

COUNCIL

18 MAY 2023

REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Overview and Scrutiny Report

1. In 2019, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel identified services supporting the mental health of children and adolescents in the County as a priority for scrutiny. In December 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) agreed that a Scrutiny Task Group should be set up to look into this area. Unfortunately, this work was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic and was restarted in December 2021.
2. The Terms of Reference for the scrutiny exercise were *'to investigate access to and the availability of appropriate mental health services for children and adolescents'*.
3. The Task Group gathered evidence on mental health services currently available to children and young people in the County, with a focus on how and by whom these services are accessed. The OSPB considered the Scrutiny report on 27 February 2023 and fully endorsed the recommendations.
4. The Scrutiny process provides for the relevant Cabinet Members with Responsibility to submit to the Cabinet a response to the Scrutiny Report's findings and recommendations to be considered alongside the Scrutiny Report. Given the cross-cutting nature of the subject matter and the collaborative way in which services are delivered, a response to the Scrutiny Report was also requested from the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board.
5. Cabinet has received the Scrutiny Report about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, together with the responses from the Cabinet Members with Responsibility and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board. Cabinet has noted the Scrutiny Report's findings and recommendations and adopts the response of the Cabinet Members with Responsibility as the way forward.

Household Support Fund

6. The Government have released funding to support residents in Worcestershire since 2020, initially through the Winter Grant and Local Support Grant, and subsequently through the Household Support Fund which is now on round four of this specific funding.
7. In the Autumn Statement 2022, the Chancellor confirmed that the Household Support Fund would be extended for a further 12 months starting in April 2023, and this equates to just under £7.9 million for Worcestershire to use to support residents until 31 March 2024. Confirmation and guidance from the Department of Work and Pensions was received in February 2023.

8. The new fund from April 2023 is intended to provide assistance to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with the increase in living costs linked to energy and food. Whilst the general purpose of the fund is the same as that provided previously, there is a stronger focus on energy and supporting those vulnerable groups that may be facing additional costs such as families on low incomes with children of all ages, pensioners, disabled people, carers and care leavers.

9. The Proposed Allocation of Household Support Fund April 2023 – March 2024 will allocate resources to the following funding areas: food, energy, food/energy, district councils, advice services and management costs. District councils will be delivering local support through either direct in-house schemes or through various voluntary and community sector organisations in order to reach the most vulnerable residents in their local communities. Cabinet has endorsed the approach to the use of the Household Support Fund (HSF) in 2023/24 as set out in the report.

10. Cabinet has delegated the implementation of the delivery of the Household Support Fund including the allocation of any extension to the grant within the terms applicable to it, to the Strategic Director of People in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities and in liaison with the Chief Finance Officer.

Worcestershire Children First (WCF) Business Plan

10. WCF continue to meet their agreed contractual outcomes in relation to Children Social Care however, three key performance indicators for the SEND service measuring the timeliness, decision making, and completion of Education Health and Care Plan's (EHCP's) requested have not been fully met but the trajectory is improving alongside the Council's Accelerated Progress Plan (APP). In line with agreed contract monitoring, an action plan has been in place to address challenges faced by WCF in meeting these KPI's. Regular reports are taken through the Board, and WCF continue to update the commissioners. Cabinet has noted the contractual performance update on Worcestershire Children First.

11. The 2023/24 Business Plan maintains the previously agreed aims for WCF which are to improve outcomes for all children and young people (up to the age of 25) in Worcestershire, by addressing their needs holistically through excellent early help and prevention, education provision and social care. Cabinet has approved the Worcestershire Children First Business Plan 2023/24.

12. Cabinet has noted the agreed contract sum for 2023/24 to WCF as set out in the report and noted the indicative contract sum for 2024/25 and 2025/26 included in the Business Plan.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

Hazel Best, Assistant Director for Legal and Governance

Tel: 01905 843287

Email: hbest@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and background papers for the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30 March 2023:

[Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 30th March, 2023, 10.00 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/Agenda-for-Cabinet-on-Thursday-30th-March-2023-10.00-am-Worcestershire-County-Council)