Team Managers</i> <i>Manager: Team Manager</i> Membership: Foster Carer, Children and Young People, Worcestershire Children First Communications Manager</p>	<p>Workstream 6 Undertake review of all marketing, promotional and information resources including online and social media presence. Dec 21 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 6 Review the current assessment process ensuring the focus is on the Carer journey as well as managing the realistic expectations of WCFF Agency, regards to support, supervision, and training. Dec 21 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 6 Complete and Launch the WCFF Recruitment Strategy. Dec 21-Jan 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 6 Develop and Launch the Carer Ambassador Scheme to support Foster Carer’s, incorporating the Voice of the Carer into the Service Improvement Plans.</p> <p>Establish face to face annual support groups for Approved Foster Carers. Jan 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 6 Embed the Buddy Foster Carer Scheme. Launch Mar 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 6 Procurement via ESPO framework for a new website. Jun 22 – Completed</p> <p>Workstream 6 Launch new website Dec 22. Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 6 Improved engagement through analysis of recruitment/performance and online activity.</p> <p>Increase number of enquiries to the Service.</p> <p>Succinct and quality assured assessment process and in timescales.</p> <p>Evidence of a positive experience when engaging with the Service through feedback. Completed</p>
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ACTIONS/ACTIVITY

OUTCOME/PREGRESS MEASURES

<p>WORKSTREAM 7: APPROVAL/MATCHING FOSTER CARERS</p> <p><i>Work Stream Lead: Team Managers</i> <i>Manager: Team Manager</i> Membership: APPROVALS: Panel Chair and Vice, Chair, Panel Members, Panel Adviser, Agency Decision Maker, Team Managers (Kinship and Mainstream). MATCHING: Team Managers, Children and Families Social Worker</p>	<p>Workstream 7 Review the ADM Process to ensure process is robust and timely ensuring effective time management for Panel.</p> <p>As part of induction Programme ADMS to attend and observation of Fostering Panel at least annually. Jan 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 7 Develop on-line WCFF ADM Induction Programme for all new AMDs to improve their understanding of the approval process, legal framework, and documentation. Jan - May 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 7 Review and update WCFF Carer Agreement in accordance with Sch. 5. Develop process of issuing WCFF Carer Agreement and managing returns. Jan 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 7 Undertake gap analysis of Panel Members training needs and design and embed Training Tracker to capture all training completed by Panel Members. Mar 22 – Completed</p> <p>Workstream 7 Undertake a targeted Fostering Panel recruitment campaign to appoint a more sustainable and diverse panel. Feb - Mar 22 – Completed</p> <p>Workstream 7 Review and respond to responses received. Jun/Jul 22 Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 7 Identify and strengthen support offer available to both in County and out of County Foster Carers through, matching them with “Buddies”, providing specific training, regular contact with Fostering Social Workers etc. May 22 – Ongoing</p> <p>Workstream 7 Produce guidance for Social Workers and develop checklist. Mar 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 7 Review and refresh the existing Matching Form to assist with better collaborative working between child’s Social Worker and WCFF Agency, thereby ensuring the Child’s needs are fully met and evidenced. May 22 – Completed</p> <p>Workstream 7 Group Manager to have oversight of the Matching Policy. Jun 22 - Completed</p>	<p>Workstream 7 ADM completing feedback in relation to the quality of the work they receive and opportunities for improvement in relation to the Q & A role of panel.</p> <p>Every ADM to observe a panel annually.</p> <p>Dip sample a case monthly looking at ADM rationale, collecting and collating feedback from panel members regarding the ADM rationale.</p> <p>Panel Member to have undertaken all training identified to ensure they are able to fulfil their role.</p> <p>Diverse membership of Panel Members.</p> <p>Forward plan of cases to be managed effectively to ensure effective time management at Panel.</p> <p>Foster Carer Feedback to evidence they are receiving the support they need. Completed</p>
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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

24 MAY 2023

WORK PROGRAMME

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. 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
3. The Work Programme (attached at Appendix 1) is part of the Council's rolling Annual Work Programme which was discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) on 28 April 2023 and is due to be considered by Council on 18 May 2023.

Dates of Future Meetings

- 6 July 2023 at 2pm
- 7 July 2023 at 10am
- 27 September 2023 at 10am
- 6 December 2023 at 2pm

Purpose of the Meeting

4. The Panel is asked to consider the 2023/24 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 2023/24

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 Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager (Interim Monitoring Officer)), the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[Agenda and Minutes for Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 28 April 2023](#)

[Agenda for Council on 18 May 2023](#)

All Agendas and Minutes are available on the Council's website [weblink to Agendas and Minutes](#)

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting	Issue for Scrutiny	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
24 May 2023	Update on GET SAFE and GET THERE		Requested by Panel 10 May 2022
	Worcestershire Children First Independent Fostering Service Ofsted Inspection	23 February 2022	Inspection took place February 2023
	Update on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Accelerated Progress Plan	3 November 2022	
	SEND Strategy		
6 July 2023	All Age Disability (0-25) Service (ongoing Scrutiny of the transformation of the Service) All Age Autism strategy All Age Learning Disability Strategy All Age Carers Strategy	11 January 2022	Adult Care and Wellbeing O&S Panel members to be invited
7 July 2023	WSCP Annual Safeguarding Report	July 2022	
	Children's Social Care – The Government's Implementation Strategy and WCF Business Plan		Chairman agreed items be added to Work Programme - February 2023.
	Performance (Q4 January - March) and Year End Budget Monitoring		
27 September 2023	Home to School Transport Review outcome		Chairman agreed item be added to Work Programme – February 2023
	Performance (Q1 April to June) and In-Year Budget Monitoring		
6 December 2023	Performance (Q2 July to September) and In-Year Budget Monitoring		

January 2024	Scrutiny of 2024/25 Budget		
March 2024	Performance (Q3 October to December) and In-Year Budget Monitoring		
	Annual Update on Educational Performance Outcomes	22 March 2023	
Possible Future Items			
TBC	Current organisation of Education within the County (2 tier/3 tier)		Requested by Panel 16 July 2021 To be considered when further KS2 data available
TBC	Update on the Assessment Pathway for children who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)		Requested by Panel 11 January 2022
TBC	Children Missing Education		Requested by Panel 23 March 2023
TBC	Ofsted Inspecting local authority children's services (ILACS) Inspection – Feedback	11 September 2019	ILACS inspection due post July 2022
TBC	Delivery Model for Medical Education Provision – Update	16 March 2021	
TBC	Autism provision and the availability of places within education settings		Requested by Panel 10 May 2022
TBC	Nursery provision and wrap around care		Following Budget announcement March 2023
Standing Items			
March	Education Performance outcomes		Annually
July	WSCP Annual Safeguarding Report		Annually
November/January	Budget Scrutiny		Annually

March/July/September/November	Quarterly Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring		Quarterly
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