

## **Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**Thursday, 20th January 2022 at 6.00pm  
In Committee Room 2, the Council House, Priory Road,  
Dudley**

### **Agenda - Public Session (Meeting open to the public and press)**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To report the appointment of any substitute members serving for this meeting of the Committee.
3. To receive any declarations of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct.
4. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 as a correct record.
5. Public Forum
6. Medium Term Financial Strategy (Pages 1 – 30)
7. Quarterly Corporate Performance Report Quarter 2 (1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021) (Pages 31 – 42)
8. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Programme Update (Pages 43 – 81)
9. Education Update (Pages 82 – 128)
10. Social Care Improvement Update (Pages 129 – 145)
11. To consider any questions from Members to the Chair where two clear days' notice has been given to the Monitoring Officer (Council Procedure Rule 11.8).





**Chief Executive**

**Dated: 12th January 2022**

Distribution:

Councillor P Bradley (Chair)

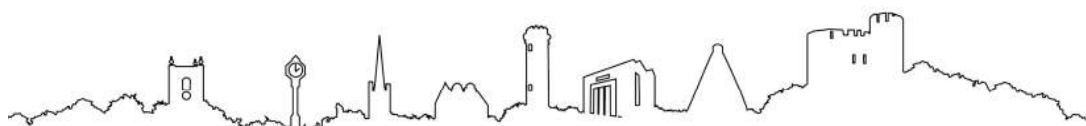
Councillor B Challenor (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Bayton, D Bevan, R Body, R Clinton, R Collins, P Drake, M Hanif, P Lee, K Lewis, N Neale and S Ridney

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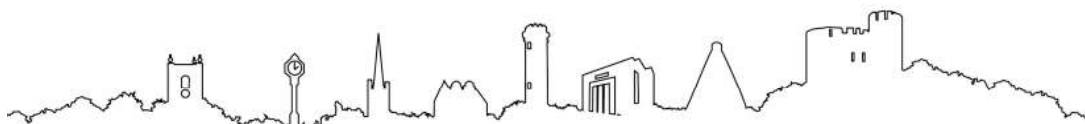
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## **Minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2021 at 6.00 pm  
in the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley**

### **Present:**

Councillor B Challenor (Vice-Chair in the Chair)  
Councillors C Bayton, D Bevan, R Body, R Clinton, R Collins, P Drake, M Hanif, P Lee, K Lewis, C Neale, S Ridney and W Sullivan.

Councillor R Buttery (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) attended at the invitation of the Committee.

### **Officers:**

C Driscoll (Director of Children's Services), H Ellis (Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions), A Stone (Service Director of Children's Social Care), S Anderson (Joint Safeguarding Business Manager), T Cranston (Service Manager Safeguarding and Review) and S Griffiths (Democratic Services Manager).

### **Local Government Association:**

C Burgess and D Madden.

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#### 18 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Bradley, N Neale and T Reid.

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#### 19 **Appointment of Substitute Members**

Councillors C Neale and W Sullivan were appointed to serve as substitute Members for Councillors N Neale and P Bradley for this meeting of the Committee only.

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#### 20 **Councillor P Bradley**

The Chair and Members expressed their deepest sympathy and extended condolences to Councillor P Bradley following his recent family bereavement.

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21 **Declaration of Interest**

Councillor P Lee declared a non-pecuniary interest as a foster carer in the Borough.

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22 **Minutes**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2021, be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

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23 **Public Forum**

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

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24 **Change in Order of Business**

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c) it was:

**Resolved**

That the order of business be varied and the agenda items be considered in the order set out in the minutes below.

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25 **Local Government Association Scrutiny Training**

C Burgess and D Madden outlined an offer from the Local Government Association (LGA) to support the effective scrutiny of Children's Services. Detailed presentation slides were circulated covering the purpose and role of scrutiny, the statutory context for the scrutiny of Children's Services, corporate parenting and the features of effective scrutiny.

The LGA work to support effective scrutiny of Children's Services involved:

- Support for Scrutiny Committees to identify strengths and areas for development using the '6 steps to effective scrutiny' self-assessment tool.
- A mix of workshop sessions, individual coaching and resources to improve the confidence and ability of Scrutiny Chairs and Members to use their roles to have a positive impact on the lives of children and families.
- Support to embed learning and ensure the wider system of support around Children's Services enabled scrutiny to operate effectively.



The Committee welcomed the approach outlined by the LGA and commented on the existing organisational capacity to carry out scrutiny activities. It was noted that D Madden was offering mentoring support to Councillor P Bradley in his role as Chair of this Committee.

## **Resolved**

That the proposed approach be supported and that further training and development activity be pursued by the LGA in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Council Officers in due course.

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## 26 **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Programme Update**

The Committee received a report of the Service Director for Education, SEND and Family Solutions giving a progress update on key areas of operational performance and elements of the wider improvements and transformation being implemented across the Dudley SEND Partnership.

The report gave an update on the Dudley Education Inclusion Vision and Principles, feedback from the Department for Education (DfE) on the July SEND Written Statement of Action, Deep Dive sessions that the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) were jointly responsible for delivering and key operational elements of the SEND Service. The latest SEND Written Statement of Action status and detailed feedback on the Deep Dive sessions were appended to the report.

A joint inspection of the local area had been undertaken in May 2019 to judge the provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The progress report gave Members the opportunity to raise questions and receive assurance that the Council and the wider partnership were making significant progress to deliver on the improvements where commitments had been made.

During the discussion, Members requested further information on the number of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP's) requested by schools compared to those requested by a parent. Reference was made to the challenges associated with working with schools concerning inclusive education and the restorative approach being taken. Information was requested on the number of schools where the Council had followed the Proceed to Name (PTN) process over the past 12 months.

The Committee supported the need to change the perception that EHCP's gave an automatic right to one to one support and to work towards a culture change to promote independence and to enable children to thrive in mainstream education wherever possible. Members emphasised the key importance of close working relationships between special and mainstream schools regarding the development of the curriculum and other opportunities for children and young people to gain essential life skills. The SEND Team were commended for their ongoing achievements.



Reference was made to ongoing issues and challenges associated with the budget and funding matrix, particularly in relation to embedding the required cultural and operational changes.

## **Resolved**

- (1) That the progress report be noted.
- (2) That the Written Statement of Achievement improvements within the Council and partner organisations, designed to embed the cultural and operational changes required to achieve sustainable improved outcomes for children and young people, be noted.
- (3) That the positive feedback received from the Department for Education, together with the reported impacts and improvements, be noted.
- (4) That the Service Director for Education, SEND and Family Solutions provide further information to Members on the number of Education and Health Care Plans requested by schools compared to those requested by a parent and the number of cases where the Council has followed the Proceed to Name process over the past 12 months.

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## 27 **Dudley Children’s Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2020/21**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children’s Services on the Dudley Children’s Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report for 2020/21. The report reflected the work carried out under the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements between April 2020 and March 2021.

The Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership (DSPP) was the overarching strategic group overseeing the work of the Childrens Safeguarding Partnership Group and the Safeguarding Adults Board, enabling a life course safeguarding approach across the Partnership. In the period since the last annual report, the Partnership had maintained a life course approach but recognised that some areas of work required a dedicated approach to children’s work. The quality, assurance and performance sub-group had been established to focus on the themes and trends across children’s services, whilst still allowing for work on cross cutting life course themes where appropriate.

The DSPP had appointed an Independent Scrutineer to support the safeguarding work across the Partnership. The Committee noted that this appointment recognised the need for dedicated, robust challenge as well as advice and guidance to help ensure the Partnership’s safeguarding arrangements were effective.





The report covered the lockdown periods during the Covid-19 pandemic and demonstrated the hard work of all frontline practitioners. Whilst priorities for direct work to address issues of neglect, exploitation and preventing harm had changed, significant progress had been made in many areas to ensure children, young people and their families remained safe. This was demonstrated by the creation of the Exploitation Hub, providing a dedicated resource for children that were, or might be, at risk from exploitation. A Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub project group had been established to revise and improve practice. The thresholds document had been revised to ensure the right level of support was offered to families at the right time.

It was acknowledged that children's mental health, and that of parents and carers, had been affected during the Covid-19 pandemic. The full extent of this may not be known for some time. However, assurance was given that colleagues in the community and the voluntary sector continued to engage with young people. The number of referrals for help around mental health had increased during the year and there was evidence of positive outcomes after support had been accessed. The Partnership would undertake a multi-agency case file audit on parental mental health, the findings of which would be included in the next annual report.

A concern was raised regarding the statistical information on bullying, the methodology of collecting data and the need for a breakdown of the proportion of hate crimes. The Joint Safeguarding Business Manager undertook to raise this issue with colleagues in the Dudley Community Safety Partnership.

The Committee raised various issues, questions and concerns regarding the demographic and health inequalities section of the report. Concerns were expressed about deprivation, widening gaps, impact on poverty and child obesity levels. It was suggested that a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group be established to be supported by the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing. This Group would seek to gain a better understanding of these issues in the Borough and the comparative data for Dudley in relation to other Councils.

## **Resolved**

- (1) That the Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report for 2020-2021 be received and noted.
- (2) That a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group be established, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, to consider the detailed issues raised by the Committee concerning the demographic and health inequalities section of the report.

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## **28 Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report 2020/21**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Services on the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual Report 2020/21.



Dudley's Safeguarding Service had a statutory responsibility for overseeing and ratifying the care plans for children and young people in care via the activity of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs). The service had a duty to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an annual report that outlined the activity of the service, the impact for children and recommendations for service improvement to enhance young people's experiences.

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 reinforced and strengthened the role of the IRO, enabling more effective independent oversight and scrutiny of the child's case. It had ensured that the child was able to meaningfully participate in planning for their own care and that the care plan the local authority prepared for them was based on a thorough assessment of the individual child's needs.

The Government had issued statutory guidance, namely the IRO Handbook, for local authorities and IROs on care planning and reviewing arrangements. The IRO Handbook stated that the statutory duties of the IRO were:

- To monitor the local authority's performance of their functions in relation to the child's case.
- To participate in any review of the child's case.
- To ensure any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child concerning the case were given due consideration by the appropriate authority.
- To perform any other function prescribed in Regulations.

All children and young people in care, including children in an adoptive placement prior to an Adoption Order, were covered by the legislation. This applied to all children who were the subject of a care order (under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989), or who were voluntarily accommodated for a period of more than 24 hours (Section 20 of the Children Act 1989), including those described in the report as in Short Break Care, or who were placed for adoption under the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

The legislation also covered those young people who were compulsorily looked after, such as those remanded by the court to local authority accommodation. Since the publication of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act in December 2012, it had been the responsibility of the Local Authority to look after all young people who were remanded into custody. These young people required an allocated IRO and reviews in their place of custody.

The Service Manager Safeguarding and Review gave a detailed presentation on the contents of the IRO Annual report including a summary of the progress on the previous year's areas for improvement and the priorities for 2021/22.

The Committee acknowledged the difficult role of an IRO in challenging the actions of the local authority. Caseload levels were considered manageable at present and the proposed creation of a full-time post would assist the situation.

The Committee thanked the officers for the report and commended the work undertaken by IROs.

## Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted and utilised to inform strategic planning for the Dudley children and young people in care population.
- (2) That the report be used to hold the Safeguarding Service to account in the ongoing delivery of services to children and young people in care.

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## 29 Children and Young People's Plan

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services on progress concerning the continued Improvement of Children's Social Care. The report included: -

- Progress against the Improvement Plan and Department for Education Strategic Targets.
- Improvement in Quality of Social Work Practice.
- Progress against the 9 Ofsted Priority Actions.
- Progress with Partners in Practice and Sector Led Improvement Partnership.
- An overview of the refreshed Improvement Plan.

The report gave Members the opportunity to clarify any issues and raise questions whilst providing assurance that Children's Social Care and the wider partnership were making improvements in the quality of services provided to children and families.

Reference was made to improvements in staff permanency and the Committee noted recent developments in respect of social worker remuneration. This included the payment of market supplements where appropriate and consideration of other potential courses of action. The Committee also commented on the ongoing improvements in respect of court proceedings and comparator data relating to Special Guardianship Orders.

## Resolved

- (1) That the progress made against the Improvement Plan and Department for Education Strategic Targets, including Quality of Practice, be noted.
- (2) That the refreshed Improvement Plan, designed to embed further cultural and operational changes to achieve positive and sustainable change to the quality of services provided to children and families, be noted.
- (3) That the Committee note that corporate leaders have been provided with an understanding of progress made and an understanding of the refreshed Improvement Plan.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm

CHAIR

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## **Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee** **– 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

### **Joint Report of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Legal and Director of Children’s Services**

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

#### **Purpose**

1. To consult the Scrutiny Committee on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2024/25 as approved by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021, with emphasis on those proposals relating to the committee’s terms of reference. For this committee the relevant items are those relating to paragraphs could 25 and 26, and Appendices D and E. Members should note that this report is based on proposals formally considered by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and does not reflect any subsequent announcements by the Administration

#### **Recommendations**

2. That the Committee considers and comments on the Cabinet’s proposals for the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2024/25, taking into account the considerations set out in paragraph 36.

#### **Background**

3. The Council approved the General Fund budget for 2021/22 and the MTFS up to 2023/24 on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021. A report on the 2020/21 outturn was considered by Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 our unringfenced revenue reserves as a proportion of net revenue spend were 17%. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 our unringfenced reserves<sup>1</sup> were 24% of net expenditure. The most recent comparative information available for other councils shows that average unringfenced reserves were 45% of net expenditure at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> In order not to distort comparisons, this excludes reserves in respect of Section 31 funding of increased Business Rates Retail relief and Local Tax Income Guarantee grant.

## External Audit

4. The External Auditors (Grant Thornton) presented their 2019/20 Annual Audit Letter to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021. They gave a qualified opinion on Value for Money and in particular expressed concerns about the Council's arrangements to ensure that it maintains a sufficient level of reserves to sustain its financial resilience. They are currently working on an updated Value for Money opinion and this will be published in the new calendar year.

## Forecast 2021/22 Position

5. In response to Covid-19, the Government has directed significant additional funding to councils. New allocations for the financial year 2021/22 are shown in Appendix A. We anticipate receiving £13.0m of unringfenced funding and further grants totalling £29.4m for specific purposes. It is expected that the latter are matched by specific increases in expenditure or reductions in income.
6. The forecast General Fund position after transfers from / to earmarked reserves is as follows.

Directorate	Latest Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m
Chief Executive	0.0	(0.1)	(0.1)
Adult Social Care	102.2	104.9	2.7
Children's Services	74.2	74.2	0.0
Health and Wellbeing	3.5	2.7	(0.8)
Finance and Legal	4.0	4.2	0.2
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	0.5	0.8	0.3
Housing and Community	6.8	6.5	(0.3)
Public Realm	51.4	52.7	1.3
Regeneration and Enterprise	11.3	14.0	2.7
Corporate, Treasury and Levies	18.1	10.2	(7.9)
<b>Total Service Costs</b>	<b>272.0</b>	<b>270.1</b>	<b>(1.9)</b>
Total Resources	(263.0)	(265.6)	(2.6)
<b>Use of Balances</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>(4.5)</b>

7. Further detail is provided in Appendix B. The significant variances are as follows:
- Pressures of £9.5m from the impact of Covid, mainly in additional costs of Adult Social Care to support the health service and ongoing reduced levels of trading income in a number of services.



- Favourable variances of £14.8m arising as a result of charging costs to Covid specific grants where services are continuing to support the pandemic response, additional grants to partially offset trading and tax income losses and application of the general Covid contingency to the pressures outlined above.
  - Net pressures of £0.8m that are unrelated to Covid, mainly from the national pay offer being higher than budgeted, offset by lower than expected borrowing costs.
8. Progress with delivery of specific savings within the current budget is set out in Appendix C. Performance on delivery of savings supports and is consistent with the forecast 2021/22 position outlined above and in Appendix B.
9. The majority of Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) services are met from the High Needs Block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As previously reported, we (in common with many other councils) have been experiencing significant financial pressures from increasing demand for children that require additional educational support. Notwithstanding the high-level recovery plan that has been agreed, there is a forecast deficit on the High Needs Block of £18.9m at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The Government has regulated temporarily to ensure that this pressure sits within the Dedicated Schools Grant, although there is a risk that there may be an impact on the General Fund from 2023/24. As such this deficit is not included in Appendix B.

### General Fund Balances

10. The impact of the outturn shown above leaves the forecast main unallocated General Fund Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 as follows:

	<b>Original Budget £m</b>	<b>Latest Position £m</b>
Forecast balance 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	24.5	24.5
2020/21 outturn (as reported to June Cabinet)		+4.4
<b>Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>28.9</b>
Planned use of Reserves approved by Council March 2021	(8.3)	(8.3)
Council Decision to amend budgets during 2021/22		(0.7)
Forecast favourable 2021/22 outturn		+4.5
<b>Forecast General Fund Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>24.4</b>

11. It should be noted that the Council's overall level of unringfenced reserves remains relatively low.

### Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2024/25



12. In updating the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, Members will need to consider carefully:
- (a) the levels of Government support allocated to the Council;
  - (b) proposals for additional spending, opportunities to free up resources (including savings), and Council Plan priorities;
  - (c) the implications of spending levels in later years as part of the Council's medium term financial plan;
  - (d) the views of consultees;
  - (e) the external factors and risks inherent in the Strategy;
  - (f) the impact on Council Tax payers.
  - (g) the potential impacts on people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. Members will need to have due regard to the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. (Further details are set out in the Equality Impact section below.)

### Government Funding

13. The Chancellor announced the conclusion of a three-year Spending Review on 27<sup>th</sup> October. This included the following:
- An additional £1.6bn of funding to local government at the national level (including £200m for supporting families and £38m for cyber security).
  - An increase in assumed Business Rate income and underlying Revenue Support Grant in line with inflation. The actual Business Rate multiplier will be frozen but councils will be compensated through grant for the income shortfall compared with an inflationary uplift.
  - Further Business Rates reliefs (in 2022/23 for retail, hospitality and leisure and in later years to incentivise property improvements, renewable energy and decarbonisation) also with councils being compensated through grant for loss of income.
  - Continuation of the 2017/18 100% Business Rates Retention pilots – including that for the West Midlands.
  - Improved Better Care Fund to continue at 2021/22 levels.
  - New Homes Bonus funding on the basis of new homes (and reductions in long term empty homes) above a threshold, with a consultation on review for 2022/23 to be published shortly.
  - Additional funding of £3.6bn over three years for reforms to social care charging.





14. We are awaiting full details of the proposed Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23 including details of how the extra funding above will be allocated to individual councils. At this stage we have made reasonable assumptions, based on past experience, about funding allocations to Dudley. These forecasts assume that social care charging reforms (loss of charging income offset by additional government funding) have a neutral impact on the council, but this is subject to uncertainty and will need to be monitored closely.
15. The Government has indicated that it will take stock of the previously proposed funding reforms (Business Rate Retention and Fair Funding Review) in the context of the position in which the sector now finds itself, both with regard to the impact that the pandemic has had on the resources available to councils, and the demands on local services. The timing and impact of any review are uncertain.

### Council Tax

16. Accounting for Council Tax Collection Fund surpluses and deficits and associated grants is complex, particularly in terms of timing. Forecasts reflect a planned charge to the General Fund of £0.3m per year for the next two years, spreading the impact of the deficit in 2020/21 that arose mainly as a result of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) claimant numbers being increased due to the pandemic. For 2022/23, this charge is more than offset by a surplus arising mainly from the fact that CTR claimant numbers in the current year have been lower than expected, leading to a net credit of £0.3m. Tax Income Guarantee (TIG) grant, compensating deficits in 2021/22, has been credited to the General Fund in the current year and this is reflected in the forecast in Appendix B.
17. Although numbers of CTR claimants in the current year are lower than expected, they remain around 1,800 higher than they were before the pandemic. Forecasts for Council Tax income in future years assume that these numbers will gradually return to pre-pandemic levels over the life of the MTFs. Forecasts have also been adjusted to reflect current numbers of households in receipt of discounts and exemptions. The position will continue to be monitored closely and any updated forecasts reported to Cabinet in February.
18. The Spending Review included proposed Council Tax referendum principles for 2022/23 of a core limit of less than 2% plus an Adult Social Care (ASC) precept limit of 1%. Forecasts in this report are based on a 2.99% Council Tax increase in 2022/23 and assume the same in later years.

### Business Rates





19. Accounting for Business Rates Collection Fund surpluses and deficits and associated grants is complex, particularly in terms of timing. Forecasts reflect a planned charge to the General Fund of £1.8m per year for the next two years, spreading the impact of the deficit in 2020/21 that arose mainly as a result of the impact of the pandemic on businesses. For 2022/23, we expect an additional charge of £10.5m (reflecting the loss of income in the current year from reliefs to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses) offset by a credit of £11.4m mainly arising from a review of provisions for business rate appeals (see below) leading to a net overall charge of £0.9m. The impact of current year reliefs is offset by grant that will be credited to the General Fund in 2022/23. Tax Income Guarantee (TIG) grant, compensating deficits in 2021/22, has been credited to the General Fund in the current year and this is reflected in the forecast in Appendix B.
20. There is ongoing uncertainty concerning the impact of the 2017 revaluation on our Business Rate and grant income, in particular the impact of appeals under what was then a new “Check, Challenge, Appeal” process. For the last four years we have been making provision broadly in line with central government assumptions about the impact of appeals. We have now reviewed this provision in the light of actual appeals received together with external advice on potential future appeals and comparisons with other councils. In light of this review, we have reduced our provision for appeals to around 1.8% of gross rates payable.
21. For future years, we have adjusted our forecasts to reflect actual levels of empty property and other reliefs, numbers of properties in rating and the ongoing impact of our review of appeals set out above. We have also adjusted forecasts of Business Rates and Section 31 Grant income to reflect the anticipated Retail Price Index.

### Combined Authority

22. The West Midlands Combined Authority (CA) receives three elements of funding via the constituent authorities as follows:
- The Transport Levy to fund its transport functions, allocated by statute on a population basis.
  - A contribution to reflect assumed real terms growth in the central share of business rates from 2016/17 onwards to fund its regeneration activities, under the terms of the Devolution Deal.
  - A further contribution to fund its non-transport functions currently allocated by agreement partly on a population basis and partly by equal shares.
23. Forecasts in this report assume that contributions continue on the same basis.



## Base Budget Forecasts

24. The Base Budget reflects the impact on spending of forecast inflation and other anticipated changes, before directorate additional spending or savings proposals are taken into account. Details are as follows.

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
2021/22 base	271.3	271.3	271.3
Pay (note 1)	5.3	7.9	10.7
General price inflation (note 2)	-	3.8	7.9
Income uplift (note 3)	-1.1	-2.4	-3.4
Pensions (note 4)	-0.9	1.0	0.1
Combined Authority (see paras 22-23)	0.1	0.3	0.4
Treasury (note 5)	0.7	2.8	3.0
Remove previous contingency (note 6)	-8.8	-8.8	-8.8
Other adjustments (note 7)	-1.0	-1.4	-1.3
<b>Base Budget Forecast</b>	<b>265.6</b>	<b>274.5</b>	<b>279.9</b>

### Notes:

(1) This allows for a pay increase of 1.75% in the current year (based on the employers' latest offer), future increases at 2% per year and a 1.25% uplift in employer's National Insurance from next year. Note that Central Government does not control Local Government pay directly.

(2) No general provision has been made for 2022/23, with any specific inflationary issues being reflected in additional spending in paragraph 28 below.

(3) Assumes an increase of 2% per year on fees and charges.

(4) Contributions from 2023/24 will be determined following the 2022 actuarial review. It is currently assumed this will not give rise to any change in underlying contributions. Contributions in individual years are impacted by the current arrangements which give varying annual discounts for 3 year advance payment.

(5) Impact of Capital Programme, treasury management and investment income changes.

(6) The existing Medium Term Financial Strategy includes a £8.8m general contingency. Specific additional spending has now been identified within this report so, to avoid double counting, the contingency has been removed.

(7) Fall-out of previous one-off items, timing of Leisure Centre works and Metro route enhancements, payments to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in relation to the DY5 Enterprise Zone, costs of the Portersfield design competition, previously agreed increases in Members' Allowances and other adjustments.



## Additional Spending

25. The following table outlines proposed additional directorate spending arising from a combination of demographic, inflationary, pandemic and other unavoidable service pressures as well as improvements to services to residents and growth in organisational capacity to deliver change. Further detail is provided in Appendix D.

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Chief Executive	0.4	0.4	0.4
Adult Social Care	10.4	12.3	12.3
Children's Services	1.5	1.5	1.5
Finance and Legal Services	0.6	0.6	0.6
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	1.7	1.6	1.5
Regeneration and Enterprise	1.0	0.8	0.9
Housing and Community	0.8	0.9	0.9
Public Realm	3.5	1.9	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>20.2</b>

## Savings

26. In total the following saving proposals have been identified. Details are set out in Appendix E.

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Adult Social Care	0.5	0.6	0.6
Chief Executives	0.1	0.1	0.1
Children's Services	0.8	0.8	0.8
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	0.0	0.0	0.1
Regeneration and Enterprise	0.3	0.7	1.9
Housing and Community	0.2	0.2	0.6
Public Realm	1.9	1.9	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>6.0</b>



## Public Health

27. The recent Spending Review announcement gave a commitment to maintaining the Public Health Grant in real terms for 2022/23, with continuing investment in healthy weight programmes and additional investment in the Start for Life offer for families. In 2021/22 there is a forecast surplus on the Public Health Grant due to the continued focus in Health & Wellbeing on dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. This surplus will be added to the ringfenced Public Health Reserve. Programmes of work are being planned, in line with council priorities, to ensure that the best use is made of these reserves.
28. The overall forecast position for the Public Health Grant funded budget can be summarised as follows:

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Base budget forecast	22.1	22.7	23.4
One-off spending plans	2.7	0.7	0.4
<b>Total spend</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>23.8</b>
Forecast grant	22.1	22.7	23.4
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>-2.7</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>-0.4</b>
Reserve brought forward	4.2	1.5	0.8
Reserve carried forward	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.4</b>



## Medium Term Financial Strategy

29. The MTFS reflecting the revised spending proposals set out above, and forecasts of likely resource availability can be summarised as follows.

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Base Budget Forecast</b> - see para 26	265.6	274.5	279.9
<b>Additional spending</b> - see para 27	19.9	20.0	20.2
<b>Savings</b> - see para 28	(3.8)	(4.3)	(6.0)
<b>Total Service Spend</b>	<b>281.7</b>	<b>290.2</b>	<b>294.1</b>
Retained Business Rates	89.1	92.2	94.7
Tariff	(6.3)	(6.5)	(6.7)
Business Rate Grant	13.7	14.2	14.6
New Homes Bonus	0.6	0.6	0.6
Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF)	16.1	16.1	16.1
Social Care Grant	12.7	12.7	12.7
Assumed additional funding from CSR	8.0	8.0	8.0
Council Tax	139.7	145.6	151.8
Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit) – Council Tax	0.3	(0.3)	-
Collection Fund Deficit – Business Rates	(0.9)	(1.8)	
Business Rate Grant reserve	10.5		
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>283.5</b>	<b>280.8</b>	<b>291.8</b>
<b>Deficit funded from Balances</b>	<b>(1.8)</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Balances brought forward	24.4	26.2	16.8
<b>Balances carried forward</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>14.5</b>

30. The table above assumes that Council Tax increases by 2.99% in each year. Based on proposed referendum limits, this would not require a referendum in accordance with Chapter 4ZA of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

## Estimates, Assumptions & Risk Analysis

31. The proposals in this report are based on a number of estimates, assumptions and professional judgements, which are subject to continuous review:
- that pay inflation does not vary materially from current forecasts;
  - that the 2022/23 finance settlement and any specific grant income is in line with forecasts (noting in particular that there is uncertainty around the assumed allocation of additional CSR funding to Dudley);
  - that the underlying impact of any local government funding reforms (if they occur during the life of this MTFS) is neutral;



- iv. that underlying net income from Business Rates rises in line with forecast RPI, and that income and expenditure in respect of the EZ is in line with current forecasts;
  - v. that the impact of appeals against Business Rates is contained within the provisions assumed in this report;
  - vi. that the cost of Council Tax Reduction awarded will not substantially exceed forecasts, and the underlying tax base will continue to grow as anticipated;
  - vii. that cash limited non-pay budgets will be managed so as to absorb any price inflation not specifically provided for in 2022/23 and any inflationary pressures in 2023/24 and 2024/25 will be no more than the amount provided for;
  - viii. that income and expenditure relating to treasury management activity are in line with forecasts;
  - ix. that government policy on maximum underlying Council Tax increases without the need for a referendum will be in line with the levels announced at the CSR;
  - x. that the Adult Social Care market is able to absorb National Living Wage pressures within the proposed provision;
  - xi. that there will be no underlying change in the level of employers' pension contributions from 2023/24 compared with the current MTFS;
  - xii. that the net impact of social care reforms (reduced charging income offset by additional government funding) will be neutral;
  - xiii. that there will be no material losses to the Council as a result of loans, guarantees and/or grant clawback;
  - xiv. that spending pressures in relation to Special Education Needs and Disability can be contained within the Dedicated Schools Grant;
  - xv. that spending or income pressures caused by Covid-19 will not be material from 2022/23 onwards or will be met from further additional government funding;
  - xvi. that there will be no other unplanned expenditure (including any resulting from demographic, legislative or case law pressures) or shortfalls in income, which cannot be met from reserves.
32. The assumptions set out above are subject to uncertainty. While there is a forecast budget surplus in 2022/23, there is currently a forecast deficit of £9.4m in 2023/24 and this represents a significant risk. In the event that outcomes are more negative than the assumptions in this report, then action (to reduce levels of expenditure or increase income) may become urgent.



## Consultation

33. Thousands of people have taken part in the budget consultation over the past few years. Last year a total of 2,148 valid responses were received after an extensive promotion period through the media, social media and through the e-bulletin. Hard copies were also made available in libraries, leisure centres and at Dudley Council Plus. This year, the council will continue to consult far and wide using the extensive reach it has through a range of communications channels as well as working with partner organisations and community groups to encourage more people to have their say. The results will be reported back to Cabinet in the spring.
34. Detailed consultation will also be undertaken with groups identified as being potentially affected by the specific savings proposals, with a particular emphasis on equalities issues. Further information is set out in the Equality Impact section below.
35. A consultation document will be distributed to representatives of Non-Domestic Ratepayers setting out the provisional budget proposals in this report. Consultees will be offered the opportunity for a meeting to be held if there is sufficient interest. Further detailed information (as required in pursuance of the statutory duty to consult) will be distributed in February for comment before the Council Tax setting meeting.
36. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Scrutiny Committees will be asked to consider the issues set out in this report and any related specific issues relevant to their Council Plan and service responsibilities in the January cycle. In framing their responses, the Scrutiny Committees will be asked to consider both the spending and funding implications (including the impact on Council Tax) of any observations they may wish to make.

## Finance

37. This report is financial in nature and relevant information is contained within the body of the report. Based on current resource forecasts and spending and saving proposals, the General Fund is forecast to reduce by £14.4m between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

## Law

38. The Council's budget setting process is governed by the Local Government Finance Acts 1988,1992, and 2012 and the Local Government Act 2003.
39. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer to report on the robustness of estimates made for the purpose of final budget calculations, and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves and this will be included in the final budget report.





40. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new chapter into the Local Government Finance Act 1992 making provision for Council Tax referendums to be held if an authority increases its Council Tax by an amount exceeding principles determined by the Secretary of State and agreed by the House of Commons.
41. The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 are designed to enable a local authority to compensate employees whose employment terminates on grounds of redundancy or in the interests of the efficient exercise of the authority's functions. Any local arrangements in place must also be compliant with the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Equality Act 2010.

## **Risk Management**

42. The Corporate Risk Register recognises the risk that the Council may be unable to set and/or manage its budget so as to meet its statutory obligations within the resources available. This risk is currently assigned a rating of High. A detailed analysis of risks and uncertainties is included in paragraph 33.

## **Equality Impact**

43. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 - the general public sector equality duty - requires public authorities, including the Council, to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't;
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.
44. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
  - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
  - encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.



45. The legislation states that "the steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities." In practice, this means that reasonable adjustments should be made for disabled people so that they can access a service or fulfil employment duties, or perhaps a choice of an additional service for disabled people is offered as an alternative to a mainstream service.
46. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- tackle prejudice, and
  - promote understanding.
47. Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.
48. The duty covers the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
49. An initial assessment of the budget proposals has been made. Where proposals are likely to have a significant equality impact, they will undergo an equality impact assessment informed by consultation with the protected groups who may be adversely affected. The results of this process and any steps which emerge that might help to mitigate any potential impact of the budget proposals on the protected groups will be reported to Members so that they can pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in making decisions on the budget. In making decisions on budget proposals, Members will need to weigh the Public Sector Equality Duty against the forecast financial position, risks and uncertainties set out in this report.
50. With regard to Children and Young People, a substantial element of the proposed budget for the Children's Services Directorate will be spent on maintaining and improving services for children and young people. The expenditure of other Directorates' budgets will also have a significant impact on this group.

## **Human Resources / Organisational Development**

51. Proposals for an Employee Assistance Programme, for a new leadership development programme and to support transition to a new agency model are included in paragraph 27 and Appendix D.



## **Commercial / Procurement**

52. Proposed savings from increasing the Dudley Town Hall catering and bar offer, increased leisure centre income, charging for green waste collections and income from advertising on Boundary signs are included in paragraph 28 and Appendix E.

## **Council Priorities**

53. The aspirations set out in the Council Plan can only be delivered if the Council is financially sustainable.



.....  
**Kevin O'Keefe**  
Chief Executive



.....  
**Iain Newman**  
Director of Finance and Legal



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

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**List of Background Papers**

Budget and Council Tax setting 2021/22 report to Council, 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

Revenue Outturn 2020/21 report to Cabinet, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Appendix A**

**Funding provided by Government in response to Covid-19**



<b>Name</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>Comment</b>
General Covid-19 grant	8.8	
Compensation for sales, fees and charges	1.2	Latest estimate
Local Council Tax Support	3.0	
<b>Total Unringfenced</b>	<b>13.0</b>	
Section 31	10.7	Compensates for additional Business Rates relief
Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)	1.8	
Contain Outbreak Management	2.3	
Infection control and Rapid Testing	3.0	
Extension to Infection Control	2.0	Announced Sept 30 <sup>th</sup> , awaiting allocation from £363m national pot
Social Care Workforce grant	1.1	To be mainly passported to providers
Practical Support Grant	0.6	
Track and Trace Support Payments and administration	0.7	New burdens round 5 announced
Local Elections	0.2	
Covid Catch up grant for schools	0.8	
Local Support Programme – Winter scheme	1.2	
National Testing	0.5	
Holiday Activities	1.2	
Other DFE – Workforce/ Free School Meals and Mental Health	0.1	
Recovery Premium	0.2	
School Led Tutoring	0.2	
WMCA – Transport	0.2	
Household Support Fund	2.6	
<b>Total Ringfenced</b>	<b>29.4</b>	
CCG	TBC	Support hospital discharges, £0.5m claimed to date

## 2021/22 Forecast Outturn position

	Latest Budget £'m	Latest Outturn £'m	Variance £m	Of which Covid £m	Of which Other £m	Comment variance
Chief Executives	0.0	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.3)	0.2	Covid - Proportion of salaries charged to COMF (£0.3m). Non covid - one-off spend £0.2m.
Adult Social Care	102.2	104.9	2.7	2.7	0.0	Covid - Increased number of clients, bed based £4.6m and community care £0.7m, offset by; release of BCF reserve (£0.3m) and inflation contingency (£0.5m), COMF (£0.3m), CEV (£0.5m), PSF (£0.3m), salary savings (£0.6m), other savings (£0.1m)
Children's Services	74.2	74.2	0.0	0.3	(0.3)	Covid, £0.3m loss of traded income Non covid - salary savings (£0.4m) offset by external placements £0.1m.
Health and Wellbeing	3.5	2.7	(0.8)	(0.8)	0.0	Covid - 6 months of Env Health and Trading standards salaries charged to COMF (£0.8m)
Finance and Legal Services	4.0	4.2	0.2	0.0	0.2	Covid - loss of summons income £0.3m, offset by one off grant income (£0.3m). Non covid - Housing Benefit subsidy £0.2m and offsite



	Latest Budget £'m	Latest Outturn £'m	Variance £m	Of which Covid £m	Of which Other £m	Comment variance
						processing and Council Tax discount £0.1m, offset by salary savings (£0.1m).
Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.0	0.3	Non Covid - Legal fees £0.1m, ICT loss of traded services income and workspace pressures £0.2m
Housing and Community	6.8	6.5	(0.3)	0.0	(0.3)	Non covid - Electrical and Mechanical productivity pressures £0.1m offset by vacancies and release of PCSOs budget £0.4m
Public Realm	51.4	52.7	1.3	1.4	(0.1)	Covid - £0.8m net pressure on waste - additional tonnages collected and agency staff. £0.5m car parking income, £0.1m other  Non Covid - net savings (£0.1m)
Regeneration and Enterprise	11.3	14.0	2.7	2.2	0.5	Covid - £1.2m Leisure centres, £0.8m catering, £0.2m Himley/Halls and events.  Non Covid - one off receipt from LLP (£0.3m) offset by pressures on Land Development and other Corporate Landlord services. £0.3m, CCTV costs £0.3m, and staff costs £0.2m



	<b>Latest Budget £'m</b>	<b>Latest Outturn £'m</b>	<b>Variance £m</b>	<b>Of which Covid £m</b>	<b>Of which Other £m</b>	<b>Comment variance</b>
Corporate & Treasury	18.1	10.2	(7.9)	(8.8)	0.9	Covid – released contingency (£8.8m). Non Covid - payaward of 1.75% compared to budget 0.3% £2.0m, EZ payment to the LEP 0.3m; offset by Pension over recovery (£0.1m), Capital Slippage and borrowing costs (£1.2m), other (£0.1m)
<b>Total Service Costs</b>	<b>272.0</b>	<b>270.1</b>	<b>(1.9)</b>	<b>(3.3)</b>	<b>1.4</b>	
Total Funding	(263.0)	(265.6)	(2.6)	(2.0)	(0.6)	Covid - Sales, Fees and Charges compensation grant (£1.2m), Local Tax Guarantee grant (£0.8m) Non Covid - additional section 31 grant to compensate for Business Rates relief (£0.6m)
<b>Use of Balances</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>(4.5)</b>	<b>(5.3)</b>	<b>0.8</b>	



## Delivery of existing Medium Term Financial Strategy

	£'000	Comment
<b>2021/22</b>		
<b>Adults</b>		
Ensure the Disabled Facilities Grant contributes to relevant equipment costs.	450	Implemented
New Support to Carers contract	50	Implemented
Acquired Brain Injury Service - cease SLA with Dudley CCG.	100	Implemented
Automation of business processes through Successor social care IT system	50	Implemented
Streamline the Lye Community Project	50	In progress
Cease the moving and handling team and transfer functions to Occupational Therapy	50	In progress
Maximise contributions to social care (Fairer Charging)	580	In progress
Glebelands contract remodelling.	30	In progress
Supported Living Package reviews in Mental Health	20	In progress
Review and update the charging policy for transport	160	In progress
Contract out aspects of the money management function	30	Alternative option identified
Reduce a Supported Living contract by 50% when current extension ends (Mental Health)	80	Implemented
Integrated Commissioning Hub restructure - assume straight 5% saving whilst still creating Cross Directorate / Council Programme resource	70	In progress
Restructure of Mental Health Team and efficiencies from exit of Section 75 agreement.	250	In progress
Streamline of the invoice processing functions following the implementation of Successor Social Care IT system	60	Part of pressures
Continuing Health Care contributions to offset general fund expenditure on complex Learning Disability care	500	In progress
Reduction of 50% of the budget for hospital avoidance placements	290	Part of pressures
Reduce the Residential Care Placement for older people budget by 5% to reflect the increasing shift to domiciliary care.	120	Part of pressures
Residential Care Charging Fraud Initiative – tackle fraudulent asset disposal in regard to Residential Care financial assessment and charging	200	In progress
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,140</b>	
<b>Children's Services</b>		
Reduced contribution to the Regional Adoption Agency	50	Implemented



	<b>£'000</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Vacancy review	50	Implemented
Removal of low level weekend working	100	Implemented
Managed step down from external residential placements	425	In progress
Movement of external placements into internal residential placements	375	In progress
Transfer of children to Special Guardianship Order status	40	Implemented
Review of Independent Fostering Agency placements	80	Implemented
Review of home to school transport for SEND children	220	In progress
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,340</b>	
<b>Digital, Commercial and Customer Services</b>		
Closure of Dudley Council Plus on Saturdays	10	Implemented
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>		
Dudley Town Hall - increase the catering and bar offer.	50	Delayed
Confirmed success of Accelerated Towns Fund bid, £1m of prudential borrowing debt charges reduced	60	Implemented
Adult and Community Learning - maximising of costs charged to external grant which funds the service, leading to saving on core budget	50	Implemented
Reduction in costs, Enterprise Zone Management & Skills budget	150	Implemented
Bereavement: Memorial Safety budget	10	Implemented
Himley – staff re-structure	40	Delayed
Bereavement: stop locking cemetery gates	30	Delayed
Leisure Centres: Options Plus Discount scheme - reduce or remove certain categories	20	Delayed
Reduce Dudley Business First controllable budgets - based on 2019/20 outturn	50	Implemented
Review of vacant posts/spare hours in CLS	30	Implemented
Wider re-structure within Regeneration & Skills following a retirement	60	Implemented
<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	
<b>Housing and Community</b>		
Housing - reduction in revenue contribution to capital for Housing Assistance Grants	150	Implemented
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	
<b>Public Realm</b>		
Mandatory Works Management System headroom	20	Implemented
Release Bulky Waste Trial growth	50	Implemented



	<b>£'000</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Release current headroom for Clinical Waste and review annually	70	Implemented
Reduction in the resources required to improve the condition of the Borough's football pitches.	40	Implemented
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	

Where savings have been partly implemented or delayed, the financial impact is reflected in the 2021/22 outturn forecast in Appendix B or is being met from directorate earmarked reserves.



## Additional Spending

<b>Adult Social Care</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
2021/22 MTFS saving no longer achievable - Reduction of 50% of the budget for hospital avoidance placements	290	290	290
2021/22 MTFS saving no longer achievable - Reduce Residential Placement budget by 5%	120	120	120
Standard cost nursing placements increased demand	350	350	350
High cost nursing and mental health placements in demand	1,520	1,520	1,520
Residential increased demand	1,290	1,290	1,290
Covid 19 hospital related discharges and emergency community placements	1,350	1,350	1,350
Reablement increased demand	960	960	960
Higher percentage of clients are exempt from paying a contribution towards their care	500	500	500
Budget to manage market pressures due to rising costs of care	4,010	5,950	5,950
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,390</b>	<b>12,330</b>	<b>12,330</b>

<b>Children's Services</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Resource to support the SEND/Children with Disabilities Improvement Programme	260	260	260
Social Worker pay	660	660	660
Edge of Care - intensive work to support children at risk of moving into care to remain with their families	620	620	620
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>1,540</b>



<b>Chief Executive</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Chief Executives Strategic Contingency Provision (projects, events and promotional activity and support for the Borough Vision and Council Business Planning)	160	160	160
In house support team to make the successful transition to a new Agency model	70	70	-
Christmas light switch on events in each township area	20	20	20
Black Country Festival events in each township area	20	20	20
Reestablishment of a Leadership Development programme for managers and aspiring leaders Leadership Development will strengthen capability in delivering the borough and Council aspirations of the future, operate effectively within a commercial and outcomes focussed environment and work across our system for the benefits of the residents of the borough.	80	80	80
Introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Platform that will provide mental health and wellbeing to employees.	30	30	30
Internal communications and engagement officer	20	40	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>350</b>

<b>Finance and Legal Services</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Revenue & Benefits - reduction in subsidy relating to benefits overpayments	400	400	400
Revenue & Benefits – increased numbers of care leaver Council Tax exemptions	80	80	80
Financial Services - additional accountant capacity	40	40	40
Additional Staff necessary to meet the increased demand for Legal Services including additional capacity for prosecution work	110	110	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>630</b>



<b>Digital, Commercial and Customer Services</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Known impact of Microsoft price increase at next renewal of Enterprise Agreement	170	170	170
Additional costs arising from investment in new firewall technology	0	90	90
Digital platform - procure alternative semi-built solution	540	520	480
Reduce staff turnover target within ICT	100	100	100
Central web content authoring - 3 FTE Content Designers for Central Web Authoring Team	130	130	130
Additional costs to introduce a rolling desktop refresh programme, including purchasing equipment that better meets the needs of colleagues given the new ways of working.	690	540	540
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,630</b>	<b>1,550</b>	<b>1,510</b>

<b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Crystal Leisure Centre Roof – revenue implication of £600k capital investment	30	30	30
Red House Cone restoration works revenue implication of £1.5m capital investment	80	80	80
CCTV – costs of deployable cameras, increased staffing of control room and additional ICT costs	320	320	320
Fire Safety at non HRA sites.	50	50	50
Corporate Landlord staffing (Strategic Asset Management team)	120	120	120
Planning Enforcement staffing and CPO of sites identified for regeneration	100	100	100
Bereavement Services staffing	30	30	30
Corporate Landlord staffing (Construction & Design team)	50	50	50
Impact of National Living Wage on outsourced Cleaning Contract for Admin Buildings	20	40	60
Resources to maximise opportunities to secure external funding and grants to support the ambitions of the borough across regeneration, public realm, housing, tourism, levelling up	100	0	0





<b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Resources to support the development of a destination management strategy and plan to develop Dudley as a key destination of choice.	130	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>840</b>

<b>Housing and Community</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Library contract inflation provision	240	310	380
Private sector housing enforcement including traveller officer post	50	50	50
Service provision to comply with duties under the Domestic Abuse Act	240	240	240
ASB enhancement - new service model	50	50	50
Community Safety enhancement	200	200	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>920</b>

<b>Public Realm</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Commonwealth Games 2022 - Public Realm Infrastructure costs & Events programme	500	0	0
Car Parks at Rye Market and Pool Road	60	60	60
Street Cleansing Vehicles (increased capacity)	80	80	80
Highway resurfacing	1,000	500	500
Street Cleansing / Borough Enhancements	200	200	200
Green Care & In Bloom	100	100	100
Tree Planting	50	50	50
Gully Emptying's move from a 5 year cycle to a 3 year cycle	90	90	90
Nuisance Trees	100	100	100
An additional Highways Inspector	50	50	50



<b>Public Realm</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Additional resource required to manage the impact of Ash Dieback (a disease killing Ash Trees in large numbers across the UK). This will be achieved by cataloguing and monitoring the trees condition as well as undertaking necessary remedial works.	400	20	20
Weed Control trial	70	0	0
Car Parks R&M	120	120	120
Waste disposal - inflation pressures across the three main disposal contracts	230	470	710
Food Waste collection trial	200	0	0
Technical resources to provide support to corporate programmes	230	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,480</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>2,080</b>



## Proposed Savings

<b>Adult Social Care</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Streamline the Lye Community Project	50	50	50
Cease the moving and handling team and transfer functions to Occupational Therapy	60	60	60
Glebelands contract remodelling.	30	30	30
Review and update the charging policy for transport	60	60	60
Contract out aspects of the money management function	30	30	30
Reduce a Supported Living contract by 50% when current extension ends (Mental Health)	0	160	160
Integrated Commissioning Hub restructure - assume straight 5% saving whilst still creating Cross Directorate / Council Programme resource	90	90	90
Restructure of Mental Health Team and efficiencies from exit of Section 75 agreement.	150	150	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>630</b>

<b>Children's Services</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Managed step down from external residential placements	425	425	425
Movement of external placements into internal residential placements	375	375	375
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>800</b>

<b>Chief Executive</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Income from Boundary signs	40	40	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>

<b>Digital, Commercial and Customer Services</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Reduction in Customer Services advisors	0	0	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>120</b>



<b>Regeneration and Enterprise</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Close or enter into a commercial lease for Halesowen Cornbow Hall	0	100	100
Estate rationalisation - Regent House Dudley	50	150	150
Estate rationalisation - Cottage St Offices, Brierley Hill	30	30	30
Estate rationalisation - The Mere Education Centre	0	40	40
Himley - increase in car park income generation due to recent price increase. Per Decision Sheet DRE/25/2021.	20	20	20
Himley - net increase in car park income and secondary spend due to increased visits as a result of the proposed installation of Play Area.	0	70	90
Halls - net increase in income from ticket sales, bar and food as a result of increased number of shows following additional capital investment per recent Business Case	100	150	210
Leisure Centres - increase in income as a result of increasing the price of peak usage of the leisure pool at CLC and badminton	100	100	100
Leisure Centres to be self financing within 3 year period.	0	0	1,170
Bring bars back in-house for Stourbridge Town Hall & Cornbow Hall	10	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>1,920</b>

<b>Housing and Community</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Efficiencies resulting from new Libraries service / contract	0	0	360
Remove funding earmarked to match fund PSCO recruitment with Police	250	250	250
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>610</b>

<b>Public Realm</b>	<b>2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000</b>
Charging for green waste collections (net of additional spending to extend the service to 25 fortnightly collections)	1,900	1,900	1,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>1,900</b>



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**Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 20th January 2022**

**Report of the Director of Children’s Services**

**Corporate Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 2 (1st July 2021 to 30th September 2021)**

**Purpose**

1. To present the Quarter 2 position for Children’s Services for the financial year 2021/22 covering the period 1st July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee review the contents of this report and that any identified performance issues are referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

**Background**

3. The Quarter 2 performance report incorporates quarterly key performance measures. Within Children’s Services there are six (6) Performance Indicators across two (2) Council Priorities: -
  - One Council – Building a Dynamic and Sustainable Organisation – **1 measure**
  - Strong and Safer Communities – **5 measures**

For 2021/22, two (2) new measures were introduced for Children’s Services and were reported to Children and Young People’s Scrutiny in September.

#### 4. Performance Summary

##### One Council – Building a Dynamic and Sustainable Organisation

##### **PI.2249** - % of social work posts unfilled by permanent or agency staff

Target – **16%**

Q1 position – 11.81%

Q2 position - **12.01%**

*This is a new measure for 2021/22.*

There continues to be local, regional and national challenges regards social worker recruitment, both in relation to permanent and agency staffing. The Workforce Board continues to meet monthly and is focussed on improving the position.

Work is ongoing with Human Resources and Communications and Public Affairs to raise the profile of our job adverts, along with a refresh of our microsite.

A market forces supplement has also been agreed for some social worker posts. This will make posts more attractive to job applicants. Data will be monitored closely to assess impact.

In addition, a team of social workers has been provided by a third party organisation (Innovate). The team have been with Dudley for 3 months from 18/10/21.

##### Strong and Safer Communities

##### **PI.432** Number of Looked After Children per 10,000 of the child population

Target – **85**

Statutory Neighbour Average – 85.4

Q1 position – 90.06

Q2 position – **86.6**

We had more children exiting care than those who entered care during Quarter 2, 27 children entered the care system and 52 children exited care. 30 of these children turned 18. We have also increased the number of carers who have been granted Special Guardianship Orders – (9 children in total) compared to 2 in Quarter 1). This is a significant improvement from the last quarter where we had less children exiting care. This means that we are progressing children's permanence timely.



We are on track to reduce the number of children who have unnecessarily remained in care, longer than planned. We have recently filed SGO Applications in support of 15 children's carers. We are anticipating that 3 to 4 SGOs will be granted monthly. Feedback from children/young people and their carers is positive. We continue to work with the courts to ensure that discharge of care orders is on track.

There was a positive movement from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 for this measure.

**PI.426** Timeliness of Single Assessments - % Completed Within 45 Working Days  
(Assessment service only)

Target – **86.3%**

Statutory Neighbour Average – 85.5

Quarter 1 position – 77.55%

Quarter 2 position – 90.3%

We have improved our completion rate for assessments within 45 working days by over 12%. This means that 9 out of 10 children are having their needs assessed in a timely way, enabling decisions to be made more quickly about how those needs should be met.

We have introduced a new process for Team Manager oversight, meaning that decision making is taking place earlier and more frequently during the course of the assessment. This has enabled more assessments to be concluded more quickly.

The new process for Team Manager oversight is ensuring that these assessments are concluded and that more of those remaining open are the children who are requiring more detailed assessment to understand their needs.

Last Quarter's report highlighted the measures that the service had put in place which had started to bear fruition and the position for Quarter 2 has shown this to be consistently positive.

Frequent monitoring will ensure that this process continues to be embedded well and continues to have positive impact.

**PI.433** Number of children subject to child protection plan per 10,000 of the child population

Target – **43.7**

Statutory Neighbour Average – 55.1

Quarter 1 position – 34.1

Quarter 2 position – 37.5





Our figures in this area have shown a small increase for 3 consecutive months. These figures remain below the Regional average of 43.7 per 10,000 of the child population.

There has been a continued trend in the reduction of children subject to Child Protection plans (CP) for a period longer than 9 months. In July 66 young people had been subject of a CP plan for 9 months, In August, it was 75 young people and in September it was 58 young people.

The following strategies have contributed to this position:

- The introduction of CP progression panels for children subject to plans over 9 months has helped us to understand why children remained subject to Child Protection plans. It has also helped us to work with the child/family and wider professional networks to determine if a child protection plan is, or has been, effective in reducing risk
- Independent reviewing officers and social workers are using their SMART plans training and Assessment Training to help write plans, reports and minutes in language which makes sense to everyone
- A key cohort of the children subject of Child Protection Plans over 9 months were young people at risk of exploitation. The roll out of the contextualised safeguarding hub and “My Safety Plans” has helped to provide more specialist intervention to young people exposed to risk due to extra familial abuse.

When comparing this measure to our target and statistical neighbours, we consider the figure to be neutral, as without extensive analysis, it is impossible to determine whether an increase/decrease is positive or negative. For example, a decrease in this measure might mean that we are ending plans too early (negative) or that we are making good progress in ending plans where they are no longer necessary (positive).

**PI. 2250** % of closed Early Help Cases that were not open to Level 4 Services less than 6 months after closure

Target – **86%**

Q1 position – 85%

Q2 position – **91.8%**

*This is a new measure for 2021/22.*

A total of 3,505 cases were closed in the past 12 months, of which 3,222 (92%) were not referred to Level 4 services.

This data shows that the right intervention at the right time enables de-escalation of concerns with 92% of all families that Family Support works alongside. It shows that



the strength of Early Help Assessments and Family Support Plans enables a targeted approach to support families to build resilience and engage with universal services.

Targeted audits in November 2021 on the 8% referred to Social Care will begin the journey of a deeper understanding of features that lead to the referral and will enable a plan to improve on this 92%.

**PI.2129** % of eligible children who take up a 'Time for Two's' place in the Dudley Borough

Target – **70%**

Quarter 1 position – 63%

Quarter 2 position – 77.7%

98.80% of applications approved against Department of Work and Pensions.

There were more applications approved than families taking up the offer. A focus on those families to identify why they are not using childcare and education provided for 2 year olds is taking place.

Quarter 2 has seen a positive position when compared to Quarter 1 and against the national target.

### **Quarter 2 Summary**

Of the seven (7) Performance Indicators, all but one of the measures have shown a positive movement when compared to Quarter 1 of 2021/22 against the target numerator.

The service interventions being put in are having a positive impact on performance with a steady senior workforce contributing to driving improvements across Children's Services.

The Quarter 1 report highlighted COVID-19 impact and removal of lockdown restrictions would see performance levels improve and this is tangible across the measures.

### **Directorate Service Delivery**

Inclusive to the report the Directorate Service Summary document provides a detailed account of actions against the Children's Services Directorate Plan. Please refer to appendix 1 within the performance report for further information.

5. There are no alternative options to be made in receiving this report.



## **Finance**

6. There are no direct financial implications in receiving this report.

## **Law**

7. There are no direct legal implications in receiving this report

## **Risk Management**

8. The current performance reporting period, risk management is contained and reviewed in the performance reporting, however as part of the new risk management framework approved at audit and standards committee, risk reporting will not sit within performance and each directorate will need to develop a risk register for monitoring purposes.

## **Equality Impact**

9. There are no special considerations to be made with regard to equality and diversity in noting and receiving this report.
10. No proposals have been carried out.
11. No proposals have been made, therefore does not impact on children and young people.

## **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

12. There are no specific direct human resource issues in receiving this report. In terms of the Council's sickness level and the management of attendance, the HR and OD team continues to work with Directors and Heads of Service to assist and provide support in tackling those areas identified as having high levels of sickness

## **Commercial/Procurement**

13. There is no direct commercial impact.

## **Council Priorities**

14. The Council Plan and the Performance Management Framework enables a consistent approach for performance management across the organisation, aligning the Council Plan, Borough Vision and Future Council Programme and provides that golden thread between them.



Our Council Plan is built around 4 key priority areas. The Council Plan is a 3-year '[Plan on a Page](#)'. Each directorate has a Directorate Plan that aligns to the priority outcomes that the Council is striving to achieve, as outlined within the Council Plan, and includes an assessment of how the service has contributed towards these priorities along with a range of key performance indicators to enable us to keep track of progress.

Performance management is key in delivering the longer-term vision of the Council. Quarterly Corporate Performance Reports are reported and reviewed by Strategic Executive Board, Informal Cabinet, the Deputy and Shadow Deputy Leader and Future Council Scrutiny Committee

This will help to enable the council to deliver the objectives and outcomes of the Council Plan and in turn the Borough Vision



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## Appendices

Directorate Service Summary Key Actions – Children's Services



Childrens Services  
2021-22 Directorate



Children's Services 2021-22 Directorate Measures	Q2	Commentary
PI.432 Number of Looked After Children per 10,000 of the child population	86.6	<p><b>Performance: What is the data telling us?</b> We had more children exiting care than those who entered care. During Quarter 2, 27 children entered the care system and 52 children exited care. 30 of these children turned 18. We have also increased the number whose carers have been granted Special Guardianship Orders – (9 children in total) compared to 2 in Q1). This is a significant improvement from the last quarter where we had less children exiting care. This means that we are progressing children's permanence timely.</p> <p><b>Impact: What are the issues/risks to service delivery?</b> Improved performance has had a positive impact on children whose permanence plan is either SGO or reunification with their parents. Delays in court have a significant impact on the time it takes to discharge care orders. This delay is related to impact of covid-19 on the court hearings.</p> <p><b>Assurance: Provide evidence the actions in place are having an impact and explain what is working well.</b> We are in track to reduce the number of children who have unnecessarily remained in care, longer than planned. We have recently filed SGO Applications in support of 15 children's carers. We are anticipating that 3 to 4 SGOs will be granted monthly. Feedback from children/young people and their carers is positive We continue to work with the courts to ensure that discharge of care orders is on track.</p>
PI.426 Timeliness of Single Assessments - % Completed Within 45 Working Days (Assessment service only)	90.3	<p><b>Performance: What is the data telling us?</b> We have improved our completion rate for assessments within 45 working days by 12.7%. This means that 9/10 children are having their needs assessed in a timely way, enabling decisions to be made more quickly about how those needs should be met. We have introduced a new process for Team Manager oversight, meaning that decision making is taking place earlier and more frequently during the course of the assessment. This has enabled more assessments to be concluded more quickly.</p> <p><b>Impact: What are the issues/risks to service delivery?</b> Too many assessments were remaining open even though work with the family had concluded, particularly for children who were being stepped down to Universal</p>

		<p>services. The new process for Team Manager oversight is ensuring that these assessments are concluded and that more of those remaining open are the children who are requiring more detailed assessment to understand their needs.</p> <p><b>Assurance: Provide evidence the actions in place are having an impact and explain what is working well.</b> Improved and more timely Team Manager oversight is ensuring that more assessments are concluding in a timely way. Frequent monitoring will ensure that this process continues to be embedded well and continues to have positive impact.</p>
<p>PI.433 Number of children subject to child protection plan per 10,000 of the child population</p>	<p>37.5</p>	<p><b>Performance: What is the data telling us?</b> In September our performance in this area was 37.5, in comparison to 36.4 in August 2021 &amp; 34.2% in July 2021. Our figures in this area have shown a small increase for 3 consecutive months. These figures remain below the Regional average of 47.3 per 10,000 of the child population. The following strategies have contributed to this position: The introduction of CP progression panels for children subject to plans over 9 months has helped us to understand why children remained subject to Child Protection plans. It has also helped us to work with the child/family and wider professional networks to determine if a child protection plan is, or has been, effective in reducing risk. Independent reviewing officers and social workers are using their SMART plans training and Assessment Training to help write plans, reports and minutes in language which makes sense to everyone.</p> <p>A key cohort of the children subject of Child Protection Plans over 9 months were young people at risk of exploitation. The roll out of the contextualised safeguarding hub and “My Safety Plans” has helped to provide more specialist intervention to young people exposed to risk due to extra familial abuse.</p> <p>There has been a continued trend in reduction of children subject to CP plans for a period longer than 9 months. In July 66 young people had been subject of a CP plan for 9 months, In August, it was 75 young people and in September it was 58 young people.</p> <p>The introduction of a pre ICPC threshold discussions with the Duty IRO and Social Worker have helped social workers to consider the threshold of risk to</p>

	<p>determine if the Child Protection threshold was met. Following the introduction of the consultations, there has been a decrease in the number of plans starting and then ending at the first CP review.</p> <p><b>Impact: What are the issues/risks to service delivery?</b></p> <p>Our data shows that we are continuing to maintain a responsive service to risk assessment and risk planning in Child Protection. Our key performance indicators in children subject to a second CP plan ever or subsequent or second CP plan in a two year period remains stable, and below our regional and statistical neighbours.</p> <p>A raise in these performance indicators could suggest that the reduction in the number of children subject to CP plans per 10,000 was due to premature ending of plans.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b></p> <p>A sudden rise in children subject to child protection plans would mean children and young people in Dudley do not have appropriate professional support in place. A sudden rise in the number of children subject to a CP plan, could impact on the allocation of social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's).</p> <p>Our sustained levels of CP population per 10,000, remains well below the regional and national average. These KPI's have not risen sharply following the re-opening of schools or nurseries. This suggests our current activity and multi-agency working is helping to offer young people the right support, on the right plan, at the right time.</p> <p><b>Assurance: Provide evidence the actions in place are having an impact and explain what is working well.</b></p> <p>The S&amp;R service managers have been reviewing the number of CP plans ending within a 3 month period to determine if the threshold discussions taking place before an ICPC are impacting on the decision on whether the CP threshold is met. Below is a data comparison for the period before and after the introduction of the threshold discussion.</p> <p>For period Aug 2020 – January 2021:</p>
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		<p>All CP plans ended within period 287  No. CP plans ended within 3 months of ICPC/CP start date 54  % CP plans ended within 3 months of ICPC/CP start date 18.8%</p> <p>For period Feb 2021 – July 2021:  All CP plans ended within period 247  No. CP plans ended within 3 months of ICPC/CP start date 33  % CP plans ended within 3 months of ICPC/CP start date 13.4%</p> <p>The above data shows there is a 5.4% reduction in the number of children being subject of a child protection plan for a 3 month period.</p> <p>Young people who have been at risk of extra familial exploitation are now receiving tailored support from a multi-disciplinary approach to risk management. The contextual safeguarding hub are continuing to work in partnership with Young People and their families to evaluate the impact of family led intervention on their outcomes.</p> <p>The IRO service have redesigned their consultation documents and leaflets for parents, children and young people to help improve understanding of the reason why a multi-agency plan is needed and ensure families have a lead role in understanding and implementing the plan, through family led decision making. The organisation are embracing Restorative Practice and the IRO's are leading the way through restorative consultations and restorative conferencing.</p> <p>The IRO Service Managers and IRO's are completing peer audits and supervision to evaluate the impact of our practice on outcomes for children and families. Feedback from Children and Families is part of this process and our learning from audits and peer supervision is embedded in our service development plan.</p>
PI.2129 % of eligible children who take up a 'Time for Two's' place in the Dudley Borough	77.7	<p><b>Performance: What is the data telling us?</b>  Take up 77.67%</p> <p>98.80% of applications approved against DWP target.</p>

		<p><b>Impact: What are the issues/risks to service delivery?</b>  More applications approved than families taking up the offer.  A focus on those families to identify why they are not using childcare and education provided for 2 year olds.</p> <p><b>Assurance: Provide evidence the actions in place are having an impact and explain what is working well.</b>  Discussions with relevant team members, to initiate 2 minute videos on website about 2 year offer and other promotional materials.  Ensure all Team members and partners are promoting.</p>
<p>PI.2250 % of closed Early Help Cases that were not open to Level 4 Services less than 6 months after closure</p>	<p>91.8</p>	<p><b>Performance: What is the data telling us?</b>  Family Support effectiveness is measured by the percentage of cases that received an Early Help Intervention (Early Help Family Plan) and were closed in the last 12 months, and then were not referred for a Level 4 intervention in the following 6 months after closure (Social Care referral). A total of 3,505 cases were closed in the past 12 months, of which 3,222 (92%) were not referred to Level 4 services.</p> <p><b>Impact: What are the issues/risks to service delivery?</b>  This data shows that the right intervention at the right time enables de-escalation of concerns with 92% of all families that Family Support works alongside. It shows that the strength of Early Help Assessments and Family Support Plans enables a targeted approach to support families to build resilience and engage with universal services.</p> <p><b>Assurance: Provide evidence the actions in place are having an impact and explain what is working well.</b>  Targeted audits in November 2021 on the 8% referred to Social Care will begin the journey of a deeper understanding of features that lead to the referral and will enable a plan to improve on this 92%.</p>

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**Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Programme Update**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Scrutiny Committee on some key areas of operational performance progress and elements of the wider improvements and transformation we are implementing across the Dudley SEND Partnership.

The report includes October deep dive feedback in relation to the SEND Written Statement of Action (WSoA) that Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) and the area's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are jointly responsible for delivering.

This follows a joint inspection of the local area in May 2019 to inspect the provision for children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs and disabilities

This will give Members the opportunity to raise any questions and be reassured that DMBC and wider partnership are making significant progress with the improvements we have committed to deliver.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the Committee:

Note and comment on the current operational progress with regard to our strategies and approaches.

Note and comment on the WSoA improvements within DMBC and partner organisations that are designed to embed the cultural and operational changes required to achieve sustainable improved outcomes for our Children and Young People.



Note and comment on the feedback received from the DfE and the impacts and improvements that are beginning to be seen on the ground.

## **Background**

3. Members will be aware from previous updates of the results of the 2019 Joint Area Inspection and the resulting Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and wider SEND Improvement Programme that has been instigated as a result of the inspection findings.

## **SEND Deep Dives**

4. As part of the on-going support provided by the DfE the Dudley Local Area have been invited to participate in a pilot approach to preparing for SEND Re-Visits. This is delivered via a series of 'SEND Deep Dives' where the areas of weakness in the WSoA identified at the original inspection are divided into four sessions in our case and the DfE team meet with the relevant Local Area Teams involved to understand the following:
  1. What has changed?
  2. What progress has been made?
  3. What has been done?
  4. What is the evidence of impact on the ground of your improvements?
  5. What are the next steps?

The second of four sessions were held in October 2021 and covered the following areas of weakness:

Area 2.- The needs of children and young people (CYP) with SEND have not been accurately identified or moderated over time.

Area 3. - A strategic approach to assessment and provision management in Dudley is lacking.

Area 4. - Joint Commissioning is underdeveloped and not always informed by accurate analysis of data.

Area 10 – Education Health Care (EHC) plans are often of a poor quality, they do not all contain Health and Social Care needs and are not outcome-focused.

The sessions were hosted by a Lead Officer and supported by a range of colleagues from across the Local Area in Health, Parent Carer Forum (PCF), Black Country Partnership, Public Health, Social Care and Schools.

General feedback from the DfE on the first Deep Dive session was:

- The Local Area overview power point presentation provided an extremely positive introduction to the background and context for the WSoA. Having presenters from DMBC, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and PCF not only gave different



perspectives but also powerfully demonstrated the strategic partnerships joined up approach.

- Presentations for Area 2 and Area 3 were excellent. It shone through that more leaders across the system, alongside parent/carer leaders from the PCF, understood the intended outcomes and progress made in priorities 2 and 3. In the following Area 4 and Area 10 sessions, both were of a good standard of presentation.
- The presentation would be even better if the final two presentations (priorities 4 and 10) indicated who was present in their first slide (as priorities 2 and 3 had done), referencing the impact of covid and the refinement of the road map to reflect the progress at regular time intervals.

In conclusion, the whole team had clearly reflected on previous feedback, acted upon it and produced a coherent and detailed account of where the area has made progress against every priority focused upon in this session. There was a clear collegiate vision, purpose and clarity of what was required at the next stage to ensure high impact and change.

Further work is still needed on a covid position statement for Dudley.

With regard to feedback on the focus areas covered on the day:

Priority 2- The needs of children and young people with SEND have not been accurately identified or moderated over time.

- There was clear evidence provided of progress over time and the current status of intended outcomes and planning for change
- There is now a single SEND dataset established since 2020 - trends and forecasting are now permissible.
- Data slides indicate that the borough has a developed dataset which is enabling analysis of need and prediction of provision and sufficiency

Even better if:

- The focus upon Bases in the presentation was very positive, a slide on wider Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) appropriateness of placement/match to EHCP with data/numbers would be useful in addition.
- Data and information is much more coherent and enabling improved planning. We now await evidence of impact on outcomes for children and young people.

Priority 3 - A strategic approach to assessment and provision mapping in Dudley is lacking.

- There is now a single data set across partner agencies used for cohort planning
- SEND needs analysis showed in the increase trend in Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) population.



- There is progress in terms of using the data to plan and inform their base planning and development.

Even better if:

- The lag in impact is evident - much entirely necessary foundations are now in place, with special places including bases now reflecting place designation at an appropriate level. This now needs to develop across mainstream to ensure more consistent assessment and identification of need, and meeting of needs.
- Engagement of mainstream school leaders is more evident within Deep Dives with the LA and CCG/ICS, through presence or 'testimony.'
- Local area is in the initial review of school health services, exploring different models of care delivery; they now need to demonstrate they have a clear understanding of needs and clear/ consistent models of care.

Priority 4 - Joint commissioning is underdeveloped and not always informed by accurate analysis of data.

- Of the planned actions in the WSoA 13 out of 13 have been completed. Formalised joint commissioning arrangements are in place and working well. A written commissioning policy is in place.
- Joint commissioning one of the key components of the SEND Strategy
- A detailed spend profile across DMBC and CCG is in place, being used to assess current effectiveness and plan new provision

Even better if:

- The area recognises "An outcomes led framework and performance metrics are not yet agreed and in place". Needs to now move at pace. CDC is supporting this process.
- Commissioning decisions informed by outcomes/spend/value for money are a work in progress. Such decisions need to link to the outcomes framework above.
- Halesbury example would benefit from clarity on the role that the voice of young people has had in developing provision. It also raised the question of decommissioning Year 14. This did not seem to have been considered, so while good evidence of working with Dudley providers, are DMBC/CCG also looking beyond Dudley for innovative provision and benchmarking?
- Course development mentioned above, again where is the voice of young people? It was less evident to reviewers. Issue raised of provision required for young people with medical needs largely psychological who have struggled in mainstream and may not cope with Further Education.
- Need to produce the data to support provision development that reduces health inequalities.



Priority 10 - EHC plans are often of a poor quality. They are not outcome-focused and often lack information about health and social care. Completed EHC plans are often not shared with early years settings.

- All actions are completed – guidance document; audit system etc but requiring more work/maintenance.
- A re-structured team is in place, increase in team size, SEND handbook produced, CPD and Induction programme established, online case management in place, multi-agency panel decision making introduced (most in time of virtual covid world).
- Tribunals and Complaints Officer; Local Offer officer and other new posts in place and making an impact.

Even better if:

- Revisit representation of focus group and identify those getting key message across. Give succinct explanation of any restructure, why? and impact?
- Further collection of evidence of impact both quantitative and qualitative. Feedback from parents, SENCOs, and other professionals.
- Dudley is aware that culture and practice needs to develop even further. They know that their Plans are not of a good enough quality. Include a regular cycle of process check. Use complaints and Tribunals as an opportunity to search for organisational learning.

Other Deep Dives scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.

Please see attached in Appendix 2 the SEND Deep Dive Schedule.

### **SEND Operational Performance/Data Update and Progress**

As part of our wider improvements, we are continually working to improve our SEND Operational performance measures including those laid out in the SEND Code of Practice.

What is working well:

- Process improvement and efficiencies
- Better use of business intelligence to support:
- Capacity planning for Case Officers
- Timeliness reporting and progress to support improvement activity
- Forecasting of SEND need over the next 3 to 5 years
- Data backed provision planning down to Primary Need, Age and Township
- Working as a system with partners, parents, carers, and children and young people to change how day to day works.

What is not working well:





- An increased number of requests for statutory assessments from Early Years for the Autumn term. This will have an impact on the timeliness of dealing with requests and the capacity of advice givers in the Spring term.
- Demand continues to increase from Parents and Schools for specialist settings.

## Compliments and Complaints

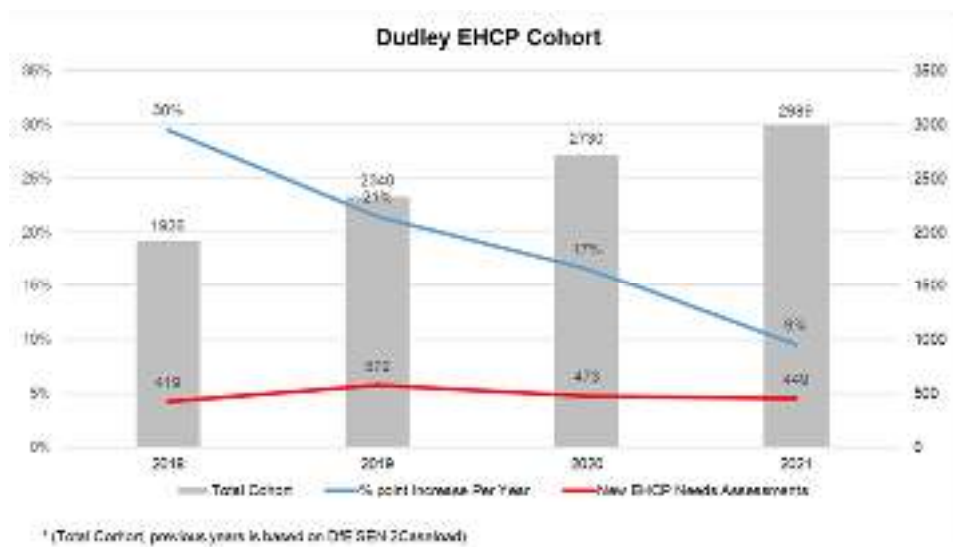
In the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, **54** complaints were received. This reduced to **38** between April 2020 to March 2021.

The current number of complaints for this year stands at **15** from April 2021 to Dec 2021.

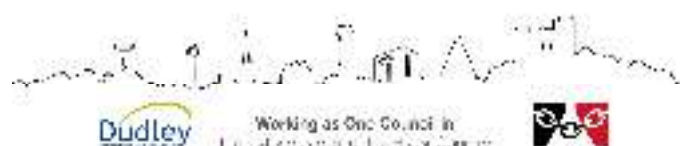
In the last 18 months we have begun to receive compliments, totalling **85** since April 2020.

## Dudley EHCP Cohort

The borough is continuing to see an increase in the cohort of children and young people that have an EHCP. However, the rate of increase for this year to date is the lowest in the last seven years and the annual % increase of 10.5% is in line with the current national average. The number of EHCP's being issued is down from 473 in 2020 to 449 year to date (November) in 2021. In addition, we have also ceased more plans this year to date than any other year. This has been driven by more robust processes around annual reviews and increased effective monitoring of children and young people's progress.



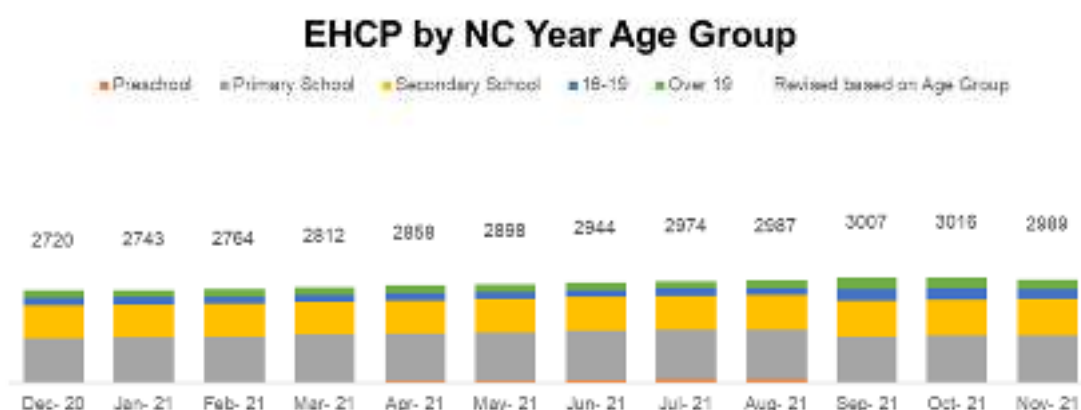
## EHCP by NC Year Age Group



The total number of EHCPs fell by 27 from October to November, the majority of which were in the post 16 group as they have met their outcomes and/or have made successful transition into employment/training.

Work is ongoing across several areas to improve the quality and effectiveness of the EHC Assessment process to ensure that the support is right and in the right place where it is needed. To achieve this, we are focusing on:

- Providing increased SEND Support in schools through access to appropriate support at the appropriate time.
- Launching a SEND Toolkit to increase Schools' knowledge and confidence.
- Delivering training via the whole school SEND project.
- Enabling stronger decision making and ensuring support is provided where is required, making best use of resources in the right places.
- Improving the Request to Assess process.
- The appropriate ending of plans where relevant.



### EHCP New Requests Completed within the 20 Week Statutory Timeframe (including Exceptions)

The current level of completion within the 20 week timescale is 46% year to date (November), unchanged from October 2021. This is a 20 percentage point improvement since December 2020 year to date.



There are a range of drivers for the current achievement rate:-



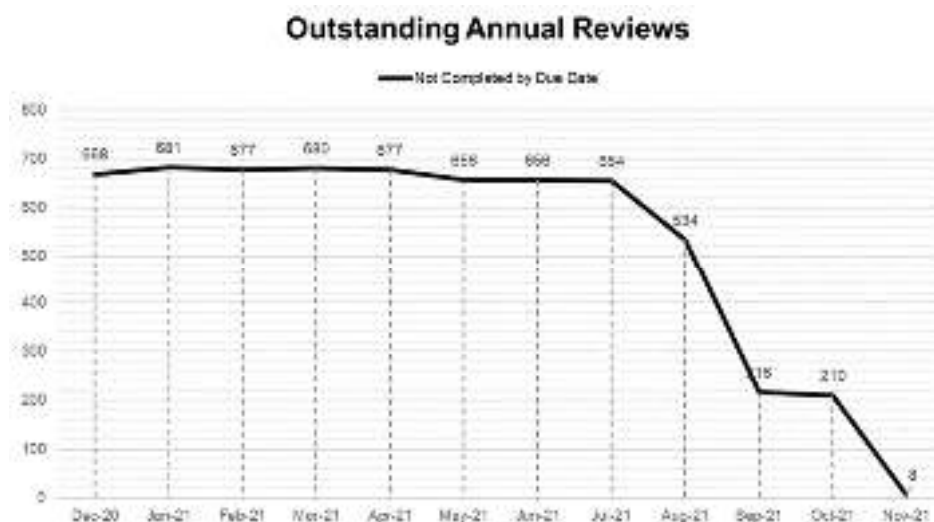
- Lack of identified needs at SEND support level which causes a delay in the assessment process as it is more complex.
- Capacity of advice givers and professionals to provide input to reports.
- A continuing high number of assessment requests that impacts capacity.

Mitigation measures are being introduced to address these issues such as the SEND Toolkit, Early Years transformation and further development work with School Educational colleagues.

## Annual Reviews

The current number of outstanding reviews is 8 which is down from the previous months total of 210. This has come about through a data cleanse and an increased focus on completing annual reviews. There has been an overall decrease of 660 outstanding reviews since the beginning of this year.

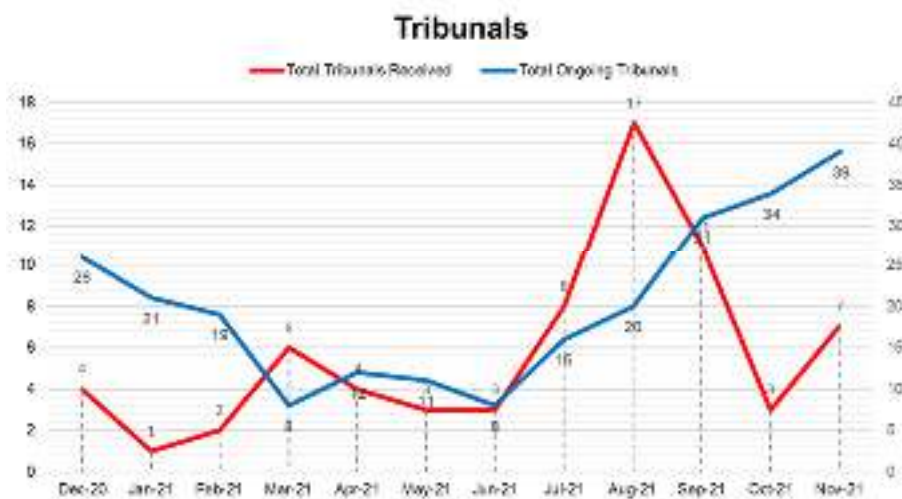
A comprehensive review around the Annual Review process is still on-going with clarified process mapping and timings in the current system updated to better reflect the needs across the years and flow of information with schools.



## Appeals (Tribunals)

The number of new tribunals has increased in the last month by a further 7 resulting in a total of 39 on-going tribunals. The increase is due to continuing challenge around named provision (Section I) which is the main reason for appeals. These challenges are where the Local Authority has named mainstream but parental preference is for specialist provision.





Some of the key lessons we have learned from the Tribunals are around being proactive, specifically:

- Early resolution through mediation
- Use of Consent orders ensuring ongoing work to resolve disputes continues even once a tribunal is lodged.
- We are also continuing to work on a number of areas of improvement around appeals.
- Stronger links with commissioning of required provision.
- Working with mainstream schools to improve inclusion across the borough.
- Working with mainstream schools to improve the access to resource or knowledge.
- Raise the aspirations that the professionals have for children of Dudley.
- Whole School SEND project will address the low aspirations for children across some parts of Health education and social care, particularly for SEMH children.

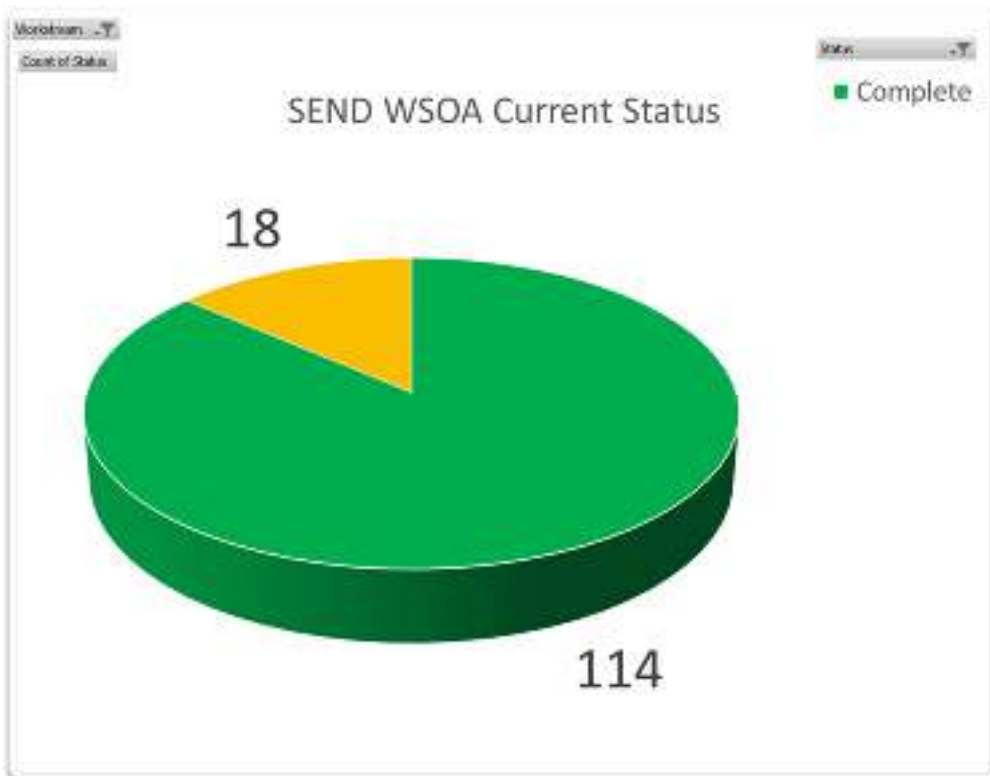
### Update on SEND WSoA Progress

With regard to our specific progress in delivering the actions in our SEND Written Statement of Action (WSoA), across the 132 actions our progress as of 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 is:

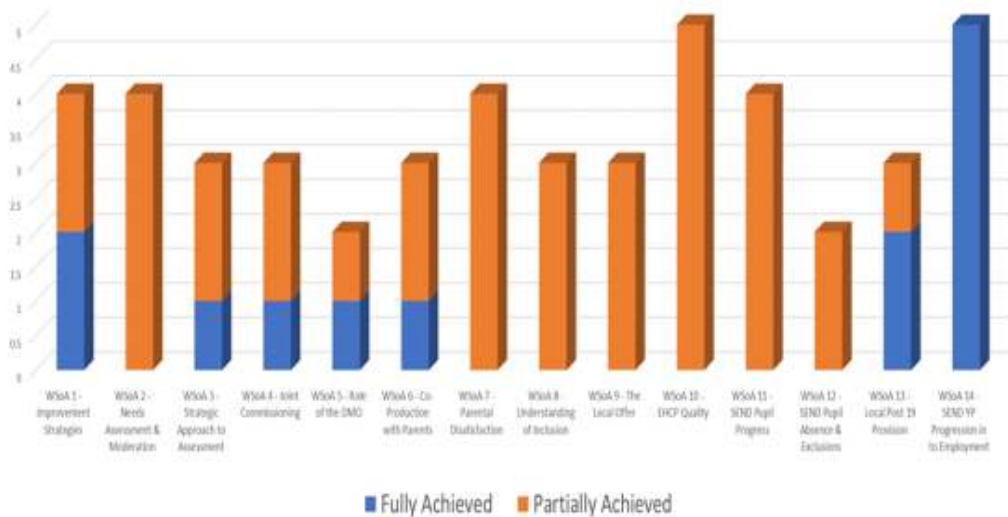
- 114 actions now completed.
- 18 actions in progress.
- 0 actions yet to start.

We have completed all actions in seven of the fourteen areas as illustrated below and all remaining actions are currently forecasted for completion by the end of June 2022.





## Dudley SEND WSoA Outcomes/Impacts Progress Status by Priority Area



Please see attached in Appendix 1 the current WSoA delivery status.

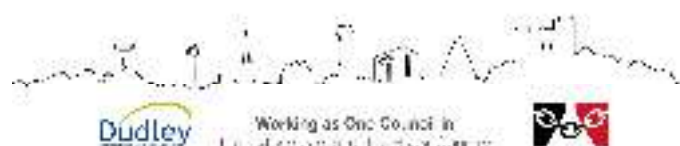
### **Finance**

5. The funding of Children and Young People with High Needs is provided by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which is a ring-fenced revenue grant allocated to local authorities.

In Dudley the funding from the High Needs Block is directed to fund:

- a. SEN pupils who meet a given threshold determined by Education, Health and Care Plan.
- b. Non-SEN pupils, such as those placed in Alternative Provision (pupil referral units or education otherwise).

For 2021/22 the High Needs block allocation is £39.849m, the latest forecast assumptions for 2021/22 reflect an overall deficit of £18.813m for the Dedicated Schools Grant, this includes a brought forward deficit from 2020/21 of £11.151m and assumes that savings of £2.835m are achieved in year. A breakdown reflecting the latest financial position is reflected below.





	Latest Budget 2021/22	B/Fwd Deficit Position	Nov 21 Cumulative Forecast 2021/22 (+ over / - under)
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	226.535	-	-
High Needs Block	39.849	13.609	21.657
Early Years Block	19.327	-1.965	-2.420
Central School Services Block	2.005	-0.493	-0.424
<b>Dedicated Schools Grant</b>	<b>287.716</b>	<b>11.151</b>	<b>18.813</b>

A detailed recovery plan includes a number of efficiencies that coincide with the SEND Improvement Programme.

Funding allocations for 2022/23 Dedicated Schools Grant are published and include additional funding following the announcement as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. The High Needs block funding includes an additional allocation of £1.758m, grant conditions and associated plans are currently under review.

The SEND Team are funded by a Local Authority General Fund revenue budget. The 2021/22 latest budget is £1.321m, in addition, a reserve of £0.587m was approved in 2020/21 and this funding was rolled forward and is available to be spent in 2021/22. A business case was approved to request additional permanent funding for the SEND team as part of the 2022/23 budget process and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

## Law

- The law governing the education of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is primarily supplied Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and its associated Regulations and Guidance, in particular the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years. They state that local authorities' education and social care teams, with local health authorities, must work together to enable and facilitate access to a suitable education for children and young people with SEND aged 25 years and below.

As the law also gives those young people and the parents of the children concerned the right to challenge the manner in which decisions are reached about their education and the substance of those decisions, it is essential that:





- The officers within Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's (the Local Authority) SEND Team, and the policies and procedures that support their work, comply with the law; and
- The Local Authority's SEND services receive regular and detailed scrutiny to ensure that:
  - (a) they comply with the law;
  - (b) they meet the needs of the children, young people and parents that they serve; and
  - (c) they can be corrected and adjusted to achieve (a) and (b), where necessary.

Consequently, because this report provides the Committee with evidence of how the Local Authority is developing, implementing and monitoring of these services with the assistance of public bodies, both local and national, it demonstrates that the Local Authority is endeavouring to comply with its legal duties and improve the outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

## **Risk Management**

### **7. Key Risks & Mitigation**

Capacity to deliver change at pace across partners impacts progress of the Programme.

Programme has been reviewed and aligned to maximise efficiency across all areas of the Improvement Programme and WSoA. The enhanced SEND Team capacity supports the delivery of change at an operational level.

Detailed plans are in place and mapped to ensure that focus is on delivery of key tasks when they are required with strong tracking, management and support for all task owners from the programme team.

Wider alignment and engagement with partners is key to delivering the impact for the children of Dudley – Key to delivery of the improvements across all areas of 0-25 SEND requiring strong leadership and support from all areas of DMBC.

### **Covid-19**

Contingency plans have been in place with virtual meetings taking place to ensure that the programme has continued at pace. There has been an impact with staff being diverted to Covid activities but the impact has been minimised.



## Equality Impact

8. There are no equality implications resulting from this update.

## Human Resources/Organisational Development

9. The service is in regular discussion with the HR Business Partner in relation to recruitment and workforce planning to support the SEND improvement programme.

## Commercial/Procurement

10. There are no direct commercial or procurement implications associated with this report, however improved relationships with Dudley schools does create opportunity for increased trading.

## Council Priorities

11. The SEND Improvement Programme and its related activities aligns with the Council's core priority of Supporting Stronger and Safer Communities by ensuring that SEND CYP feel valued and have the opportunity to contribute towards strengthening the Community.

It also relates to the Council's aspirations in terms of Dudley being a place where everybody has the education and skills they need, and where outstanding local schools, colleges and universities secure excellent results for their learners.

We have high ambitions for our SEND CYP in terms of their aspirations and achievements and believe passionately that they should be given the same opportunities to achieve them.



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

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## Appendices

### List of Background Documents

Appendix 1 - Written Statement of Action Current progress

Appendix 2 – DfE SEND Deep Dive Schedule



Completed-114 In Progress-18 Yet to Start-0

	SRO	LEAD OFFICER	ORIGINAL DELIVERY DATE	CURRENT DELIVERY DATE	OUTPUTS/PRODUCTS	STATUS AT 29/10/21	STATUS AT 11/11/21
<p><b>1.- Improvement Strategies are not embedded and they have not had a marked impact on improved outcomes.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A co-produced SEND Strategy that is owned, shared and delivered through the Improving Outcomes for Children and Families Board.</li> <li>• A SEND action plan which sets out improvements needed across Education, Health and Care ensuring a coherent joined up approach.</li> <li>• A SEND Strategy which focuses on identifying, sustaining and future proofing joint priorities to improve Children and Young People’s outcomes across Education, Health and Social Care.</li> <li>• A robust Workforce Development Plan which has a clear vision to ensure strategies are embedded and ambition to improve outcomes for Children and Young People in Dudley.</li> </ul>	Toni Dawodu						
Review and agree SEND Oversight Group Membership to monitor and ensure progress of WSoA across the partnership	Toni Dawodu	Helen Ellis	Oct-19	Oct-19	1. Revised attendee list reflecting all partners.		
Gain agreement at the Improving CSIB to report SEND progress against WSOA	Toni Dawodu	Helen Ellis	Nov-19	Nov-19	1. Publication of minutes showing agreement.		
Gain agreement to increase CSIB membership to reflect the SEND improvement plan	Toni Dawodu	Helen Ellis	Nov-19	Nov-19	1. Publication of minutes showing agreement.		
Co-produce a communication strategy that will encompass all stakeholders to ensure they are updated with the on-going plan and progress of SEND improvements and make provide a means of sharing knowledge, learning and provide feedback.	Toni Dawodu	Shelley Brookes	Dec-19	Dec-19	1. Publication of communications strategy. 2. Feedback from stakeholders shows a reduction of 50% dissatisfied with effectiveness of information communication against the April 2019 baseline by July 2020.		
Design an effective feedback process to channel learning from complaints into SEND case officers performance	Toni Dawodu	Karen Connerney	Nov-19	Jun-20	1. Publication of process to include evidence of how it will improve outcomes for the SEND cohort and by when.		
Seek external support to develop the workforce development plan to ensure best practice is captured in its design and objectives.	Toni Dawodu	Toni Dawodu	Jan-21	Nov-21	1. Publication of input from external source.		

Paul Lynch is developing a corporate WDP which SEND will augment. Timetable of production is TBC.

Provide an update to IOCFB to show the results of the 100 day plan and the progress of all deliverables	Toni Dawodu	Helen Ellis	Feb-20	Feb-20	1. Production of update.		
Provide a progress update of WSoA deliverables to CSIB across the partnership ensures delivery against time quality and cost.	Toni Dawodu	Helen Ellis	Mar-20	Mar-20	1. Publication of update and feedback/comments from CSIB.		
Facilitate a series of workshops with key partners to identify key areas of the current strategy that require review including revisiting the SEND Code of Practice.	Toni Dawodu	Helen Ellis	Dec-19	Mar-20	1. Publication of output from workshop.		
Identify key areas for development and create task and finish groups to deliver partnership wide improvements to the SEND service.	Toni Dawodu	Helen Ellis	Dec-19	May-20	1. Output showing areas to be revised with timescales of delivery and ownership details.		
Capture parents/carers and young people input to ensure the strategy is fully co-produced	Toni Dawodu	Helen Ellis	Dec-19	May-20	1. Publication of input from parents & Carers.		
Evaluate effectiveness of revised improvement strategy to track improvements in stakeholder satisfaction and outcomes for SEND CYP.	Toni Dawodu	Helen Ellis	May-20	Oct-20	1. Decrease of 50% in Parent and Carer dissatisfaction that their children's needs are being met against April 2019 baseline.		
<p><b>2.- The needs of CYP with SEND have not been accurately identified or moderated over time.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear early identification of all children that will require additional Health, Social Care or Education support</li> <li>• 100% of EHCPs accurately match assessment and moderated needs of every pupil so that pupils are placed in appropriate settings</li> <li>• Provision is regularly reviewed so that the moderated needs of the Dudley SEND Cohort are accurately captured</li> <li>• Development of additional small bases within mainstream provision, for pupils with ASD or SEMH in particular that mirror existing bases.</li> </ul>	Toni Dawodu						
Carry out an exercise to identify accurate demand for places in special schools for September 2020 and for future years.	Toni Dawodu	Inderjit Lahel	Nov-19	Sep-20	<p>1. Publication of demand numbers by year.</p> <p>2. The trend of rising numbers of appeals &amp; tribunals against the provision for SEND CYP is stemmed in the year from January 2020 and reduced by 50% in the year from January 2021.</p> <p>3. Increase in the number of CYP with EHCP's within mainstream settings to align with the region and statistical neighbours by July 2021.</p> <p>4. By Sep 2020 a target date is set to match the performance of the top quartile of LA's in regard to 3.</p>		

Dudley Education Psychology Service (EPS) to confirm the demand for potential new bases for ASD and SEMH pupils within mainstream schools to increase the numbers of relevant settings available.	Toni Dawodu	Dawn Goodall	Jan-20	Mar-20	1. Publication of business case.		
Review current arrangements for identifying provision to ensure that there is equity of access and to build confidence in all stakeholders.	Toni Dawodu	Dawn Goodall	Nov-19	Jan-20	1. Parents and carers dissatisfaction that CYP needs have not been met reduces by 50% compared to the April 2019 baseline by July 2020.		
A full review of SEND staffing was carried out to ensure that the structure is suitable for delivering the highest quality EHCPs .	Toni Dawodu	Dawn Goodall	Jan-20	Jan-20	1. 100% of all new Sep-2020 admission arrangements have been created with inputs from parents and carers.		
Produce a full Dudley EHC plan database in order to ensure all information is up to date and allowing direct comparison with the levels of the different categories of need locally to national, regional and statistical neighbour data to support improvements in our performance where relevant.	Toni Dawodu	Andy Baker	Nov-19	Feb-20	1. Database identifies differences between the Dudley cohort and national, regional and statistical neighbour data is identified and any explanations explored.		
Revise the Annual review process for EHC plans to ensure that all primary and secondary needs are accurately captured to improve the matching of provision to correctly assessed educational and health needs.	Toni Dawodu	Susan Powell	Apr-20	Aug-20	1. Annual review process ensures that all plans are compliant with the code of practice. 2. School survey shows 95% of Schools say the overall quality of EHC plans has improved since May 2019.		
Review the staff handbook and SENCo training to ensure that the process for annual reviews of EHC plans involves a review of the primary and secondary needs.	Toni Dawodu	Karen Connerney	Feb-20	Apr-20	1. Production of the review output. 2. Number of parents and carers dissatisfied with the assessment of their child's needs reduces by 50% compared to the April 2019 benchmark by July 2020. 3. Number of parent & carers stating that their child's needs are poorly assessed reduces by 50% compared to the April 2019 baseline by July 2020.		
Plan and deliver a development approach/tool to revise the schools guidance document to ensure that schools are able to accurately identify primary and secondary needs.	Toni Dawodu	Julia Dean	Apr-20	Nov-21	1. Revised Schools guidance document is published. 2. New relevant CPD is in place.		To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.
Review the system of EHC plan moderation facilitated by the SEND Network so that schools are able to review their individual EHC plans against other schools to ensure a consistent approach.	Toni Dawodu	Julia Dean	Apr-20	Nov-21	1. Publication of review with suggested improvements. 2. Schools survey confirms that 85% of them have attended training and using it to moderate their EHC plans.		To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.
Identify effective SEND provision in the local area, across the West Midlands region and nationally that could be replicated in Dudley to replicate best practice where applicable.	Toni Dawodu	Inderjit Lahel	Apr-20	Sep-20	1. Publication of data map showing the Dudley position in relation to our performance against best practice.		

<p><b>3. - A strategic approach to assessment and provision mapping in Dudley is lacking.</b>  <b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An effective approach to strategic assessment and provision management in Dudley.</li> <li>• Increased coordination of assessment information between agencies.</li> <li>• Integrated and shared access to information systems.</li> </ul>	Toni Dawodu							
<p>Capture education requirements for input in to the early assessment and provision process to improve forecasting and planning of commissioned services</p>	Toni Dawodu	Julia Dean	Jan-20	Nov-21	1. Publication of appropriate education needs for input into the early assessment and provision process.			To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.
<p>Capture CCG requirements for input in to the early assessment and provision process supporting forecasting and planning of commissioned services</p>	Toni Dawodu	Neill Bucktin	Mar-20	Jun-20	1. Publication of requirements.			
<p>Agree and establish a joint LA / CCG dynamic risk register is agreed to identify CYP within the SEND (ASD and/or L Disability) Transformation Care Partnership at risk of hospital admission.</p>	Toni Dawodu	Neill Bucktin	Feb-20	Feb-20	1. List of CYP with SEND at risk of hospital admission within the TCP. 2. Identification of relevant interventions and resolutions to reduce risk.			
<p>Embed an RCA process for those CYP diagnosed with ASD and/or L Disability during admission to establish why they are admitted.</p>	Toni Dawodu	Linda Cropper	Feb-20	Feb-20	1. Publication of the process to include a method to monitor its effectiveness.			
<p>Carry out an audit of assessment of SEND in Dudley schools against the best practice identified in the SEND Code of Practice to produce a gap analysis.</p>	Toni Dawodu	Julia Dean	Mar-20	Nov-21	1. Production of a data map identifying our areas of required improvement.			To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.
<p>Carry out an audit of provision mapping in Dudley schools against the best practice identified in the SEND Code of Practice to ensure that they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what is delivered and to which pupils</li> <li>• how success will be measured</li> <li>• the cost of each intervention</li> <li>• a focus on outcomes and skills</li> <li>• which staff are involved</li> </ul>	Toni Dawodu	Julia Dean	Mar-20	Nov-21	1. Publication of the gap analysis of the use of provision management by Dudley SENCos against the CoP. 2. A document showing how to close the gap between the current use and CoP with how we will measure success and dates by when.			To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.



Produce a CPD offer relating to effective assessment and provision management that is included in the Learning Support Service training for SENCOs	Toni Dawodu	Julia Dean	Jun-20	Nov-21	1. Publication of relevant CPD. 2. Best practice in Dudley schools is identified and shared in SEND Network training sessions. 3. There is evidence available showing the impact of the revised CPD in the quality of assessment and provision management in schools. 4. Meet target(s) listed in WSoA.			To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.
Confirm that assessments and provision management are part of the support and challenge carried out by LA officers to ensure that schools are developing an inclusive curriculum and a program for interventions for each SEND group.	Toni Dawodu	Julia Dean	Sep-20	Nov-21	1. Publication of review findings that includes measures of success and milestone dates.			To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.
Publish an effective moderation process co produced with SENCO's so that schools are able to improve the accuracy of assessment and the quality of provision management.	Toni Dawodu	Julia Dean	Sep-20	Nov-21	1. Produce the moderation process. 2. Parents & Carers rating the suitability of provision poor reduces by 50% compared to April 2019 benchmark by September 2021..			To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.
<b>4. - Joint Commissioning is underdeveloped and not always informed by accurate analysis of data.</b> <b>Required Outcomes:</b> • <b>Formalised Joint Commissioning Arrangements.</b> • <b>An outcomes led framework and performance metrics are agreed and in place.</b> • <b>Commissioning decisions informed by outcomes / spend / value for money.</b>	Inderjit Lahel							
Incorporate the SEND commissioning arrangements into the current joint learning disability commissioning arrangements, such that the scope of the existing joint commissioning group, its membership and terms of reference are revised is to include SEND.	Inderjit Lahel	Inderjit Lahel	Dec-19	May-20	1. Publication of revised LDGP. 2. List of any jointly funded posts as part of S75 between Dudley CCG and Dudley MBC (and / or Dudley Multi-Speciality Care Provider.			
Undertake a workshop with Parents / Carers to ensure shaping and input of priorities is built into the development of the strategy. The workshop will be a bespoke session as part of the Parent / Carer Forum programme held at Saltwells but hosted by the Head of Integrated Commissioning, Performance and Partnerships. Key areas of the session will cover: - a) Current commissioned spend b) Independent Provision c) Options to use funding more creatively d) Creation of new provision and models e) Parents views on gaps in the SEND area	Inderjit Lahel	Inderjit Lahel	Feb-20	Feb-20	1. Development of a joint Commissioning Plan that includes measures of success and milestone dates.			



Detail spend profile across the Council / DSG and CCG in order to assess the effectiveness of current provision and assist in the planning of future commissioned services.	Inderjit Lahel	Inderjit Lahel	Feb-20	Sep-20	1. Benchmark of activity against spend across SEND system and comparison with other LA's and areas of good practice and impact. 2. Clear outcomes framework for all funded services 3. Identification of areas for focus of High Needs Block spend and assess Value for Money against relative output and outcomes for children.		
Carry out a review to ensure that current arrangements with Special, Mantained Schools and Independent Providers are formalised into SLA's and / or contracts as appropriate.	Inderjit Lahel	Laura Smith	Mar-20	Sep-20	1.Publication of review that confirms standardised arrangements with associated contractual expectation are in place and milestone dates for rectification where appropriate.		
Analyse the impact and effectiveness of planned future commissioning initiatives to ensure they provide an integrated approach.	Inderjit Lahel	Laura Smith	Mar-20	Oct-20	1. Publication of analysis together with outcomes, measures of success and milestone dates.		
Carry out a review to agree and confirm how the work of the EYTA can develop an integrated care model for SEND CYP.	Inderjit Lahel	Bal Kaur	Feb-20	Feb-20	1 . Publication of review findings. 2.Decrease of 50% in parents and carers rating 'poorly' their CYP's needs being met compared with the April 2019 baseline by July 2020.		
Complete a review of the resource requirements to ensure consistent delivery of 2yrs and 2.5yrs pre-school needs reviews.	Inderjit Lahel	Bal Kaur	Feb-20	Aug-21	1. Review output shows levels of resource required against the number of reviews and a plan to close any identified gaps.		
In line with the SEND Strategy and associated Joint Commissioning Strategy develop a 5 year plan to support the key outcomes for Dudley's children with SEND	Inderjit Lahel	Laura Smith	Feb-20	Nov-20	1.,Publication of joint plan with outcome measures of success and milestone dates.		
Ensure that all CYP with complex and multiple health needs will be consistently provided with hospital passports which communicate their health and support needs	Inderjit Lahel	Linda Cropper	Apr-20	Nov-20	1. Publication of the revised approach/process. 2. Decrease of 50% in parents and carers rating 'poorly' their CYP's needs being identified compared with the April 2019 baseline by October 2020.		
Embed a process to reduce delays in access to the 0 to 5 autism spectrum disorder (ASD) service by working with referring agencies to gather information.	Inderjit Lahel	Linda Cropper	Apr-20	Apr-20	1. Publication of process to include the reasons for delays, targets with milestones to reduce them and how referral timeliness will be monitored through Clinical Quality Reporting Meeting.		
Review the core CAMHS offer to deliver an holistic approach to CYP with mental health issues up to age 19.	Inderjit Lahel	Linda Cropper	Apr-20	Apr-20	1. Publication of review that includes planned improvements together with measures of success and milestone dates.		

Review procedures for making direct referrals to paediatricians and CAMHS, particularly for allied therapists, to reduce delays.	Inderjit Lahel	Linda Cropper	Apr-20	Apr-20	1. Publication of review that includes planned improvements together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Complete a review of physiotherapy support for young people post-16 to confirm current provision and define the improved pathways	Inderjit Lahel	Linda Cropper	Apr-20	Nov-20	1. Publication of review that confirms current provision and the planned improvements together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
<b>5. - The DMO has insufficient capacity to promote the SEND agenda across health providers. Required Outcomes: • Increased levels of capacity to promote the SEND agenda across health providers. • Increased levels of health input capacity into EHCP's to increase their effectiveness in assessing SEND provision.</b>	Neill Bucktin						
Complete business case for the appointment of DCO to support DMO	Neill Bucktin	Linda Cropper	Nov-19	Dec-19	1. Publication of the business case for review and feedback by all stakeholders.		
Successfully complete the CCG governance process to sign off additional DCO support	Neill Bucktin	Neill Bucktin	Dec-19	Dec-19	1. Approval of the business case to recruit the DCO.		
Design and implement the recruitment process for the DCO to include job description and specification, advert and interview logistics and appointment.	Neill Bucktin	Linda Cropper	Jan-20	Feb-20	1. Recruitment of the DCO successfully completed.		
Design an effective proactive SEND briefing/communication plan for health providers to ensure dissemination of the SEND agenda and provide an effective mechanism for feedback from parents and carers.	Neill Bucktin	Dr Timothy Horsburgh	Mar-20	Jun-20	1. Publication of the plan for review and feedback.		
Evaluate the baseline effectiveness of the DCO's impact on raising awareness of the SEND agenda and the Health Provider Comms Strategy.	Neill Bucktin	Dr Timothy Horsburgh	Jan-20	Mar-20	1. Health provider survey carried out by the CCG shows baseline knowledge of the SEND agenda.		
Evaluate the effectiveness of the DCO's impact on raising awareness of the SEND agenda and the Health Provider Comms Strategy.	Neill Bucktin	Dr Timothy Horsburgh	Sep-20	Nov-20	1. Follow up survey shows the increase of awareness against the Mar-20 baseline.		
<b>6. - Co- Production with Parents is weak. Co-production at a wider strategic level is underdeveloped. Required Outcomes: • A clearly defined vision and ambition of strong co-production across the Dudley Area Partnership. • Effective strategic co-production and accountability which is embedded in practice and ensures that SEND priorities are owned across Education, Health and Social Care • Processes evidence early involvement of parents/carers in the strategic developments, design, monitoring and evaluation of SEND services.</b>	Neill Bucktin						

Share the OfSTED findings and key actions with parents/carers	Neill Bucktin	Catherine Knowles	Oct-19	Oct-19	1. Publication of meeting minutes and comment/feedback.		
Agree how the views of the parent/carer forum would be represented at task and finish groups	Neill Bucktin	Susan Powell	Nov-19	Nov-19	1. Publication of agreement that shows how this will be achieved.		
Ensure the Communication Strategy clearly defines how we capture the voice of children, young people and families through our improvement journey.	Neill Bucktin	Shelley Brookes	Dec-19	Nov-19	1. Publication of communications strategy evidences how this will be achieved and maintained.		
Carry out a review to further investigate the opportunity of working alongside the Northwest Regional lead	Neill Bucktin	Nicki Burrows	Nov-19	Dec-19	1. Publication of review with findings and next steps.		
Gain agreement for the CSIB to monitor and approve all SEND improvement strategies to ensure they are co-produced.	Neill Bucktin	Helen Ellis	Dec-19	Dec-19	1. Publication of relevant CSIB minutes showing confirmation.		
Carry out a review to identify examples of co-production best practice across Dudley and produce a plan to implement this practice borough wide.	Neill Bucktin	Helen Ellis	Nov-19	Jan-20	1. Publication of review that includes planned improvements together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Develop and publish a co-production agreement with partners and stakeholders.	Neill Bucktin	Karen Connerney	Nov-19	May-21	1. Co-production agreement has defined roles, responsibilities and expectations. 2. Measures of success are defined and include milestone dates.		
Further investigate the opportunity of working alongside the Rotherham lead for the Dudley Charter.	Neill Bucktin	Nicki Burrows	Nov-19	Sep-20	1. There will be clarity on current best practice and what good looks like.		
Co-produce a feedback process with the Youth Council and Children in Care Council to ensure the voice of children and young people is fully embedded into system re-design on an ongoing basis.	Neill Bucktin	Amanda Grove	Nov-19	Jan-20	1. Publication of process together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Meet with the parent/carer forum to review SEND provision and review the Local Offer	Neill Bucktin	Susan Powell	Dec-19	Jan-20	1. Publication of review with confirmation of suggested improvements.		
Carry out a review that defines how participation training would feature within our workforce development plan.	Neill Bucktin	Susan Powell	Nov-19	Apr-20	1. Publication of review that contains recommendations and milestone dates.		
Definition of co-production is clearly defined in the H&WBB terms of reference.	Neill Bucktin	Helen Ellis	Nov-19	Nov-21	1. Publication of relevant H&WBB minutes showing confirmation.		

Liaising with Sharon Essex on minutes from Sep Board.

<p><b>7. - There is a great deal of parental dissatisfaction. The passion and commitment of the various parent groups has not been harnessed. Many parents feel disengaged with the system.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships and trust is built with all parents/carers</li> <li>• Parents/Carers and young people have a clearly defined integral role in reviewing and designing services</li> <li>• The vision for SEND in Dudley is jointly created and owned by families and all services working with SEND children and young people</li> <li>• Parents/carers and children and young people have access to information on SEND in a timely, clear and transparent way.</li> </ul>	Neill Bucktin						
Review governance arrangements ensuring there is robust parent/carers representation at all SEND partnership meetings	Neill Bucktin	Nicki Burrows	Oct-19	Oct-19	1. Publication of review findings and recommendations.		
Meet with current/active parents and carers groups to share the recent SEND Inspection response and agree the co-production model.	Neill Bucktin	Helen Ellis	Nov-19	Nov-19	1. Publication of any feedback/comments received.		
Embed a process to capture parents and carers input into the SEND improvement strategy.	Neill Bucktin	Helen Ellis	Nov-19	Dec-19	1. Publication of process.		
All task and finish groups reviewed to ensure representation of parents/carers	Neill Bucktin	Helen Ellis	Nov-19	Dec-19	1. Publication of review findings and recommendations.		
Agree and publish a procedure where SEND complaints are dealt with professionally, within timescales and parents/carers are kept up to date in individual cases.	Toni Dawodu	Toni Dawodu	Mar-20	Jul-21	1. Publication of process that contains measures of success and milestone dates.		
Organise a formal method for all service feedback to be captured and comments relayed back to parents/carers	Neill Bucktin	Toni Dawodu	Jan-20	Aug-20	1. Publication of process together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Agree and put in place a process to learn from complaints/mediation and tribunals and what has changed as a result is shared with parents via the Parent Carer Forum and publish on the care and share website.	Neill Bucktin	Toni Dawodu	Jan-20	Aug-20	1. Publication of process to include measures of success and milestone dates.		
Agree a pro-active approach to complaints received where early intervention is the key feature.	Neill Bucktin	Toni Dawodu	Jan-20	Aug-20	1. Publication of process to include measures of success and milestone dates.		

<p><b>8. - There is a lack of understanding about Community inclusion in Dudley. The local area needs to change the culture and develop stakeholder confidence in the system.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dudley is an inclusive borough which will ensure that children, young people and families who are most at risk of exclusion have more choice and control over their lives, are included in their local communities and achieve better outcomes.</b></li> <li>• <b>All SEND CYP feel included in all aspects of their life and are able to achieve their full potential.</b></li> <li>• <b>All stakeholders, including families and communities are confident that Dudley borough is an inclusive borough and understand their role and contribution to this outcome.</b></li> </ul>	Neill Bucktin						
CYP Alliance Board to hold a number of stakeholder events to contribute and shape the development of an inclusion strategy /approach for Dudley.	Neill Bucktin	Andy Gray	Jan-20	Jan-20	1. Publication of workshop output that shows how this will be achieved.		
Create an action plan to improve and embed Community Inclusion principles including for example a focus on policy and practice, practitioners and commissioners , range of settings including communities , maternity, early years, education and employment.	Neill Bucktin	Bal Kaur	Mar-20	May-21	1. Publication of plan that shows how this will be achieved together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Publication of the new Dudley SEND Charter, once agreed, to clearly establish best practice for identification, tracking of SEND pupils and self-evaluation of their outcomes.	Neill Bucktin	Dawn Goodall	Apr-20	Sep-21	<p>1. Publication of revised SEND Charter together with measures of its success and milestone dates.</p> <p>2. Oct-21 Schools survey identifies schools that are not effectively identifying, tracking and evaluating outcomes of their SEND pupils.</p> <p>3.An action plan is produced to ensure there are no outliers with milestone dates to acheive this.</p>		
Publish a co-produced Community Inclusion strategy that includes an approach to measure our progress and success in raising the levels of inclusion for SEND CYP.	Neill Bucktin	Bal Kaur	Mar-20	May-21	1. Publication of strategy with associated measures of success and milestone dates.		
Set a clear strategic commitment to prioritising Community Inclusion in Dudley Borough, that sets out a clear vision.	Neill Bucktin	Bal Kaur	Jul-20	May-21	1. Publication of vision with associated measures of success and milestone dates.		



<p><b>9. - The published local offer is poor. It is underused and difficult to navigate.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families find the Local Offer website and statutory assessment process clear, accessible and informative.</li> <li>• Parents/Carers and children and young people have access to information on SEND in a timely, clear and transparent way.</li> <li>• Higher proportion of families and children using the Local Offer to increase their knowledge of information and participation in community activities.</li> </ul>	Sue Powell						
Set up a task and finish group to co-design the local offer to ensure a focused and timely launch of an improved Local Offer to be integrated into the Dudley Community Information Directory (DCID), and ensure that it is accessible to children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Jan-20	Jan-20	1. Publication of output showing agreed co-produced design requirements.		
Engage with all stakeholders to capture specification requirements for Local Offer SEND information listing and service sign posting together with community wide accessibility and links.	Sue Powell	Lori Arthurs	Feb-20	Sep-20	1. Publication of stakeholder requirements.		
Agree the final format for the local offer together with accompanying communications to all user groups and stakeholders.	Sue Powell	Helen Ellis	Feb-20	May-21	1. Publication of agreed format and accompanying communications.		
Creation of a new post to focus on the development of the Local Offer to focus on its development and enhance its content via co-production with Parents, Carers, CYP and other stakeholders.	Sue Powell	Helen Ellis	Jan-20	May-20	1. Publication of agreed business case and officer in post. 2. Usage data shows an increase in use of 20% compared to the April 2019 baseline by October 2021.		
Launch the local offer as part of the Dudley Community Information Directory to improve the content and usability of relevant SEND Services and supporting information within an accessible and inclusive DCID.	Sue Powell	Bal Kaur	Apr-20	Jun-21	1. Reduction in dissatisfaction with not being able to 'find what I need' compared to the April 2019 baseline by October 2021.		
Once live, undertake online survey to gather feedback and opinion on the new format, usefulness and content relevance of the revised Local Offer.	Sue Powell	Sue Powell	Aug-20	Nov-21	1. Increase of 50% in awareness of the local offer compared to the April 2019 baseline by October 2021.		Will be conducted by PCF.

<p><b>10 - EHC plans are often of a poor quality, they do not all contain Health &amp; Social Care needs and are not outcome-focused.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>New co-produced Guidance Document is agreed and shared with all partners, professionals and families setting out requirements for a good EHC plan.</b></li> <li>• <b>An audit system is agreed, tested and used to report on the improving quality of EHC plans.</b></li> <li>• <b>Monitoring shows EHC plans contain appropriate information, are needs led, outcomes focused and completed within the 20 weeks' timescale.</b></li> <li>• <b>Monitoring shows the evidence of the "Tell It Once" approach being consistently used.</b></li> <li>• <b>EHC plans are shared consistently across the system.</b></li> </ul>	Sue Powell						
A full review of SEND staffing is carried out to ensure that the structure is suitable for delivering the highest quality EHCPs in line with the 2014 Code of Practice.	Sue Powell	Helen Ellis	Nov-19	Dec-19	1. Publication of review that contains recommendations and milestone dates. 2. A date is set for compliance with the code of practice and when the backlog will be completed.		
Establish a task and finish group to develop a new guidance document setting out clear requirements for a good EHC plan based on "Tell it Once" and ensuring a clear focus on outcomes.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Jan-20	Jan-20	1. Publication of the guidance document that states quality standards and benchmarking criteria. 2. The guidance document will also list outcome measures of success and milestone dates.		
Develop a shared SEND induction and training programme for staff and managers on SEND and EHC plans.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Feb-20	Mar-20	1. Publication of induction and training programme together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Identify reasons why EHC plans do not always contain appropriate information about health and social care needs and develop a remedial action plan that includes how the DMO will be involved in reviewing the quality of plans.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Feb-20	May-20	1. Publication of review that contains suggested improvements with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Complete a review of any current on line Dudley EHCP and produce an options appraisal to look at introducing an on line system to meet the requirements of the code of practice relating to EHCP's.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Mar-20	Nov-20	1. Publication of recommendations and next steps.		
Design an audit process to ensure post 16 aspirations and outcomes and links to employers where relevant are included in EHCPs.	Sue Powell	Toni Dawodu	Jan-20	Aug-20	1. Publication of approach to include measures of success and milestone dates.		
Devise and test a recurrent EHCP audit system that is then used moving forward in the case management process with evidence of partners contributing to ensure that expectations are consistently delivered.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Feb-20	Jul-20	1. Publication of proposed audit approach that includes measures of success and milestone dates.		

Review, update and produce a revised SEND staff handbook.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Jan-20	Jul-20	1. Publication of revised SEND staff handbook.		
Complete a review of the guidance and policies for EHC plans to ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that latest plans are shared with early year's settings.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Mar-20	Jul-20	1. Publication of review containing confirmation required procedures are in place and are effective.		
Ensure that the EHC plan guidance document includes appropriate information relating to health and social care information.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Mar-20	May-20	1. Publication of guidance document and how its success will be measured with milestone dates.		
Produce guidance and best practise examples for health and social care professionals to support them to appropriately specify needs, provision and outcomes in EHC plans	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Mar-20	Jun-20	1. Publication of guidance document/best practice examples and how improvements in EHCP plans will be measured with milestone dates.		
Establish a joint work stream to design and implement an evidence based co-ordinated approach to ensure the accurate and timely capture of health and social care information in EHCP's.	Sue Powell	Kellie Lennon	Mar-20	Jun-20	1. Publication of approach and how its success will be measured with milestone dates.		
Share the audit system guidance document with the SENCo network to ensure that the Graduated Approach is embedded in the guidance in order to support schools with the plan, do, and review process.	Sue Powell	Karen Connerney	Feb-20	Jun-20	1. Publication of feedback from SENCos.		
<b>11 - Pupils with SEND make slower progress than other pupils.</b> <b>Required Outcomes:</b> • <b>Identification &amp; improvement of the key outcomes that Dudley children with SEND perform poorly on.</b> • <b>Improve the rates of progress for pupils with SEND at KS2 &amp; KS4.</b> • <b>Increased confidence of partners and parents or wellbeing of CYP or their ability to access the curriculum better.</b> • <b>Reduce the gap for each SEND cohort to the national levels at the end of the early year's foundation stage.</b>	Martyn Palfreyman						
Disseminate key development points from the Local Area Ofsted Inspection and the WSoA with schools as well as regular updates of the progress made against individual targets.	Martyn Palfreyman	Neil Hoskinson	Jun-19	Jun-19	1. Publication of presentation and accompanying feedback/comments.		
Implement a process for a cycle of continual improvement by incorporating learning into the schools visit pro-forma.	Martyn Palfreyman	Neil Hoskinson	Jan-20	Jan-20	1. Publication of revised pro-forma and how its success will be measured together with milestone dates.		
Roll out the revised SEND staff handbook via staff briefings,	Martyn Palfreyman	Susan Powell	Feb-20	Sep-20	1. Briefing sessions held and any feedback recorded.		



Agree which data will be shared between the LA, schools, families and other stakeholders regarding what data will be kept, how it will be kept and how/when it will be shared.	Martyn Palfreyman	Jeremy Keeble	Mar-20	Apr-20	1. A data protocol is included in the Education Inclusion strategy and approved by the DMT/CCG as fit for purpose. 2. The protocol is accepted by all schools and used by families and other stakeholders. 3. Where it is not used, there are clear reasons recorded and evidence is available to show how this has been challenged.			
Agree key and performance indicators (KPIs & PI's) for SEND pupil progress in order to use benchmark data more effectively to identify key actions and to measure their impact.	Martyn Palfreyman	Martyn Palfreyman	Feb-20	Nov-21	1. Publication of the current levels of performance at EY's, KS2 and KS4 stages 2. Publication of plan that details the proposed initiatives to improve at each key stage together with measures of success and milestone dates.			Data group has been set up with Primary Schools- Awaiting confirmation of Secondary Schools.
Complete a full audit and 'data cleanse' to ensure SEND information from different sources is accurate.	Martyn Palfreyman	Neil Hoskinson	Nov-19	Mar-20	1. Publication of a plan that shows how and by when the Dudley cohort will be in line with the code of practice requirements for capturing all needs compared to our national and statistical neighbour averages together with milestone dates.			
Review process of recording of CYP primary & secondary needs to ensure it is accurately captured and monitored through a regular reporting framework.	Martyn Palfreyman	Susan Powell	Feb-20	Apr-20	1. Publication of review that contains recommendations, milestone dates and details of how the revised process success will be measured through a reporting framework. 2.Reduction in the level of parent & carer dissatisfaction with the assessment of their CYP's needs by 50% against the April 2019 baseline by July 2020.			
Use the new data dashboard to analyse the cohort in order to baseline the current levels of progress and measure the changes in Pupil progress against improvement plan.	Martyn Palfreyman	Martyn Palfreyman	Nov-19	Nov-21	1. Data Protocol is amended and approved by DLT as fit for purpose. 2. The protocol is accepted by all schools and used by families and other stakeholders. 3. Where it is not used, there are clear reasons recorded and evidence is available to show how this has been challenged.			Data group has been set up with Primary Schools- Awaiting confirmation of Secondary Schools.

Complete a review of assessment to ensure it is consistent, accurate and how rates of progress of pupils with SEND can be improved at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher forums</li> <li>• SENCo forums</li> <li>• Parent Carer forums</li> <li>• Ofsted EIF training</li> <li>• Specialist Inclusion Services CPD sessions</li> </ul>	Martyn Palfreyman	Martyn Palfreyman	Dec-19	Nov-21	1. Publication of review with proposed improvements, measures of success and milestone dates.			Delivered via Whole School SEND training led by Jo Moules.
To use internal and external expertise to devise an annual programme of training for all schools to develop SEND knowledge, skills and confidence	Martyn Palfreyman	Martyn Palfreyman	Mar-20	Nov-21	1. A new training programme is agreed by DMT/CCG/IOCFB, delivered on an annual cycle by the Learning Support Service and includes success measures and milestone dates.			Delivered via Whole School SEND training follow up assesment led by Jo Moules.
Use the recently established SEND Data Analysis tool to analyse the attainment and progress of each group of pupils with SEND and set targets to match and exceed comparable performance.	Martyn Palfreyman	Martyn Palfreyman	Dec-19	Nov-21	1. Assessment of attainment and progress for each group of pupils with SEND. 2. Compares regionally and nationally and a plan is in place with targets to match/exceed comparable performance. 3. Decrease in Parent & Carer dissatisfaction by 20% that educational attainment is improving compared to the April 2019 baseline by October 2021			Data group has been set up with Primary Schools- Awaiting confirmation of Secondary Schools.
Undertake a review of school readiness approaches with the Early Year's Transformation Academy (EYTA) to identify areas required to improve the school readiness of children with SEND.	Martyn Palfreyman	Bal Kaur	Mar-20	Sep-21	1. Publication of review. 2. Accompanying plan shows how improvements will be made with measures of success and milestone dates.			
To review any other SEND CPD for schools delivered by the Specialist Inclusion Services, Learning Support Service and other LA services other than for asesment and provision management to improve the offer.	Martyn Palfreyman	Julia Dean	Apr-20	Nov-21	1. Publication of revised CPD with measures of its success and milestone dates. 2.Evidence of external expertise being sourced to develop the CPD offer. 3. Feedback from parents & carers shows that satisfaction with education provision has improved by 20% compared to the April 2019 baselineby September 2021.			To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.

Produce an amended Schools training and guidance document to ensure that support and intervention for SEND pupils is effective in the improvement of their outcomes.	Martyn Palfreyman	Julia Dean	Apr-20	Nov-21	1. Publication of revised guidance document that contains outcome success measures and milestone dates.			To be delivered via the SEND Toolkit which is being rolled out from Oct-21.
Review and refine the integrated health and early years review at 2 2.5 years to identify CYP at risk of not being school ready to produce an agreed standard operational procedure together with measures of success and milestone dates.	Martyn Palfreyman	Bal Kaur	Mar-20	Oct-21	1. Set a date by Sep 2021 when performance for SEND Supported CYP in all GLD Prime Areas will be at national levels by. 2. Increase the level of performance for SEND with EHCP's achieving the GLD level from the current 0.9% to the national average of 4.5% by July 2024.			School readiness element has been reviewed. Guidance to be issued as part of a revised approach. Awaiting evidence from Sally Cornfield.
<b>12. - Pupils with SEND have higher absence and exclusion rates than other pupils.</b> <b>Required Outcomes:</b> • To narrow the gap between levels of absence and persistent absence for pupils with SEND with all pupils nationally, regionally and in statistical neighbour LA's. • To narrow the gap between the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions for students with SEND compared with all pupils nationally and in Dudley.	Martyn Palfreyman							
Ensure that the new Preventing Exclusion & Off Rolling Strategy includes a priority on reducing all exclusions and off-rolling for CYP with SEND.	Martyn Palfreyman	Neil Hoskinson	Nov-19	Nov-19	1. Publication of relevant recommendations to be included in strategy.			
Communicate the full Preventing Exclusion & Off Rolling Strategy consultation responses to better inform all partners and stakeholders understanding of inclusion.	Martyn Palfreyman	Neil Hoskinson	Nov-19	Nov-19	1. Publication of consultation responses.			
Publish the Inclusion Pathway Strategy to include the plans to reduce off rolling and exclusions for CYP with SEND. Also to agree the approach and principles of Education Inclusion for any CYP for behaviours linked to their SEND or with an EHCP.	Martyn Palfreyman	Jeremy Keeble	Jan-20	Apr-21	1. To be included in the published AP Strategy with targets and milestone dates to reduce all exclusions for CYP with SEND 2. Strategy includes a pledge to not permanently exclude any CYP for behaviours linked to their SEND or with an EHCP.			

Carry out a review to identify, collate then analyse the data/reasons relating to levels of absence and persistent absence of CYP with SEND compared to all pupils nationally and all pupils regionally and in statistical neighbour LAs.

Gather evidence from schools, including case studies to identify successful early intervention to improve absence for CYP with SEND. To inform future training and support for schools on improving attendance.

Develop a clear strategy for schools on improving attendance in relation to SEND. This will include monitoring and reporting and ensure that all Specialist Inclusion Services, Learning Support Service and the Pupil Access Team have a clear focus on improving attendance for CYP with SEND.

Consolidate initiatives and approaches across Education, Youth Offending and Children Looked After to agree a strategy to provide early intervention for CYP with SEND at risk of offending as part of the YOS Annual Plan submission.

**13. - There is a lack of local provision post-19 for young people with the most complex needs.**  
**Required Outcomes:**  
 • A clearly defined and co-produced transitions pathway is in place  
 • Preparations for Adulthood is clearly defined  
 • Post 19 provision for young people with the most complex needs is in place and understood.

Martyn Palfreyman	Jeremy Keeble	Jan-20	Apr-21	1. Publication of review with evidence of why there is absence and persistent absence for all groups with SEND in Dudley. 2. A plan is in place to reduce absence and persistent absence together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Martyn Palfreyman	Jeremy Keeble	Mar-20	Apr-21	1. Publication of evidence showing where best practice is most effective in reducing SEND absence. 2. A plan is in place by July 2020 that details how absence will be reduced together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Martyn Palfreyman	Jeremy Keeble	Apr-20	Apr-21	1. Publication of strategy for improving the attendance of Dudley CYP with SEND and then shared with / agreed by DMT/CCG Board/IOCFB. This includes a clear monitoring programme for SEND attendance together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Martyn Palfreyman	Martyn Palfreyman	Jun-20	Nov-21	1. Early intervention to prevent CYP with SEND being at risk of offending initiatives to be included in the Education Inclusion Strategy. 2. The strategy includes Dudley YOS, the West Midlands Police and all schools. 3. Strategy must contain confirmation of the current numbers at risk of offending. 4. Strategy must contain targets to reduce the number at risk with milestone dates.		
Emma Matthews						

CYP with EHCPs known to the YO system.

Form a task and Finish group to review the transition protocol with parents/carers to identify improvements in the transition process.	Emma Matthews	Santokh Dulai	Dec-19	Feb-20	1. Identification of the problem areas of transition. 2. Plan to resolve these together with measures of success and milestone dates.		
Consult with Parent/Carer forum and other parent groups to capture all transition experiences and identify issues.	Emma Matthews	Nicki Burrows	Jan-20	Feb-20	1. Preparation for Adulthood pathway documentation agreed and produced across the partnership.		
Carry out a mapping exercise identifying gaps and challenges in the Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) pathway.	Emma Matthews	Mark Barnett	Mar-20	Sep-20	1. A Post 19 provision map is produced to enable the formulation of a plan and milestone dates to improve transition.		
Finalise and issue the revised Adulthood pathway documentation and guidance that includes an approach to ensure all service users are aware of all post 19 provision	Emma Matthews	Santokh Dulai	Mar-20	Jun-21	1. Publication of the revised pathway guidance to include a method of evaluating its effectiveness.		
Review LA continuing care and transition policies/procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose and appropriate to reflect the full scale and range of needs and measure current baseline of feedback of transition process.	Emma Matthews	Santokh Dulai	Mar-20	Sep-20	1. Establishment of feedback baseline on transition process. 2. Follow up survey shows transition is smoother against March 2020 baseline.		
Review current timing of the Year 11 Post 19 provision review and confirm which more complex cases may need earlier reviewing in year 10 or before.	Emma Matthews	Santokh Dulai	Mar-20	Jul-21	1. Publication of review that shows current baseline numbers for earlier review by the end of September for the following March 31st deadline. 2. Policy is published that details how the early review process will be maintained and monitored.		
<b>14. - Too few young people with SEND progress into employment.</b> <b>Required Outcomes:</b> • Increase in the number of apprenticeships offered to SEND students. • Increase in the number of young people with SEND progressing into employment. • Local employers to provide more opportunities for young people with SEND including developing work experience opportunities. • Increased involvement from local education and training providers to undertake better pre-employment preparation with their SEND students. • Increased awareness of the full range of employment opportunities available to SEND young people.	Mark Barnett						
Identify work experience opportunities for Year 10 & Year 11 SEND cohort to increase the number of employment opportunities available to them.	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Jan-20	Jul-21	1. Publish the list/numbers of current work experience opportunities available by school. 2. Publish a plan to increase the number of opportunities, by how many		



Identify the cohort and allocate dedicated resources to the virtual school to ensure we have a clear understanding of which of our SEND looked after children need to be supported appropriately in the context of being at risk of offending.	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Nov-19	Jul-20	1. Publish the list of individuals within the specific cohort. 2. Publish an action plan to improve the support with dates of by when and how we will measure the success of this initiative.		
Meet with advice and guidance specialists who work within the youth offending service and agree how they can contribute to increasing the number of employment opportunities.	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Nov-19	Mar-20	1. Publish the list of agreed new initiatives. 2. Publish a plan of how and when these initiatives will be live and how we will measure their success.		
Develop a process for regular follow up of SEND cohort that have entered employment within the last 6 months to ensure sustainability	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Nov-19	Mar-20	1. Publish the list of issues preventing sustained employment for SEND young people. 2. Publish a plan to resolve these issues with dates of by when and how we will measure the success of this initiative.		
Engage with local employers to identify and increase the number of employment opportunities for SEND young people	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Feb-20	Jul-21	1. Increase of 20% in the number of SEND YP offered employment by Dec 2021. 2. Increase of 20% in the number of SEND YP offered apprenticeships by Dec 2021.		
Contact and offer one to one guidance sessions with specialist careers advice and guidance officers to understand how their service to SEND CYP can be improved.	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Dec-19	Mar-20	1. Publish output from meetings identifying improvements required in advice and guidance to increase take up.		
Identify individuals within the year 11 SEND cohort with no recognised post 16 destination	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Nov-19	Jun-20	1. Produce a list of any year 11 cohort "at risk" of not progressing successfully to post 16 destination. 2. Produce a plan to have 100% of cohort with a destination together with dates of when this will be achieved.		
Identify any barriers to progression that are preventing a post-16 destination to be identified	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Jan-20	Jul-20	1. Publish the list of barriers preventing progression to employment for SEND CYP. 2. Produce a plan to remove the barriers with dates of when this will happen by and how we will measure the success of this initiative.		

Establish links with Dudley College mentoring program and explore opportunities for SEND young people	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Nov-19	Jul-21	1. Confirmation of current numbers of SEND YP involved in the mentoring programme. 2. Co-produced plan with the College to increase numbers and by when.		
Complete a gap analysis to identify geographical areas where there are significant lack of employment opportunities	Mark Barnett	Mark Barnett	Feb-20	Jul-21	1. Publish the data map of employment opportunities. 2. Publish a plan to increase opportunities in the relevant areas by when and by how many.		

## Dudley SEND Deep Dive Schedule

Review Date	WSoA Areas of Weakness
	<p>The aim of the Deep Dives is to support Dudley in evaluating where they are in their journey from the inspection findings of May 2019 to sufficient progress made against the identified priorities.</p> <p>The Deep Dives will explore:</p> <p>What was said in the 2019 inspection letter?</p> <p>What was planned in WSoA/done?</p> <p>What has changed?</p> <p>Where is the evidence of impact?</p> <p>What are the next steps?</p>
<p><b>20<sup>th</sup> July 2021 Completed</b></p>	<p><b>9. - The published local offer is poor. It is underused and difficult to navigate.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families find the Local Offer website and statutory assessment process clear, accessible and informative.</li> <li>• Parents/Carers and children and young people have access to information on SEND in a timely, clear and transparent way.</li> <li>• Higher proportion of families and children using the Local Offer to increase their knowledge of information and participation in community activities.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>13. - There is a lack of local provision post-19 for young people with the most complex needs.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clearly defined and co-produced transitions pathway.</li> <li>• Preparations for Adulthood is clearly defined.</li> <li>• Post 19 provision for young people with the most complex needs is in place and understood.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>14. - Too few young people with SEND progress into employment.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of apprenticeships offered to SEND students.</li> <li>• Increase in the number of young people with SEND progressing into employment.</li> <li>• Local employers to provide more opportunities for young people with SEND including developing work experience opportunities.</li> <li>• Increased involvement from local education and training providers to undertake better pre-employment preparation with their SEND students.</li> <li>• Increased awareness of the full range of opportunities available to SEND young people.</li> </ul>



<b>14<sup>th</sup> October 2021 Completed</b>	<p><b>2.- The needs of CYP with SEND have not been accurately identified or moderated over time.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear early identification of all children that will require additional Health, Social Care or Education support.</li> <li>• 100% of EHCPs accurately match assessment and moderated needs of every pupil so that pupils are placed in appropriate settings.</li> <li>• Provision is regularly reviewed so that the moderated needs of the Dudley SEND Cohort are accurately captured.</li> <li>• Development of additional small bases within mainstream provision, for pupils with ASD or SEMH in particular that mirror existing bases.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>3. - A strategic approach to assessment and provision management in Dudley is lacking.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An effective approach to strategic assessment and provision management in Dudley</li> <li>• Increased coordination of assessment information between agencies.</li> <li>• Integrated and shared access to information systems.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>4. - Joint Commissioning is underdeveloped and not always informed by accurate analysis of data.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalised Joint Commissioning Arrangements.</li> <li>• An outcomes led framework and performance metrics are agreed and in place.</li> <li>• Commissioning decisions informed by outcomes / spend / value for money.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>10 - EHC plans are often of a poor quality, they do not all contain Health &amp; Social Care needs and are not outcome-focused.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New co-produced Guidance Document is agreed and shared with all partners, professionals and families setting out requirements for a good EHC plan.</li> <li>• An audit system is agreed, tested and used to report on the improving quality of EHC plans.</li> <li>• Monitoring shows EHC plans contain appropriate information, are needs led, outcomes focused and completed within the 20 weeks' timescale.</li> <li>• Monitoring shows the evidence of the "Tell It Once" approach being consistently used.</li> <li>• EHC plans are shared consistently across the system.</li> </ul>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 Completed</b>	<p><b>1.- Improvement Strategies are not embedded and they have not had a marked impact on improved outcomes.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A co-produced SEND Strategy that is owned, shared and delivered through the Improving Outcomes for Children and Families Board.</li> <li>• A SEND action plan which sets out improvements needed across Education, Health and Care ensuring a coherent joined up approach.</li> <li>• A SEND Strategy which focuses on identifying, sustaining and future proofing joint priorities to improve Children and Young People's outcomes across Education, Health and Social Care.</li> <li>• A robust Workforce Development Plan which has a clear vision to ensure strategies are embedded and ambition to improve outcomes for Children and Young People in Dudley.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>5. - The DMO has insufficient capacity to promote the SEND agenda across health providers.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased levels of capacity to promote the SEND agenda across health providers.</li> <li>• Increased levels of health input capacity into EHCP's to increase their effectiveness in assessing SEND provision.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>6. - Co- Production with Parents is weak. Co-production at a wider strategic level is underdeveloped.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clearly defined vision and ambition of strong co-production across the Dudley Area Partnership.</li> <li>• Effective strategic co-production and accountability which is embedded in practice and ensures that SEND priorities are owned across Education, Health and Social Care</li> <li>• Processes evidence early involvement of parents/carers in the strategic developments, design, monitoring and evaluation of SEND and associated services.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>7. - There is a great deal of parental dissatisfaction. The passion and commitment of the various parent groups has not been harnessed. Many parents feel disengaged with the system.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships and trust is built with all parents/carers</li> <li>• Parents/Carers and young people have a clearly defined integral role in reviewing and designing services</li> <li>• The vision for SEND in Dudley is jointly created and owned by families and all services working with SEND children and young people</li> <li>• Parents/carers and children and young people have access to information on SEND in a timely, clear and transparent way.</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022	<p><b>8. - There is a lack of understanding about Community inclusion in Dudley. The local area needs to change the culture and develop stakeholder confidence in the system.</b></p> <p><b>Required Outcomes:</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dudley is an inclusive borough which will ensure that children, young people and families who are most at risk of exclusion have more choice and control over their lives, are included in their local communities and achieve better outcomes.</li> <li>• All SEND CYP feel included in all aspects of their life and are able to achieve their full potential.</li> <li>• All stakeholders, including families and communities are confident that Dudley borough is an inclusive borough and understand their role and contribution to this outcome.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>11 - Pupils with SEND make slower progress than other pupils.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification &amp; improvement of the key outcomes that Dudley children with SEND perform poorly on.</li> <li>• Improve the rates of progress for pupils with SEND at KS2 &amp; KS4.</li> <li>• Increased confidence of partners and parents or wellbeing of CYP or their ability to access the curriculum better.</li> <li>• Reduce the gap for each SEND cohort to the national levels at the end of the early year's foundation stage.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>12. - Pupils with SEND have higher absence and exclusion rates than other pupils.</b></p> <p>Required Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To narrow the gap between levels of absence and persistent absence for pupils with SEND with all pupils nationally, regionally and in statistical neighbour LA's.</li> <li>• To narrow the gap between the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions for students with SEND compared with all pupils nationally and in Dudley.</li> </ul>

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## **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**20th January 2022**

### **Report of the Director of Children's Services**

#### **Education Report**

##### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an educational update including key areas of operational performance, progress and elements of the wider improvements and transformation we are implementing.

This will give Members the opportunity to raise any questions and be reassured that the local authority and wider partnership are making significant progress with the improvements we have committed to deliver.

##### **Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:-

Note and comment on the current operational progress with regard to our strategies and approaches.

Note and comment on the improvements within the Local Authority (LA) and partner organisations that are designed to embed the cultural and operational changes required to achieve sustainable improved outcomes for our Children and Young People.

##### **Background**

3. The report contains updates on the work of the Education Outcomes team from September 2021 as follows:
  - Education Strategy
  - Historical Data



- School Improvement Organisation
- Safeguarding
- Inspections
- Inclusive Pathways
- Attendance
- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Elective Home Education (EHE)
- School Admissions

#### 4 **Education Strategy**

5 An updated Education Strategy for Dudley (2020-2023) was launched with all internal stakeholders, elected members, schools, academies and Chairs of Governors during the first half of the Autumn term, last year, in 2021. It was well received, in providing the essential framework to all the borough's education and inclusion work, and a coherent context for all of the other workstreams and initiatives.

6 As part of this continued work, alongside the appointment of a new Head of Education Outcomes, four key priorities were identified for 2021/22. These were shared with all Head Teachers in September 2021 and have endeavoured to provide a very clear direction of travel internally for our Education Management Team (now known as EMT) and externally to our schools and academies.

7 It is clear that we have a significant distance to travel to ensure that our systems and processes are fit for purpose and are providing appropriate support and challenge to our providers in equal measure.

#### 8 **Our Key Priorities for 2021/22**

9 **Develop an Inclusive Practice** – meeting the needs of all our young people regardless of their background, previous skills and experience

- SEND – effective use of the SEND toolkit at grassroots level in our townships and learning communities.
- Localised expertise and development with good practice shared and developed
- Vulnerable/EHE/CME/CIC and the work of the virtual school are a priority and group.
- Those at 'risk' for whatever reason are identified and supported and this is maximised by the use of inclusive pathways, helping to prevent exclusion.



- 10 **Ensure we have effective Partnership Working** - Creating an effective joined up approach across all teams and organisations
- Developing the role of School Improvement and LA teams to be proactive and relentless in driving high expectations and improvement at all levels.
  - Developing a joined up strategy with our Social Care, Health and Education Teams to ensure wrap around care for our young people.
  - Considering how we engage with the wider Community – business links/community groups/parents/residents to improve the life chances of our young people and their families.
- 11 **Enable Innovation and Development** - Ensuring everything we do is fit for purpose, promotes improvement and makes a demonstrable impact
- The development of CPD and effective training for all staff on a variety of topics which drive school improvement and outcomes for young people.
  - Effective systems and processes at all levels which promote new ways of thinking, risk taking in the pursuit of improvement and
  - Curriculum innovation – meeting the needs of all young people through an engaging and effective curriculum.
  - Changing the mindset to encourage growth and creativity.
- 12 **Increase our levels of Aspiration and Ambition** - Never settling for what we have but always wanting to be better
- Developing a comprehensive definition of outcomes and understanding where accountability sits for these.
  - Celebrating our successes across the borough.
  - Implementing data driven intervention to drive improvement.
  - Becoming a pathfinder LA and area for good practice, outcomes and future transition.
- 13 The priorities aim to encapsulate the direction of travel over the next year as we seek to establish clear and transparent ways of working and a collective restorative approach to all we do. Quite simply, our work simply puts our young people at the heart of all we do, ensuring they go on to lead successful lives.
- 14 As part of this, we need to develop a clear understanding of our interpretation of 'outcomes' and see this in the widest sense of impacting the future life chances of our young people in many arenas, including both academic results, careers education, social skills, transition and future progression routes.



- 15 We recognise that a clear understanding of outcomes and future progression routes also has a massive impact on the families and communities of our Children and Young People (CYP) and a seamless joined up approach is a prerequisite across all of our services to ensure this happens consistently and effectively.

### **Historical Data**

- 16 There has been no published examination or statutory assessment data for our schools or academies during 2020 and 2021, due to the suspension of examinations and assessments during the Covid pandemic.

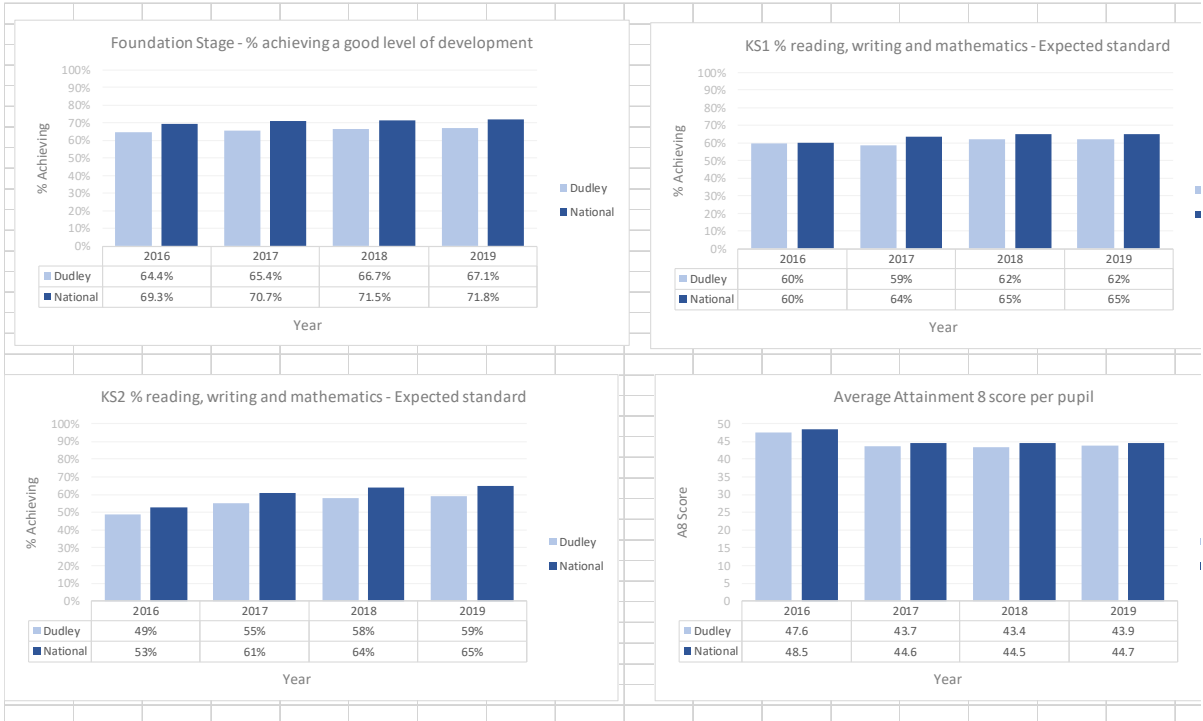
- 17 The data presented here is up until 2019 but will still be used as the benchmark for some elements of future comparisons.

- 18 Attendance and exclusion data for 2020 and 2021 is also incomplete due to school closures, isolations and lockdowns. Therefore, this is not comparable to previous years.

- 19 It is very clear that in many areas, Dudley performs below the national average and therefore systematic improvement is needed to drive up standards and subsequent academic outcomes.



Education Outcomes - 2016 - 2019						
AREA	Metric	LA/NAT.	All Pupils			
			2016	2017	2018	2019
Early Years Foundation Stage	Foundation Stage - % achieving a good level of development	Dudley	64.4%	65.4%	66.7%	67.1%
		National	69.3%	70.7%	71.5%	71.8%
Key Stage 1	KS1 % reading, writing and mathematics - Expected standard	Dudley	60%	59%	62%	62%
		National	60%	64%	65%	65%
Key Stage 2	KS2 % reading, writing and mathematics - Expected standard	Dudley	49%	55%	58%	59%
		National	53%	61%	64%	65%
	Progress between age 7 and age 11 - KS2 Reading	Dudley	-1.4	-1.6	-1.5	-1.5
		National	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Progress between age 7 and age 11 - KS2 Writing	Dudley	-0.1	-0.7	-0.5	-0.4
		National	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Progress between age 7 and age 11 - KS2 Maths	Dudley	-1.0	-1.2	-1.4	-1.3	
	National	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Key Stage 4	Average Attainment 8 score per pupil	Dudley	47.6	43.7	43.4	43.9
		National	48.5	44.6	44.5	44.7
	Average Progress 8 score per pupil	Dudley	-0.22	-0.12	-0.15	-0.17
		National	--	--	--	--
Exclusions	Total Permanent Exclusions from school as a % of the school population	Dudley	0.17	0.25	0.20	0.21
		National	0.08	0.10	0.10	0.10
	Fixed period exclusions expressed as a percentage of the school population.	Dudley	4.81	4.89	4.91	9.12
		National	4.29	4.76	5.08	5.36
Absence	Attendance Rate	Dudley	95.3%	95.2%	95.0%	95.0%
		National	95.4%	95.3%	95.2%	95.3%
	Authorised absence rate	Dudley	3.30%	3.20%	3.30%	3.30%
		National	3.40%	3.40%	3.50%	3.30%
	Unauthorised absence rate	Dudley	1.50%	1.60%	1.70%	1.70%
		National	1.10%	1.30%	1.40%	1.40%
	Overall absence rate	Dudley	4.70%	4.80%	5.00%	5.00%
		National	4.60%	4.70%	4.80%	4.70%

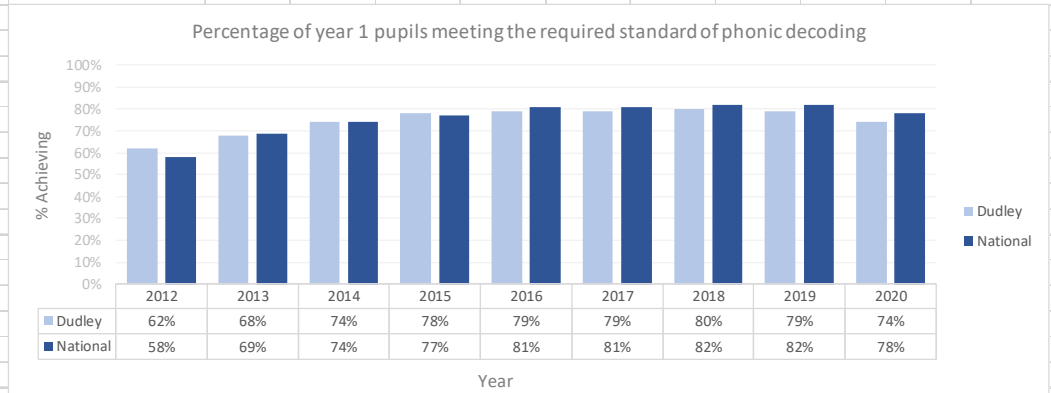




**Percentage of year 1 pupils meeting the required standard of phonic decoding.**

The Yr1 Phonics check is the only primary statutory assessment that has been completed since the 2018-2019 academic year. Although no Phonics checks were carried out in the 2019-2020 academic year due to covid, checks were done in the Autumn term of the 2020-2021 academic year for the 2020 Yr1 cohort.

LA/NAT.	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Dudley	62%	68%	74%	78%	79%	79%	80%	79%	74%
England	58%	69%	74%	77%	81%	81%	82%	82%	78%

**School Improvement – redefining our vision**

- 23 It is important that we develop and implement a clear vision for School Improvement for Dudley. This vision needs to be based on the fact that Dudley is a great place to grow up and we have the highest expectations for the achievement of children and young people in borough. We believe all children and young people have the right to achieve their full potential whatever their culture or background.
- 24 The Local Authority (LA) recognises that it is the responsibility of school leaders to secure improvement in their school. As part of the working partnership with schools the LA will act as champions of educational excellence for children and young people, working with early years settings, maintained schools, academies, free and independent schools to forge strong professional relationships through school networks and teaching school alliances.
- 25 We will strengthen our quality assurance role to ensure that all schools strive to improve. We will broker school-to-school support using high quality performing leaders to work alongside those schools requiring support to be good or better. Fundamentally, equality of opportunity and excellence in achievement should become the norm for all by meeting the needs of all of our children and young people.

Our School Improvement Strategy will have several foci:

- 26
- The LA identifies schools, through a robust and coherent risk register, that require support and challenge and responds promptly to intervene.
  - The LA uses a range of information and data to secure a comprehensive understanding of the quality of provision in all schools and to identify areas



of strength and weakness. Data driven intervention is used to target support.

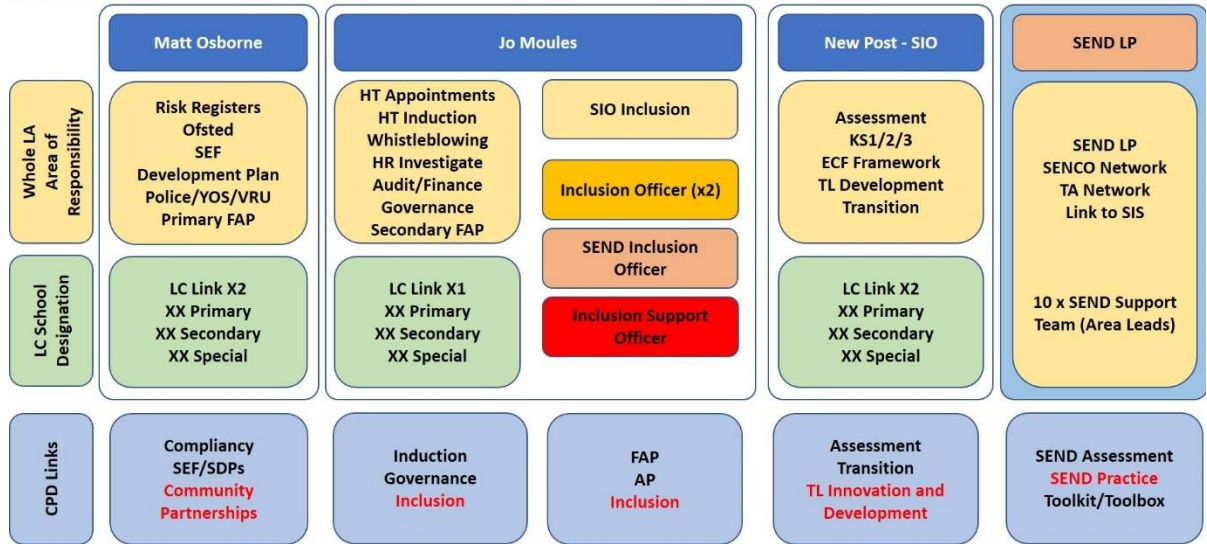
- Accurate risk assessment is a strength of the LA.
- There is a differentiated, bespoke approach to support and intervention for all schools.
- The school improvement journey is clear and applied consistently to all schools.
- Support is commissioned from successful schools, local and national leaders in education, national leaders of governance and external consultants.
- The aim is to develop and support a self-improving school system.

27 A statutory function of Local Authorities with responsibility for education (LA's) is to ensure that all schools provide a high-quality educational experience for the children and young people in their care. In meeting these statutory duties, the LA is required to monitor, challenge and, where necessary, intervene in maintained schools. Academies across the borough are also invited to engage with the prioritisation should they wish to participate as part of the Dudley family of schools. Education Outcomes is committed to working with all partners to monitor, challenge and intervene in LA maintained schools in inverse proportion to the success of each school; success being defined in terms of the quality of provision and the outcomes achieved by pupils. In order to carry out this function in an effective and transparent way, Dudley is now implementing a process of school prioritisation whereby LA officers and school partnerships assess the performance of schools and educational institutions, to judge the degree of risk in the quality of education being provided and where necessary to respond to these risks. The purpose of the school prioritisation process is to reach an agreement about the priority for intervention for each primary, special and secondary LA maintained school. This enables the LA to deliver its statutory functions, to manage risks, target appropriate interventions and thereby help those who are causing concern. The process also allows the LA to be confident that all schools/institutions are meeting their responsibilities for continuous improvement.

28 As part of this process, the School Improvement Team is currently being reorganised to provide a clear and transparent service. This involves Officers having defined LA responsibilities as well as being the named advisor for a group of schools across our current townships and learning communities.



## DUDLEY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY APPROACH 2021/22



- 30 A new School Improvement Officer is currently being recruited to develop and deliver statutory assessment, transition, teaching and learning development and our own Early Careers Framework which focuses on 'growing our own school workforce' moving forward.
- 31 The reorganisation becomes the first part of developing a localised provision model, ensuring robust, streamlined and effective impact at 'grassroots' level in each of our township learning communities. These are the route to maximising support and challenge at a very local level.

### Safeguarding Update

- 32 Apart from general advice and guidance phone calls/emails, since the start of the academic year there have been 37 safeguarding concerns reported into Safeguarding in Education. These are where further action/investigation and a written response, is necessary.
- Primary 19
  - Secondary 13
  - Special 2
  - College 2
  - PRU/AP 1 (Pupil Referral Unit) / (Alternative Provision)
- 33 11 of the above were reported through Ofsted from parents/carers and some anonymous. The range of themes includes:
- Child being able to leave the school site unattended.
  - Pupil injury whilst on school site.



- Child not in school.
- Peer on peer abuse.
- Gang issues.
- Knife issues.
- Children bullying/fighting.
- Safeguarding concerns with SEND child / child in care (CiC).
- Concerns with Permanent Exclusions and exploitation.

**34 Number of schools used Escalation and Resolution process**

- Stage 1 = 3 2 primary both resolved, 1 Secondary resolved
- Stage 2 = 0
- Stage 3 = 1 Primary moved to Stage 4
- Stage 4 = 1 Primary

35 Service such as, EHE/SEND/Education Outcomes are starting to use the process to engage with professionals and to move on a case. A staff briefing is being delivered by safeguarding trainer in December.

**Number of Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO referrals relating to staff in school/college = 48**

**36 Safeguarding Training – Currently virtual via MS Teams**

<b>01.09.2021 - 17.11.2021</b>	Attendance	Sessions
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Refresher	74	9
DSL New in Post	29	2
<b>Total Trained</b>	<b>103</b>	

<b>18.11.2021 - 31.12.2021</b>	Booked	Sessions
DSL New in Post	15	1
DSL Refreshers	21	2
<b>Total Trained</b>	<b>36</b>	

<b>January to March 2022</b>	Availability	Sessions
DSL refresher	90	6
New in Post	30	2
<b>Total Availability</b>	<b>120</b>	

<b>Predicted April to July 2022</b>	Availability	Sessions
DSL refresher	90	6
New in Post	30	2
<b>Total Availability</b>	<b>120</b>	



- Number of Safer Recruitment and Governor Training courses delivered up to November = 4
- Fortnightly Safeguarding in Education newsletter shared with all DSLs

### **SERG Meeting – themes**

#### **37 September**

- Transport system/concerns for children with SEND
- Teen pregnancy pathway sign off
- Brooke traffic light training
- DSL contact details during holidays

#### **38 November**

- Transport – Update
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Flow chart
- Specific incidents Information Sharing Template including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment (SV/SH) incidents
- Emergency Contacts (Schools) – out of hours/school holidays into MASH
- Safeguarding themes from recent Ofsted inspections

### **Themes from DSL Forums**

#### **39 September**

- Update form Education Outcomes
- New Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) process
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Education Officer role and responsibilities
- Vaccine Roll out 12-15 yrs
- Teen Pregnancy Pathway
- DSPP Training/Booking offer

#### **40 November**

- Prevent Update/Risk Assessment/Incel - West Midlands Police
- Children Missing from Care /Home
- Youth Offending Service (YOS) Offer

#### **41 What are Safeguarding in Education working on December 2021 to March 2022?**

- Traded Service for Safeguarding Training



- DSL Safeguarding training for Education Outcomes/SEND staff
- Restorative Practice training for DSLs/Heads
- School Data on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment (SVSH) and significant safeguarding themes
- S175 Workshop on Recording and reporting concerns




### **Ofsted Update – Autumn Term 2021**

- 42 Since September 2021 Ofsted have now returned to fully graded inspections (Section 5) for all schools and settings as well as monitoring visits (Section 8) for schools with an overall effectiveness rating of GOOD.
- 43 Ofsted has also stated what their prime focus will be. This will be schools that either:
- Have an overall effectiveness judgement of Requires Improvement
  - Have an overall effectiveness judgement of Outstanding / Good and have not been inspected since 2016
- 44 One of the biggest changes to inspection is, the removal of the exemption from inspection for outstanding schools. As Ofsted states “It’s important for children, and for parents, that we get a clear view of education in these schools”.
- 45 **Education Inspection Update: Ofsted September 2021 – Full article**
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-and-early-education-inspection-update-academic-year-2021-to-2022/schools-and-early-education-inspection-update-september-2021>
- 46 Since September Dudley has had 6 inspections (4 x Section 5, 2 x Section 8). There have been 5 Primary Schools and 1 Secondary School visited. As with all schools being unique the focus is variable however we have already begun to see a few patterns emerging from our inspections.
- 47
- Phonics – All primary schools were subject to an in-depth Phonics scrutiny and a clear focus on children making **rapid** progress.
  - Early Reading – This is a focus in all inspections. Is the teaching of it consistent across school, did the books match the level of reader, were the school using a Government validated scheme?
  - Maths – Was there detailed plans for each year group, each day. How prescriptive is the Maths curriculum?
  - Curriculum – Progression and Sequencing. Did the school have detailed plans with clear end points. Was it adequately sequenced so that children could build on previous knowledge?



- Quality of distributed leadership (including Governance) – Did **all** leaders at **all** levels clarify the INTENT and IMPLEMENTATION of the curriculum with the same philosophy as the Headteacher
- Attendance /Persistent Absence (PA) – What are the strategies and impact for improving attendance and reducing PA

#### 48 Schools Inspected – September 21 – November 21

School	Date	Section 5/Section 8	Final Letter Received	Letter
Crestwood Park	28/09/21	Sec 8	Y	(Appendix 1)  Crestwood Park Ofsted Report.PDF
Fairhaven	06/11/21	Sec 5	Y	(Appendix 2)  10201037-fairhaven-primary-school-103
Hawbush	12/10/21	Sec 5	Y	(Appendix 3)  10201048 Hawbush Primary School 1038
Our Lady and St Kenelm	02/11/21	Sec 5	N	Awaited
Church of the Ascension	03/11/21	Sec 8	N	Awaited
Beacon Hill	03/10/21	Sec 5	N	Awaited

49

- As an Education Outcomes Team, we have risk assessed all our schools and settings to target support effectively through our prioritisation system.
- We have currently visited over 50 schools to meet with the Headteacher and discuss support with an aspiration to visit the remaining schools before Christmas.
- All LA maintained Require Improvement (RI) schools / LA maintained Outstanding Schools have had some form of Quality Assurance (QA) from a School Improvement Officer. (11 schools)
- Closer links developed with SEND / Inclusion Officers to support children / schools

#### Inclusive Pathways Update

50 The Inclusive Pathways Strategy was launched in 2020/21 and has been initiated as an LA Wide approach to effect change, initiate school based intervention and





improve access to a range of fit for purpose Alternative Provision, and improved outcomes for children and young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion or have experienced permanent exclusion.

- 51 It is a Strategy designed to provide access to a broad and balanced, appropriate curriculum for all learners by bringing together education partners through proactive and effective intervention that meets the needs of 'At Risk' Children and Young People
- 52 The Strategy aims to increase Inclusivity across all settings through the development of evidence-based core offers and deliver long-term solutions to significantly reduce the need of settings to permanently exclude children and young people.
- 53 It has been evidenced that Dudley's exclusion rates are significantly higher than most of our statistical neighbours within the West Midlands Authority, and there has been no significant fall in the last 3 years. It is recognised that data for 2020 and 2021 is not necessarily a true reflection of expected exclusions as a result of the Covid pandemic.
- 54 Aims of Dudley's Inclusive Pathways:
- To ensure all settings have equitable access to preventative pathways (including a SEN Graduated Response and Early Help).
  - To develop a pathway for all settings in ensuring reflective, inclusive practice at all points along a continuum of support in order that permanent exclusion is rarely necessary.
  - To implement a clear, shared commitment from multi-agency services to prevent exclusion and support inclusion.
  - Recognition that all Children and Young People get the right support at the right time from the right services.
  - Focus is on effective utilisation of existing resources and services, there is no additional funding.

## Meeting Need

- 55 Disruptive behaviour can, and often is, an indication of unmet needs. The DfE Exclusions statutory guidance for Schools and Academies says schools should consider whether a multi-agency (Early Help) assessment, that goes beyond the pupil's educational needs, is required to address the causes behind the challenging behaviour which may be evident as an outcome. This is a fundamental strand of our preventative strategy that needs to be developed and will form a significant part of our CPD strategy moving forward.





## Current Situation

56 In 2020/21, between 1 September and end November – 13 Permanent Exclusions (PEX)

In 2021/22, between 1 September and end November – 10 PEX

## 57 Next Steps

1. Appoint 2 new Inclusion Officers to increase capacity to respond to schools.
2. Develop SEND Inclusion role to support the high number of children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) who are at risk of Permanent Exclusion.
3. Secure funding to enable the Link Educational Psychologist to continue to support the Inclusion Officers with complex cases.
4. Provide additional guidance and training to schools regarding the importance of the Assess – Plan – Do – Review cycle at all stages of the pathway.
5. Develop quality assurance system between SEND and School Improvement to ensure schools are inclusive and rigorous in their practice meeting EHCPs where targets are specific and measurable over a given timeframe.
6. Review the effectiveness and impact of IP through the new Alternative Provision Operational Group.

58

<b>Report for IP Governance</b>				
<b>Reporting Period</b>				
From: February 8 <sup>th</sup> 2021 To: November 12th 2021				
<b>Analysis of requests received</b>				
Total number of requests received to date: 110				
Support for schools engaged in IP is on-going.				
<b>New requests for IP support and advice.</b>				
Some of the CYP at schools have been placed in special schools for the start of this academic year so that the overview of the number of currently supported schools has been adjusted from the July report.				
Overview of CYP in schools currently supported				
	Primary settings		Secondary settings	
	On-going	Recent	On-going	Recent
Maintained:	27	2	1	
Academy:	16		25	3
EHCP in place:	19		2	
EHCP request in progress:	3		2	
Total number of screening tools shared:	1		9	1
Total followed through to Alternative Provision (AP)	4		4 + 1 paused	

## Covid Update

### **Education settings Covid19 data Autumn term 2021 up to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

- 59
- 6523 positive cases reported. Of this, 5772 are children, 751 are adults
  - 4882 total cases as part of outbreaks in schools (10% tolerance)
  - Symptomatic 43%, Asymptomatic 27% and Diffused 30%
  - 17 IMT Outbreak Meetings held with schools
  - Closures – two secondaries, one for one day, one for two days (specific year groups) one primary, three days. Closures due to staff absence and H/S concerns.

## School Attendance and Enforcement

- 60 The Education Investigation Service was renamed the Education Support Service on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. The purpose for this it to enable the service area to focus more on preventative support with schools and families to improve attendance & engagement at school. This is not a single service response and must be seen as a multi-agency approach to supporting improvements in school attendance that is supported by all Children's Services team.
- 61 The Education Support Service continues to provide the lead on delivering the statutory intervention where parents fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and as such they will issue Warning Notices, Penalty Fines for unauthorised leave of absence and general/persistent absence from school.
- 62 Many children struggle to attend school regularly for a whole variety of reasons and school provide the initial response to support these children. Schools are advised to undertake Early Help assessments and make referrals where families are in need of support, and where they give consent/are prepared to work with that support. Where this fails, the authority's last resort is to enforcement action and the Education Support Service work in partnership with all services to ensure this is an effective and appropriate response.
- 63 From September 21 to November 21 the service has issued 244 fines for Unauthorised Leave of Absence (a holiday of 5 days or more in term time not authorised by the headteacher). This compare to 162 similar fines issued in the same period last year.
- 64 Only 2 fines have been issued for general absence in this period compare to 31 in the previous year.
- 65 Of the fines issued:
- 107 were paid within 21 days, compared to 110 in 2020, 2 were paid after 21 days at a higher rate compared to 18 in 2020 and 9 were withdrawn compared to 17 in 2020. 96 are still within date and awaiting payment.
  - Where a fine is not paid the matter will be taken to the courts for resolution.
  - There are currently 48 cases listed with the courts for consideration however, these are all from offences committed during last academic year. There are



32 cases being prepared for court action relating to absences from this academic year compared to 27 cases at the same time last year.

66 During the whole school year 2020/21 there were a total of 461 fines paid and 134 matters taken to court compared to 2,374 fines paid and 172 matter taken to court in 2018/19 which was the pre Covid period.

67 There is no local or national school attendance data available for the academic year 2020/2021. Whilst the DFE and LA was monitoring attendance in school daily during this period due to the regular closure of schools and covid isolation of children, classes, year groups and in some cases the whole school there has been no reliable way to capture the picture on school attendance during this period. We will be collecting school attendance data during this year and expect to have a clearer picture following the end of term break.

68 Attendance Data

	Attendance Date	National		Dudley		Sandwell		Walsall		Wolverhampton	
		Percentage of Pupils On Site *	Percentage of Schools Responding to Survey	Percentage of Pupils On Site	Percentage of Schools Responding to Survey	Percentage of Pupils On Site	Percentage of Schools Responding to Survey	Percentage of Pupils On Site	Percentage of Schools Responding to Survey	Percentage of Pupils On Site	Percentage of Schools Responding to Survey
06/09/2021	06-Sep	72.9%	36.1%	61.6%	27.4%	65.0%	26.2%	55.8%	25.4%	71.6%	48.7%
07/09/2021	07-Sep	82.6%	42.5%	77.9%	35.9%	78.4%	34.6%	74.0%	30.3%	77.6%	51.3%
08/09/2021	08-Sep	88.7%	45.4%	89.9%	31.6%	89.5%	31.5%	88.7%	33.6%	87.0%	48.7%
09/09/2021	09-Sep	90.7%	47.0%	92.2%	44.4%	87.6%	39.2%	82.3%	31.1%	88.2%	52.2%
10/09/2021	10-Sep	90.8%	47.4%	90.4%	43.6%	89.6%	38.5%	82.4%	34.4%	90.2%	58.4%
13/09/2021	13-Sep	91.1%	50.7%	90.8%	49.6%	90.6%	43.1%	85.3%	32.8%	90.9%	60.2%
14/09/2021	14-Sep	90.8%	51.6%	90.8%	53.0%	91.0%	45.4%	87.5%	36.9%	89.9%	57.5%
15/09/2021	15-Sep	91.3%	54.6%	91.6%	57.3%	91.6%	48.5%	88.3%	48.4%	91.1%	60.2%
16/09/2021	16-Sep	91.1%	54.7%	91.6%	54.7%	90.3%	49.2%	88.0%	43.4%	90.8%	59.3%
17/09/2021	17-Sep	89.6%	53.6%	90.2%	53.0%	89.4%	51.5%	88.0%	41.8%	90.2%	60.2%
20/09/2021	20-Sep	89.9%	56.7%	89.6%	59.0%	89.6%	50.8%	86.7%	44.3%	88.9%	63.7%
21/09/2021	21-Sep	89.9%	57.4%	88.2%	54.7%	88.8%	47.7%	84.8%	48.4%	88.1%	61.9%
22/09/2021	22-Sep	90.0%	57.6%	90.2%	57.3%	89.2%	47.7%	87.1%	44.3%	87.7%	61.9%
24/09/2021	24-Sep	84.6%	55.0%	81.9%	63.2%	86.5%	50.0%	83.9%	42.6%	86.1%	58.4%
27/09/2021	27-Sep	86.4%	58.3%	88.5%	60.7%	86.4%	55.4%	85.9%	44.3%	84.7%	56.6%
28/09/2021	28-Sep	88.3%	57.3%	88.8%	63.2%	89.3%	48.5%	87.1%	42.6%	88.1%	61.9%
29/09/2021	29-Sep	88.2%	56.2%	89.9%	52.1%	88.7%	52.3%	86.3%	42.6%	87.9%	57.5%
30/09/2021	30-Sep	87.7%	55.6%	88.7%	62.4%	88.8%	49.2%	86.0%	42.6%	87.3%	51.3%
01/10/2021	01-Oct	82.2%	55.4%	84.8%	58.1%	83.7%	46.9%	74.6%	40.2%	85.9%	56.6%
04/10/2021	04-Oct	88.3%	55.9%	89.4%	56.4%	87.9%	46.2%	87.5%	47.5%	88.4%	63.7%
05/10/2021	05-Oct	88.1%	55.8%	90.0%	54.7%	89.9%	48.5%	83.5%	43.4%	89.0%	59.3%
06/10/2021	06-Oct	88.7%	54.4%	89.7%	55.6%	89.7%	47.7%	87.2%	44.3%	88.3%	52.2%
07/10/2021	07-Oct	88.6%	55.2%	88.9%	60.7%	89.5%	47.7%	87.7%	47.5%	88.5%	58.4%
08/10/2021	08-Oct	87.3%	53.3%	89.6%	60.7%	89.4%	41.5%	82.7%	45.9%	87.6%	56.6%
11/10/2021	11-Oct	87.9%	56.9%	90.2%	54.7%	88.7%	49.2%	86.2%	46.7%	86.6%	58.4%
12/10/2021	12-Oct	89.1%	55.4%	90.2%	54.7%	90.2%	45.4%	87.6%	45.1%	88.5%	54.9%
13/10/2021	13-Oct	88.4%	54.4%	89.8%	55.6%	90.2%	42.3%	86.1%	44.3%	87.4%	49.6%
14/10/2021	14-Oct	88.9%	55.2%	89.3%	58.1%	89.1%	45.4%	87.5%	41.0%	89.6%	54.9%
15/10/2021	15-Oct	84.4%	53.4%	77.6%	56.4%	88.7%	45.4%	86.0%	44.3%	85.3%	50.4%
18/10/2021	18-Oct	88.0%	50.1%	89.4%	49.6%	88.3%	48.5%	87.1%	44.3%	86.9%	48.7%
19/10/2021	19-Oct	87.9%	49.5%	88.2%	52.1%	89.3%	45.4%	86.4%	42.6%	87.7%	51.3%
20/10/2021	20-Oct	87.9%	49.1%	87.9%	51.3%	88.3%	45.4%	88.7%	46.7%	86.7%	50.4%
21/10/2021	21-Oct	86.5%	46.6%	86.8%	51.3%	88.9%	47.7%	84.7%	39.3%	85.6%	50.4%
22/10/2021	22-Oct	70.6%	35.3%	79.0%	45.3%	55.1%	33.1%	73.7%	36.1%	74.6%	45.1%
01/11/2021	01-Nov	84.1%	39.4%	78.6%	36.8%	78.2%	33.1%	77.6%	36.9%	82.9%	41.6%
02/11/2021	02-Nov	90.7%	49.1%	91.2%	47.9%	91.1%	36.2%	90.9%	38.5%	90.3%	44.2%
03/11/2021	03-Nov	90.9%	46.8%	90.8%	47.0%	91.2%	43.8%	87.8%	35.2%	89.8%	45.1%
04/11/2021	04-Nov	90.6%	50.3%	91.1%	49.6%	91.2%	43.1%	88.6%	37.7%	89.7%	45.1%
05/11/2021	05-Nov	89.9%	47.4%	87.5%	53.8%	88.9%	35.4%	86.7%	38.5%	87.2%	42.5%
08/11/2021	08-Nov	90.9%	52.2%	91.1%	52.1%	91.0%	42.3%	88.9%	38.5%	89.1%	46.9%
09/11/2021	09-Nov	91.2%	52.3%	90.6%	52.1%	91.0%	41.5%	88.0%	40.2%	90.2%	50.4%
10/11/2021	10-Nov	90.8%	50.9%	91.2%	47.9%	91.2%	42.3%	88.0%	39.3%	91.7%	46.0%
11/11/2021	11-Nov	90.7%	51.9%	89.8%	48.7%	89.9%	46.9%	88.5%	36.1%	89.5%	59.3%
12/11/2021	12-Nov	89.3%	49.4%	89.3%	49.6%	89.0%	41.5%	87.2%	36.1%	87.0%	43.4%
15/11/2021	15-Nov	90.1%	52.5%	88.5%	50.4%	89.5%	40.8%	89.0%	40.2%	89.7%	54.0%
16/11/2021	16-Nov	90.2%	52.2%	88.9%	51.3%	90.0%	43.8%	88.3%	40.2%	89.5%	51.3%
17/11/2021	17-Nov	90.1%	51.2%	88.0%	47.9%	89.9%	46.2%	91.4%	37.7%	88.8%	46.9%
18/11/2021	18-Nov	89.9%	51.7%	87.5%	47.0%	89.5%	49.2%	88.6%	41.0%	89.2%	52.2%
19/11/2021	19-Nov	87.8%	49.4%	86.0%	48.7%	87.2%	43.1%	84.9%	37.7%	87.8%	48.7%

\* Actual National percentage data not available. Figures are an estimate based on an average of all LAs



## **Children Missing Education (CME)**

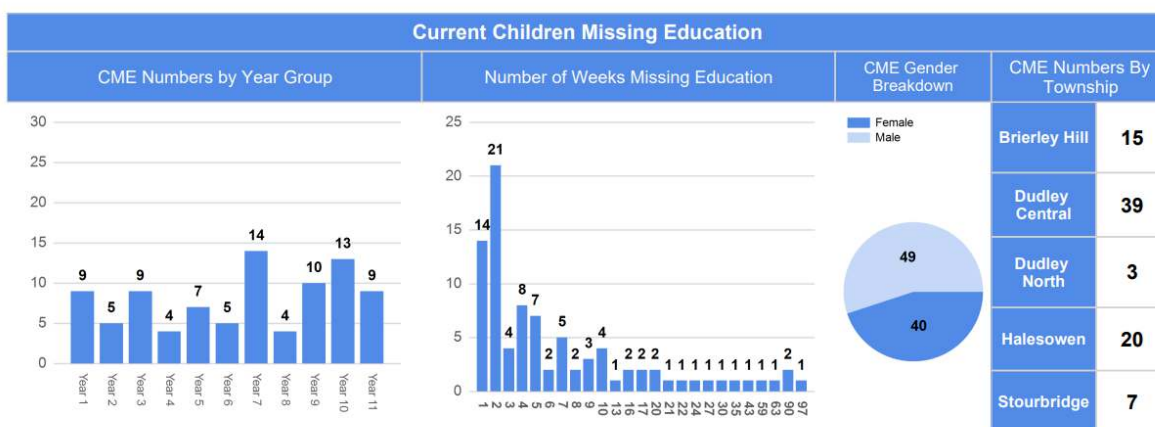
- 69 Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training) later in life.
- 70 The responsibility for CME transferred to Education Outcomes on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and sits within the Education Support Service (ESS). The CME team is made up of 1fte officer, 0.5fte Family Support Worker (FSW) and 0.5fte administrator. Whilst the team oversees all children without access to a suitable education those children with and EHCP are led by the SEND team, those who have been excluded from school are led by the Inclusion team and those who are applying for a school place are led by the School Admissions Team. This leaves a number of families who refuse to engage with services or support voluntarily to ensure their children access suitable education.
- 71 Some of these children may be Children in Need, Child Protection, Child Looked After or supported by Early Help. Services are working together to ensure these children are safe and supported to access a suitable full-time education. Unfortunately, some parents fail to ensure their children receive a suitable education and hence their children's life chances are harmed. It is vital that all services work together to ensure children can access a suitable, full time and outstanding education at school or otherwise.
- 72 The CME Board meets on a monthly basis to review progress on each case. Work is currently ongoing to refresh the role, purpose, and membership of the Board to ensure it is able to lead on the Improvement plan for CME.
- 73 Significant improvements have already been made in the case management processes to ensure children are placed in schools as quickly as possible and families are followed up without any delays where they are reluctant to engage.
- 74 All case records are captured on Synergy system with regular management oversight and a case management audit system. From the last audit sample there were 7 audits. 6 were graded 'Good', 1 was graded 'Requires Improvement'. The overall findings are that CME Officers are following the referral process, children are being supported with returning to education, and children's cases are being discussed at the CME Board as required. The 'Requires Improvement' grading was due to a MARF not being submitted; however, contact was still being made with the family.
- 75 Weekly strategic overview reports are being sent to Service Managers and processes are being put in place to ensure those open to other services are supported and safeguarded appropriately.



- 76 At the time of writing this report there are 28 children being supported by the CME Officer, 11 of which have been identified since 1<sup>st</sup> October. 54 children are being supported by School Admission, 1 child is being supported by Inclusion and 9 children are being supported by SEND.
- 77 Removal from roll notification in November and October were 55 and 56 respectively, this is reduced from September when there were 191. Most families have returned to their country of origin. Movers into Dudley in November is 65 compared to 52 in 2020 and 54 in 2019.
- 78 Fair Access Panels are meeting fortnightly and allocating school places to children very efficiently.

79  **Proof Of Concept** **OFFICIAL SENSITIVE**  
**Children Missing Education Current NOR As At 17/11/2021 12:02:13**  
 with Indicative CIN / CP/ CLA indicators from The Social Care System BI Reporting (as at COB yesterday).

Current NOR	... with EHCP	... with SEN Support	...with CIN	...with CIN (C & F Plan)	...with CP	...with CLA	...with Early Help
89	7	11	2	1	1	0	3



### Elective Home Education

- 80 Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time. This is different to education provided by a local authority otherwise than at a school.
- 81 The responsibility of the authority is to identify and deal with children who, for any reason and in any circumstances, are not receiving an efficient suitable full-time education. In delivering this we seek to identify that children registered as EHE are





receiving a suitable education by assessing the education provision provided by parents to ensure it is suitable and sufficient.

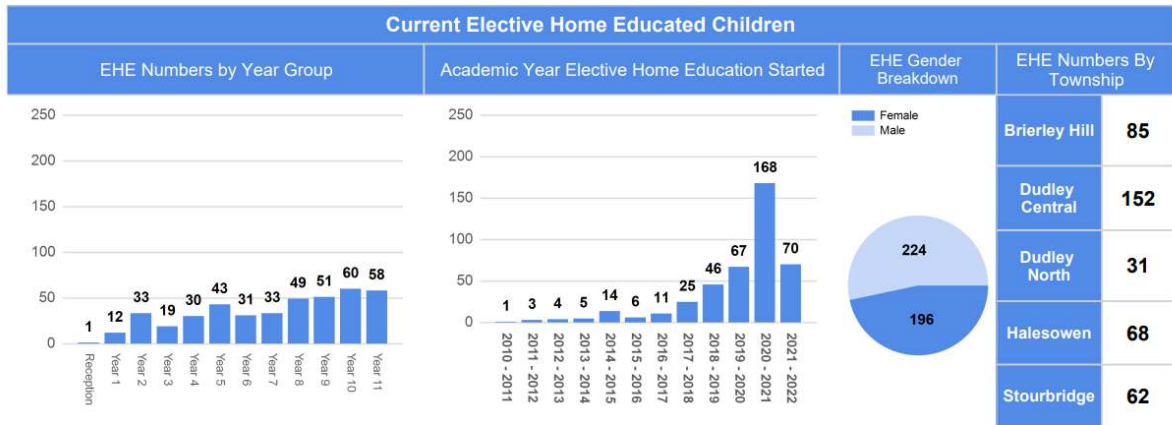
- 82 Local authorities have the same safeguarding responsibilities for children educated at home as for other children and we should be ready to use safeguarding powers appropriately, when warranted.
- 83 In the same way as for Children Missing education significant improvements have been made in the case management processes to ensure children are assessed in a timely manner and monitored regularly where there are concerns regarding the quality of the education provided. Families are followed up without any delays where they are reluctant to engage.
- 84 Weekly strategic overview reports are being sent to Service Managers and processes are being put in place to ensure those open to other services are supported and safeguarded appropriately
- 85 At the time of writing this report there are 420 children registered with the authority as EHE, this compares to 435 in November 2020, 328 in 2019, 293 in 2018, 244 in 2017, 205 in 2016 and 180 in 2015.
- 86 During the year we see numbers of children moving into EHE and then back into school and therefore the total number of children registered at some time during the year with EHE is somewhat higher.
- 87 Over the last few academic years, we have seen the aggregated number of children registered at some point with EHE go from 272 in 2015/16 to 576 in 2020/21. More than a 100% increase in a few years.
- 88 Due in the main to Covid, September to December 2020 saw a big rise in EHE number moving from 301 in August to 436 at the end of December an increase of 135 children. The highest point was May 2021 when there were 451 children registered. Since this time numbers have reduced, and we now have 420 registered children.
- 89 We currently have 22 EHE children who also have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a further 78 with SEN support needs and 3 undergoing a statutory assessment. There are 11 EHE children also supported under Child in Need and 12 support by Early Help. There are no children looked after by the authority who are registered as EHE and no children on the child protection register, however, there are 2 children on the child protection register whose parents are wishing to remove their children from the mainstream school in order to home educate them. Intensive work is ongoing with the families between the allocated social worker and EHE officer to ensure if this happens, the children are safeguarded and their access to a suitable education is maintained.



**Elective Home Education Current NOR As At 17/11/2021 12:20:29**

with Indicative CIN / CP/ CLA indicators from The Social Care System BI Reporting (as at COB yesterday).

Current NOR	... with EHCP	... with SEN Support	... with Statutory Assessment	...with CIN	...with CIN (C & F Plan)	...with CP	...with CLA	...with Early Help
420	22	78	3	7	4	0	0	12



**School Admissions Service Update**

- 91 The School Admissions Service is responsible for all statutory functions relating to the admission of pupils to school, except for those pupils with an EHCP. We ensure that parents can express a preference, give reasons for that preference and these are then considered in accordance with the regulations and relevant admissions policy.
- 92 The service supports schools by way of managing and co-ordinating the allocation of school places within the Borough at both the normal point of entry and during the school year (approximately 10,500 applications per year).
- 93 We also assist schools, who are their own admission authority, in carrying out their statutory admissions functions including the annual statutory consultation process for determining their admission arrangements.
- 94 The service co-ordinates and oversees the fair access process ensuring that all hard to place and vulnerable pupils are placed in a timely and equitable manner. An average of 420 pupils are placed each year via the fair access protocol.
- 95 In addition, the service will prepare and present cases at independent appeal hearings (an average of 390 per annum) on behalf of all Dudley schools. The aim of which is to protect the education for the existing students ensuring it is not prejudiced by having more pupils than the physical capacity.



96 The team has 7.43 staff delivering a high-quality service to a variety of agencies, parents, and pupils. We offer a traded service to academies for all non-statutory work with every academy in Dudley taking up the offer generating an income of approximately £120,000 per annum.

DLT November 2021														
In year School Admissions														
Academic Year	Application Type	Month											Annual To Total	
		Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul		
2020/21	Total Applications Received													
	1 Moved into Dudley	189	87	53	45	38	52	119	41	68	51	0	743	
	Moving within the Borough	87	35	23	11	2	10	34	10	32	13	0	257	
	3 New school - no house move	218	87	56	60	30	38	64	66	84	73	0	776	
	Monthly Total	494	209	132	116	70	100	217	117	184	137	0	1776	
	1a New to the UK	35	26	18	17	25	21	33	9	16	14		214	
	1b Asylum/ Refugee	5	3	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	0		15	
	1c Returning to UK	27	10	0	1	0	2	5	1	2	1		49	
	1d Relocation within the UK	122	48	35	27	13	27	77	30	50	36		465	
	Monthly Total	189	87	53	45	38	52	119	41	68	51	0	743	
	2 Moving within the Borough	87	35	23	11	2	10	34	10	32	13		257	
	3 New School -no house move	218	87	56	60	30	38	64	66	84	73		776	
	FAP Referrals	35	47	34	40	32	36	46	42	40	34	42	428	
	2021/22	1 Moved into Dudley	212	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	279
Moving within the Borough		78	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	106	
New school - no house move		293	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	356	
Monthly Total		583	158	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	741	
1a New to the UK		67	21										88	
1b Asylum/ Refugee		2	1										3	
1c Returning to UK		14	7										21	
1d Relocation within the UK		129	38										167	
Monthly Total		212	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	279	
2 Moving within the Borough		78	28										106	
3 New School -no house move	293	63										356		
FAP Referrals	66	65										131		

NB: Sept includes applications from July and August

97 There are no consultations or recommendations. There are no decisions to be taken and the report is provided for information only.

## Finance

98 The Education functions delivering the above areas of activity are funded for 2021/22 from a combination of:

- General Fund Revenue Budget Education - £2.3m
- Dedicated Schools Grant Central School Services Block - £2.0m

Funding to support the Alternative Provision strategy is contained within the High Needs block allocation of £39.8m.

## Law

99 The law provided by the Acts of Parliament, Regulations and Statutory Guidance regularly published and updated by Central Government outline the rules governing





Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's (the Local Authority) statutory duties to educate and safeguard children and young people and to maintain the schools within its area.

In particular, the Education Act 1996 obliges the Local Authority to:

- “[secure] efficient primary ... secondary ... and ... further education ... to meet the needs of the population of their area.” sub-section 13(1)
- “... ensure that their relevant education ... and ... training functions are ... exercised ... with a view to ... promoting high standards, ... ensuring fair access ... and ... promoting the fulfilment of [the] learning potential by every person to whom this subsection applies.” sub-section 13A(1)

AND

- “[fulfil] ... their functions under this Act, ... establish ... maintain ... and ...assist primary or secondary school[s] ...” sub-section 16(1)

Therefore, in order to comply with these and its other statutory duties, the Local Authority's structure, policies and procedures must enable it to collate, interpret and act upon the data available regarding the social and educational needs of local children and young people, as well as the educational attainments and outcomes of the pupils and students in its area.

Consequently, because this report describes the work being done by teams within the Local Authority, it demonstrates how those teams are assisting the Local Authority to comply with its statutory duties, including those duties cited above.

### **Risk Management**

100 There are no deemed risks as this report is provided for information purposes only.

### **Equality Impact**

101 The HR/OD Business Partner is fully engaged with officers within the Childrens Services Directorate to support the delivery of the key principles of this strategy.

### **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

102 As noted above in paragraph 101.

### **Commercial/Procurement**

103 There are no direct commercial or procurement implications associated with this report, however improved relationships with Dudley schools does create opportunity for increased trading.

### **Council Priorities**



104. A place where everybody has the education and skills they need, and where outstanding local schools, colleges and universities secure excellent results for their learners.

A place of healthy, resilient, safe communities with high aspirations and the ability to shape their own future.



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

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### **List of Background Documents**

- Appendix 1 – Crestwood Park Ofsted Report
- Appendix 2 – Fairhaven Ofsted Report
- Appendix 3 – Hawbush Ofsted Report
- Appendix 4 – Letter from the Education Secretary



# Inspection of a good school: Crestwood Park Primary School

Lapwood Avenue, Crestwood Park Estate, Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 8RP

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Crestwood Park is a friendly school, where pupils are cared for well. Parents hold the school in high regard and value its family ethos.

Pupils feel safe and say that poor behaviour and bullying are rare. They are confident that adults deal with any incidents of poor behaviour quickly. Pupils' good behaviour is recognised and celebrated regularly. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school values - referred to as SPARKS: 'Smart, Polite, Aware, Respectful, Kind, Safe'. They understand why these values are important and reflect them when they work and play together.

Pupils benefit from a range of activities beyond the classroom. Leaders are starting to reintroduce the educational visits that took place before the pandemic. Pupils enjoy these visits. Older pupils take on extra responsibilities, such as being reading ambassadors, lunchtime monitors and members of the school council. These opportunities help pupils to develop their sense of independence and responsibility. This contributes to their pride in the school.

Staff encourage pupils to work hard. Pupils are interested in the topics that they learn and are proud of their work. However, some subjects are not well planned. This limits pupils in reaching their full potential.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, want the best for every pupil. They know the school well and have rightly identified the need to improve the quality of education that the school provides. However, this work needs to be carried out more rapidly to help pupils develop and remember the knowledge that they need.

Teachers ensure that their planning helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to learn the full curriculum. These plans set out how staff should support pupils during lessons. Adults do this successfully. Their support ensures that all pupils learn a broad range of subjects. However, the curriculum is not structured sufficiently well enough in some foundation subjects. This is a barrier to pupils' learning. For example, pupils learn French in some years and German in others. This slows pupils' learning.

Curriculum plans in some subjects set out clearly the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn. For example, in mathematics, teachers understand the exact content they need to teach, and when to teach it. This allows teachers to check that all pupils are keeping up with the mathematics curriculum. However, curriculum leaders have not set this information out precisely enough in all subjects. As a result, teachers sometimes decide for themselves which key facts and ideas to cover. While these lessons provide pupils with interesting activities and exciting experiences, they do not build pupils' knowledge over time. This hinders pupils from achieving as well as they should.

Leaders have ensured that there is a clear approach to teaching early reading. Staff understand this approach and stick to it. The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Younger pupils learn to read in small groups every day. As a result, most pupils make good progress and soon become better readers. However, some pupils do not get enough practice because the books they read are not well matched to the sounds they know. This slows their progress in learning to read fluently.

Leaders have identified the early years as a phase of the school they intend to improve further. They have started to make positive changes to enhance children's learning experiences. For example, they have deployed extra staff to work with children in smaller groups. This helps children to carefully focus on the things they need to learn.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They communicate these expectations well. Procedures for dealing with behaviour are clear. This helps all staff to have a consistent approach. As a result, pupils behave very well. They concentrate on their tasks and take part in lessons without fuss.

Leaders work extremely hard to promote the well-being of children and adults. Pupils benefit from weekly lessons in personal, social, health and economic education. These lessons teach pupils about healthy relationships and help them to maintain strong friendships. The pastoral team work diligently to support pupils, families and staff. This is creating an environment where everyone feels valued. Consequently, pupils enjoy being at school and staff morale is high.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, have put systems in place to safeguard pupils. They keep accurate records and work well with other agencies to make sure that pupils receive the right help when they need it.

Leaders ensure that all staff are alert to identify pupils who may need help. For example, staff regularly discuss possible situations when they would need to take action. This helps staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils practise reading using books that are not precisely matched to their phonics ability. This prevents these pupils from becoming better readers. Leaders should ensure that pupils practise reading from books that are matched to their reading ability.
- Curriculum plans are not structured sufficiently well in some subjects. This limits pupils in reaching their full potential. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is well structured in all subjects.
- Curriculum plans in many foundation subjects do not set out the essential knowledge that leaders expect pupils to know and remember each year. This is a barrier to pupils knowing more and remembering more. Leaders should develop curriculum plans to clearly set out the knowledge, vocabulary and skills that pupils are expected to learn in each subject.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2016.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103790
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199831
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Dean Hubbard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amy Cooper
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.crestwood-p.dudley.sch.uk/">http://www.crestwood-p.dudley.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2019.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Early reading, mathematics and history were considered as part of this inspection.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders and teachers. The inspector also spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed curriculum plans, looked at pupils' work and visited lessons.



- The inspector reviewed safeguarding procedures. This included scrutinising the school's single central record of checks on staff.
- The inspector also looked at a range of policies and documents provided by the school. These included leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plan.
- The inspector had informal conversations with parents at the end of the school day and considered 52 responses on Ofsted's Parent View website.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils to collect their views on the school and took account of 31 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff and considered 22 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Jonathan Leonard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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# Inspection of Fairhaven Primary School

Barnett Lane, Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 5PY

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Inspection dates: 6 and 7 October 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The headteacher and staff have created a nurturing school where the adults really care about the pupils. Pupils are happy and friendly. They respect adults and trust them to sort out any bullying should it occur. Parents appreciate the warm, friendly greetings they receive from leaders on the school gate.

Everyone is treated with respect. Staff teach pupils to value differences. The 'fair' in Fairhaven shines through. Pupils say, 'It would be a boring world if we all looked the same, talked the same, behaved the same'.

Despite these positive features, pupils do not achieve well enough. Some pupils do not learn to read fluently. Quite often, pupils struggle to remember what they have been taught. Pupils do not build on their learning well from the early years through to the end of Year 6. This is because leaders have not given enough thought to what they want pupils to know in each subject in key stages 1 and 2.

Pupils behave well. Those who have additional behavioural needs are well supported, including those within the nurture provision. Pupils value the opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as peacemakers. They help pupils get on together.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Children get a secure start to school in the early years. They achieve well across the whole curriculum. Staff are well trained and know what children should learn at each stage. The new nursery provision is proving popular. The early years provides a good foundation for what pupils will learn in key stage 1.

In key stages 1 and 2, the school teaches the full range of subjects. However, in some of these subjects, leaders have not agreed what is the most important content for pupils to remember. Leaders' plans do not show the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn clearly enough. Teachers are unsure about the prior knowledge pupils need before they tackle new work. Weaknesses in curriculum planning mean that pupils sometimes find it hard to remember important information from earlier learning. Teachers tend to focus on testing pupils rather than checking how well pupils remember what they have been taught in each subject.

Teaching pupils to read has been a focus for leaders. Reading is taught regularly across the school. However, there are inconsistencies in the way phonics is taught and in the resources that teachers use. Reading books in Reception closely match the sounds that children know. This is not the case for pupils in other year groups. This slows their ability to use their phonics to read words they have not met before. Pupils enjoy texts from the 'Reading River'. They talk fondly of books they have read. For example, speaking of a particular book, they said, 'It talked you through the ups and downs of life'.

Leaders have a structure in place to help teachers plan and teach mathematics effectively. Teachers know what they will teach pupils and when they will teach it. They check what pupils know and can do. Pupils use their knowledge to tackle challenging problem-solving activities. Leaders use schemes to help them develop subjects such as science and design and technology (DT). This is beginning to help teachers to know what to teach and when.

The special educational needs coordinator works diligently to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Additional teaching and pastoral support are well focused on ensuring that pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive because they find the extra help valuable. Parents appreciate the professional and sensitive support that their children get. They say it makes a difference.

Most staff feel well supported by leaders and are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the training that leaders provide.

Governors are proud of the school's kind and caring ethos. However, leaders' planning for improvement does not set clear actions and measures. As a result, governors are not able to provide enough challenge to leaders on the way the curriculum is designed and how this is helping pupils learn.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Skiing, sightseeing in London, theatre and museum visits all add to pupils' experiences. The local area is used well to support visits and learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about these visits. The 'adopt-a-chef' programme helps pupils to understand healthy eating and how to prepare food safely. Parents comment positively on the way staff work hard to bring back a little happiness and normality since the pandemic.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well and prioritise their welfare. Staff are well trained. They understand their duty to keep pupils safe and report any concerns. Leaders work closely with external agencies to help pupils and their families. They follow up their actions in a timely manner.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know who to go to if they have any worries. Pupils learn to identify and manage risks. For example, they learn about water safety, road safety and how to stay safe online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

- The curriculum is not coherent or sequenced well. Pupils do not remember enough about what they have learned. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum plans for all subjects set out the knowledge that pupils should know and when

they should know it. Leaders should check the progress pupils make through the curriculum and if they understand and remember it.

- The reading programme is not effective for all pupils. Some pupils fall behind. Leaders need to ensure that the teaching of phonics is accurate and consistent. Leaders should ensure that reading books directly match the sounds pupils are learning in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Governors have not held leaders to account well enough for the quality of education and pupils' achievement. Governors need to improve their skills so that they can hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance.
- Leaders' planning for improvement is not matched closely enough to the weaknesses in the school. At times, the actions taken have not been sufficiently focused on the most important areas for improvement or carried out quickly enough. Leaders need to ensure that action plans clearly set out what is required to improve the quality of education in a succinct and manageable manner.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103786
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10201037
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	293
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Annette Whalley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Thomas Garner
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fairhaven.dudley.sch.uk/">www.fairhaven.dudley.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 December 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school opened a governor-led nursery provision for two- and three-year olds in September 2020.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders, pupils and members of the governing body. An inspector met with the chair and two members of the local governing board, and looked at the minutes of local governing board meetings.



- The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority and the school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and DT. Inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding were checked. This included checks on the single central record, and staff training and safeguarding records.
- An inspector discussed the school's records on attendance and behaviour with leaders.
- An inspector analysed the school's self-evaluation document and plans for improvement. A range of policies and documentation on the school website were scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils in lessons and at break times, as well as in pupil group meetings.
- Inspectors talked to a number of parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. They also took account of the 53 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey.
- Inspectors met with a number of staff and took account of the 23 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Devinder Riat	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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# Inspection of Hawbush Primary School

Hawbush Road, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 3NH

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils believe in the school's values of fairness, perseverance, hope, resilience and respect. Pupils enjoy their forest school sessions and working together. Pupils know what bullying is. They have confidence that adults would help them sort it out. Pupils feel safe in school.

Staff are ambitious for pupils. They show commitment to the pupils and the local community. The school provides high-quality care for pupils who need emotional support. Pupils behave well most of the time.

Staff are looking for ways to extend pupils' experiences. Pupils are looking forward to restarting clubs and welcoming visitors. For example, some have recently started school council, junior leadership team and working with community police.

Despite these positive features, pupils do not achieve well enough. Leaders know the attributes they want all pupils to have by the time they leave the school. However, leaders have not identified exactly what pupils need to learn in subjects such as history, science and art and design. The curriculum lacks ambition and is not well organised in some subjects. Leaders have prioritised improving pupils' mathematics. However, due to weaknesses in the teaching of early reading, some pupils do not learn to read fluently or confidently.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The quality of education is not good enough. Leaders are beginning to think about how to organise and deliver their curriculum so that it supports pupils' learning and development more effectively. For example, in mathematics, leaders are clear on the small steps that pupils need to learn to be successful.

The teaching of early reading is not secure. Some staff do not have the skills to teach phonics well because training has not been effective. Adults do not always appropriately model the sounds letters make. Pupils struggle to remember and use their previous learning. Pupils do not use letter sounds to help them write well.

In some subjects, teachers have insufficient guidance about what to teach. Curriculum plans in these subjects do not clearly identify the knowledge and skills pupils will learn. Teaching in these subjects does not sequence learning well enough to help pupils build on what they already know or prepare them for future learning. Some teachers have not had sufficient training to help them teach the curriculum well. Pupils have a poor recall of their science and history work.

Leaders have not consistently checked that subject plans are delivered effectively. This does not help leaders have an accurate understanding of the areas to improve in the school. For example, plans to learn about key artists have not enabled the pupils to know more and remember more about these artists.

Leaders are ambitious to broaden pupils' horizons. They make sure that pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Other areas of the curriculum teach pupils about democracy. Leaders have also prioritised pupils' understanding of mental health. They have secured additional support for those who need it. Pupils generally behave well. Sometimes they lose focus when the curriculum does not meet their needs fully.

Leaders have procedures in place to manage attendance. However, low attendance and high persistent absence rates have continued since summer 2021, when all pupils were expected to return to school. This is a barrier to pupils making progress through the curriculum.

Teachers understand the difficulties that pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND) have with their learning. This is especially so in the school's specially resourced provision. The individual attention and care that these pupils receive meets their needs well. This means that the pupils engage in learning where they may not have done so before.

The early years curriculum is well thought out. Skilled adults help children to learn and acquire language. There is a high focus on this, and children rise to the challenge. They can talk effectively with a partner by the time they reach Reception Year. Relationships are strong and children get off to a good start because the adults understand the steps to develop learning. Children who have had little pre-school experience or have SEND are well supported. However, due to weaknesses in the teaching of reading, children do not do as well as they could.

Governors have ensured that the school operated well during the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been less attention on their evaluation of the school's quality of education.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They say leaders support them well. Staff value the help they get to keep a positive work-life balance.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that there are clear arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They train all staff so that everyone knows what to do if they have concerns about a child. Staff are alert to any signs that a pupil may be at risk. They report concerns quickly. Leaders' records help to ensure that pupils and their families get the support that they need when they need it.

Additional staff provide well-being support. Leaders have also invested in external services to help pupils.

Pupils learn about keeping safe, including how to stay safe online.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The reading programme is not effective for all pupils. Leaders need to ensure that the teaching of phonics is precise and consistent. Leaders also need to ensure that all adults, routinely and accurately, help pupils use their phonics knowledge to write well.
- In some subjects, the curriculum is not well sequenced. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum plans for all subjects show teachers the knowledge that pupils should learn and when. Leaders must make sure that teachers have the necessary subject knowledge to develop the curriculum effectively.
- Leaders have not checked how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum. As a result, leaders do not know whether pupils are learning the planned curriculum. Leaders need to check how well the curriculum is delivered so that they can implement training and support where necessary.
- Governors do not have a full picture of the schools' strengths, weaknesses and priorities for improvement. This makes it difficult for them to support and challenge leaders effectively. Governors need to make sure they have the necessary information to proactively hold leaders to account.
- Pupils' attendance is low. This reduces the time available for learning. Leaders need to ensure they rigorously apply the school's systems to challenge pupils' absence so that attendance levels rise, and fewer pupils are persistently absent.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103820
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10201048
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	260
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joyce Carter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob McConomy
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hawbush.dudley.sch.uk">www.hawbush.dudley.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school now offers provision for two-year-olds.
- The school manages a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This provision caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- Inspectors were aware that a serious incident had previously occurred at the school while a child was in the care of staff employed by the school. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incident were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders and members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's plans for improvement and the work of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, science and art and design. Inspection activities included discussion with curriculum leaders, scrutinising curriculum plans, lesson visits and discussion with both teachers and pupils about learning.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day and gathered their views. Inspectors considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors took account of the responses to the survey for staff.
- Inspectors also considered the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEMH.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding leader to check that safeguarding procedures and processes were effective. Inspectors also checked the single central record to ensure that the required recruitment checks on staff have taken place.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.

### **Inspection team**

Richard Kentish, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Barry Yardsley

Ofsted Inspector



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**Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP**  
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/contactus/df](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus/df)

23 November 2021

Dear Chief Executives,

Since the pandemic began, I have been consistently impressed by the hard work and dedication that staff across Local Authorities have shown in ensuring that children and young people are able to continue attending school and accessing education. Your teams have worked tirelessly with us to help minimise the negative impact of the pandemic on the education of our children and young people in what have been the most challenging of circumstances. Since coming into post as Secretary of State, I have been able to see this tremendous work first-hand and I am extremely grateful for their resilience and commitment.

I recognise the impact that Covid is continuing to have, and this is why control measures such as home testing, increased ventilation and the vaccine offer, are as important as ever to ensuring disruption to education and particularly school attendance is minimised. School attendance should also not be limited through the use of bubbles or isolation of contacts, and I am confident that effective implementation of the control measures remain the best way to manage the effects of the virus.

I know that the pandemic has also exacerbated traditional drivers of non-attendance, such as lack of routine and mental health challenges, and we know that attendance remains below pre-pandemic levels even after we account for absence caused by Covid. As we now move forward, I hope that we can continue to work together in a collaborative way to tackle these. I am keen to make maximising school attendance a top priority across the sector.

As you know, local authorities play a critical role on school attendance and are in a unique position as the key to social care, legal interventions and wider support services. Strengthening the relationships across all your services and facilitating effective cross-agency working is vital to making good progress on school attendance and I want to ask for your support in ensuring that this continues to happen as effectively as possible.

I therefore also ask for your support in ensuring the following actions are being implemented:

- Being clear with parents that ensuring their child attends school is a legal responsibility that has repercussions if not fulfilled. This includes making full use of the parental responsibility measures such as education supervision orders, parenting contracts and fixed penalty notices. During the height of the pandemic, suspending the use of these measures felt most appropriate, but as we push now to maximise school attendance, it is important that they are once again being applied across the country.
- Doubling down on our efforts to break down any barriers between services and build on the excellent multi-agency working and innovation that we have seen during the past 18 months.
- Identifying children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than at school (for example, at home, or in alternative provision) – ensuring these children are offered and take up a school place.
- Improving joint working between education services and children's social care teams, building on the expanded role of the Virtual School Head for children with a social worker. As you know, the severest cases of non-attendance are almost always a symptom of wider issues and where schools or attendance teams indicate an issue, LAs should consider what further action may be needed, including statutory social care intervention, where appropriate, and how to best support these families so that children can attend school.
- Looking critically at the current ways of working and implement best practice in areas such as data management and communication with schools and parents. The DfE's [best practice advice for improving school attendance](#) is a helpful tool for this and we will soon be running a series of webinars on this as well.
- Identifying pupils at risk of persistent absence and re-engage them directly.

I am delighted that Dame Rachel de Souza has also made the attendance of children and young people in schools and colleges one of her priorities. Her office will be looking to work with you in the coming weeks.

In the medium to longer term, I am keen for us to work together to ensure the lessons learned during the pandemic help us strengthen and improve the school attendance system to ensure the absence facing us today does not become perpetual. As such, I've been clear that attendance and

engagement with education will be a central tenet of my White Paper on the future school system and my officials have recently met with LA heads of service to begin that process.

As you will know, we are investing substantially in our school system and ensuring that children and young people are able to catch up and recover from the negative effects of the pandemic. This includes nearly £5 billion for education recovery, with £1bn of funding to help those pupils most in need of support to catch up by extending the recovery premium for a further two years.

To support and reengage other at-risk pupils we are also investing £45m for new SAFE and AP taskforces, bringing together specialist support in schools and AP settings in serious violence hotspots. We are also appointing a small team of expert attendance advisers who will support some MATs and LAs to improve their approach to attendance.

We remain committed to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. We are providing more than £17m this year to build on existing mental health support in education settings, including £9.5m to enable up to a third of schools and colleges to train a senior mental health lead, as part of our commitment to fund training for leads in all schools and colleges by 2025.

We want to ensure that you are able to access all of this support and are keen to help troubleshoot any issues you may have doing so. To ensure our children and young people can benefit from all of the positive initiatives that are being put in place, I hope you agree on the urgency with which we must tackle school attendance issues and that you will support us in doing so. I remain grateful for your continued work and effort and I look forward to working collaboratively for the benefit of our children and young people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', written in a cursive style.

**Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP**  
**Secretary of State for Education**

**Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 20th January 2022**

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Social Care Improvement update**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to further update the Scrutiny Committee on the continued Improvement of Children's Social Care including: -
  - Overview of the refreshed Improvement Plan 2022/2023
  - Update on the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Diagnostic by Worcestershire Children First.
  - Update on the Sector Led Improvement Partnership with South Tyneside
  - Update on the DfE Review December 2021
  - Overview of quality of social work practice.

This will provide members with an opportunity to seek clarity and raise questions whilst providing ongoing assurance that Children's Social Care, along with the wider partnership is making improvements at pace to improve the quality of services being provided to the children and families of Dudley.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that Members: -
  - Note and comment on the progress made to date against the Improvement Plan including the quality of practice
  - Note the refreshed Improvement Plan agreed November 2021, which is designed to achieve positive and sustainable change to the quality of services provided to the children and families of Dudley.
  - That Corporate Leaders have been provided with an understanding of progress made to date.

**Background**

3. We continue to focus on our value of '*Children first and at the heart of all that we do*', which has been strengthened through the refreshed and updated Improvement Plan 2022/2023.



Members will be aware that between October 2020 and November 2021, our Improvement work focused upon 9 key priority areas:

- Leadership
- Improve the timeliness and quality of decision making in the multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Improve Quality of Assessments and Child Focussed plans
- Timely application of pre proceedings stage of PLO (Public Law Outline)
- Prioritising progression of permanency plans for children
- Improve the Quality and Impact of Education for children in care key stage 4 and post qualification and attainment
- Case transition points across all services
- The pace of progression in the development of non-familial abuse and exploitation
- Improve the effectiveness of supervision, Quality Assurance and Senior Management oversight

### **Update on the 5-priority areas of the Improvement plan 2022/2023**

4. In November 2021 we identified 5 priority areas of focus, namely *Restorative Model of Practice, Whole System, Learning Organisation, Partnership Working, Workforce and Impact* with our recovery from Covid threaded throughout the 5 priority areas and plan.

The new Improvement Plan has been developed jointly with the DfE Advisor, DfE, members of the Improving Service for Children Board (ISCB) and staff.

#### *Restorative model of practice*

In developing meaningful relationships with children and families including their wider family network, we will seek to create opportunities to work collaboratively with them and to find solutions to their challenges and difficulties and in doing so, support the building of resilient family networks to support them, focusing on their strengths.

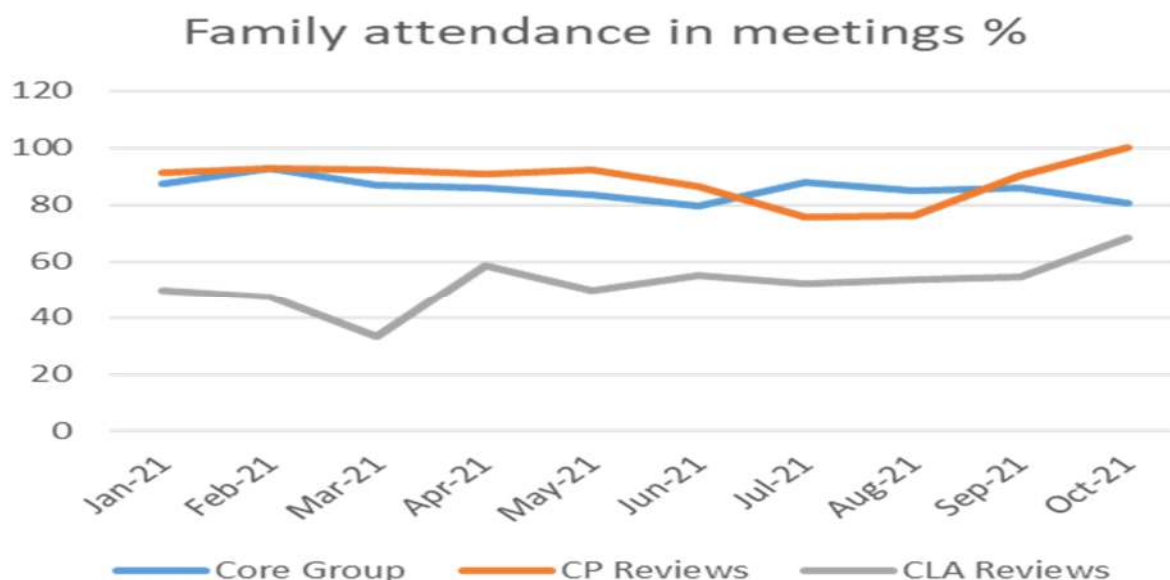
Our plan is to now embed restorative practice in our day-to-day work and work with and alongside families to resolve their difficulties at the earliest opportunity. We know from our current audit activity that we need to strengthen this area further and continue to train and support our staff in this model of work and their practice.

Since September 2021, there has been significant activity around training the workforce in the Restorative Practice Model and to date over 100 front line staff and almost 40 managers have been trained. The remaining Children's Services staff are in the process of being trained and we have included Restorative practice in our core training offer for staff and within our new training programme for 2022. It is anticipated that any new staff joining us will also be trained in this model of work.

We are committed to engaging with children, young people and families and family attendance in child protection conferences and Child in Care Reviews has increased and this is a key area of our focus. We want children and families to feel supported and empowered to make 'Family Led' decisions, which will enable them to have more control



over their lives and to receive professional help for the least amount of time that is necessary in line with their needs.



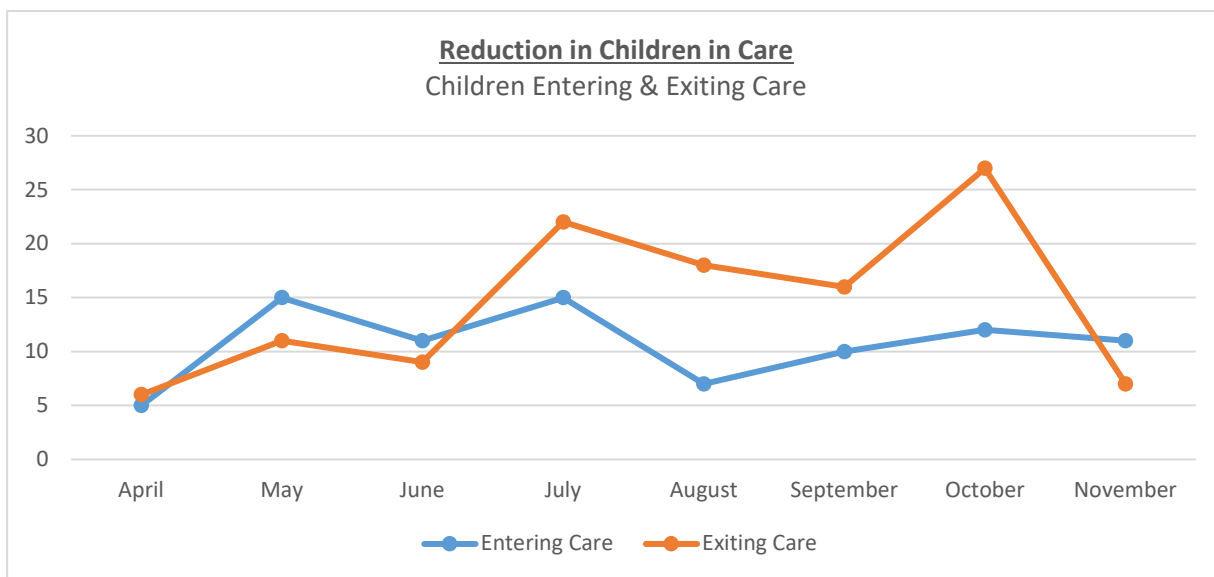
Restorative processes are being embedded across everything we do. Practitioners have received guidance to use Restorative Approaches in everyday work; ‘4 first steps’ guidance was circulated advising how to use high challenge and high support, restorative check ins, solution circles and language that cares. We have a Restorative Practice Steering group in place and champions are being identified across the system and are developing a plan on a page for their service area and this is a key area of our work during 2022 and will form part of our Restorative Practice model plan that will strategically take the work forward.

As part of our Restorative Practice model, we have undertaken work on changes to the forms with our children’s case file recording system (Liquid Logic) to promote Restorative Practice principles and ways of working, including how we undertake and record our management decision making relating to children and young people – *What has happened, who has been affected by this and what needs to happen next.*

In line with our work in this area, we need to see further evidence on children’s files around how restorative practice is impacting on day-to-day practice and family led decision making including the use of restorative circles in practice.

In line with our work around permanency and valuing families, our data informs us that more children have left care during April-November 2021 than those entering care (116 have left care compared to 86 entering care) and our key aim is to ensure children and families receive the right help at the right time.





### *Whole system*

Children and families will benefit from timely and effective interventions in response to their needs and are seen alone as necessary and their lived experience fully understood, and they are safer as a result of the help they receive and secure permanency in a timely way.

We are redesigning our Edge of Care service and strengthening our assessment and planning processes and including exploring opportunities for children and young people to return to their parents where it is assessed as safe to do so.

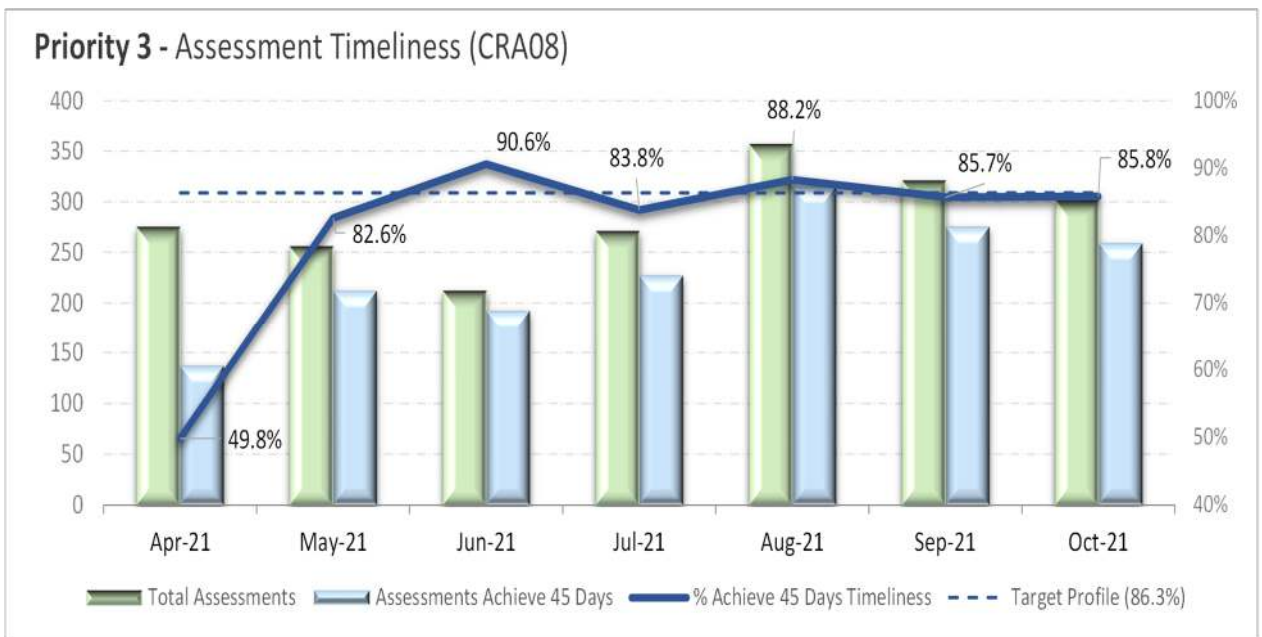
Since September and building on the strengths of our current CART (Child, Adolescent Response) team, we are launching our Supporting Families First model in January 2022. Service design and scoping of the work has taken place including work and engagement with partner agencies. The service has been designed with the aim of supporting more children and young people to safely remain with their families and in doing so ensuring interventions are delivered to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Additional support has been provided to the Assessment Service to work through an increase in referrals over the September and October period. We have developed improved data reporting to assist with manager oversight and timeliness in the MASH and Assessment Service and started to implement a revised process for manager oversight of assessments.

Our Assessment timeliness continues to improve and has remained above 85% since August 2021.



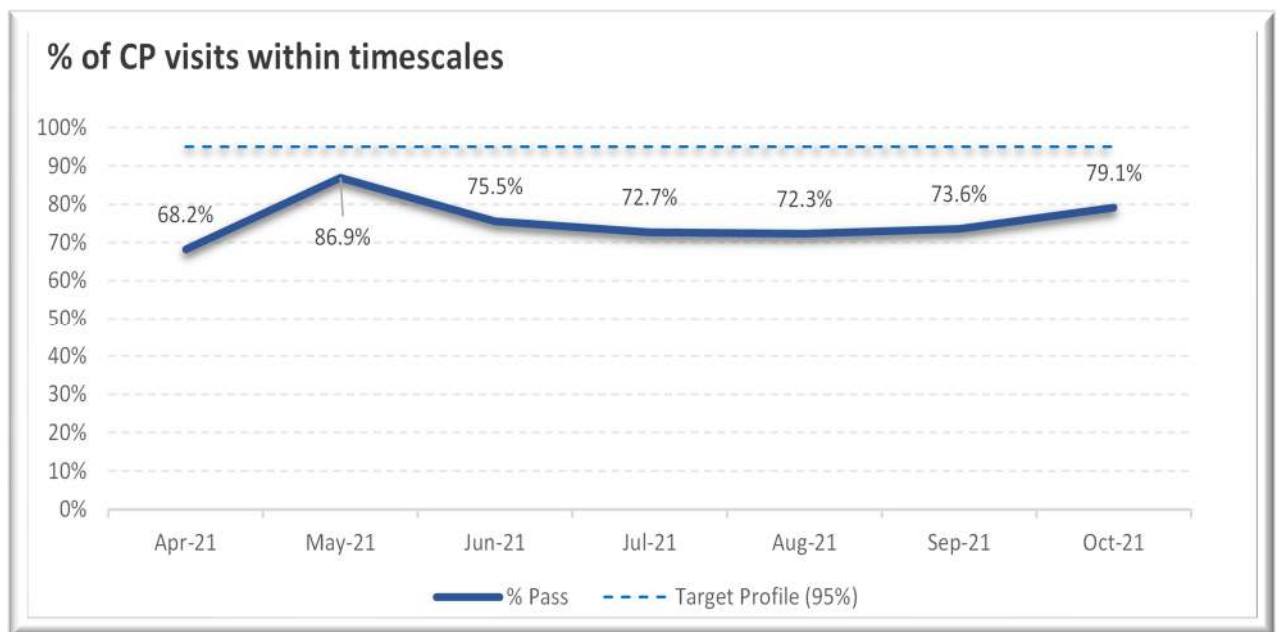




We have reviewed and amended our processes when children step down to Level 4 services to early help ensuring children and families receive a streamline service and receive the right support aligned to their needs.

We have seen a recent increase in our overall percentage of 2 weekly visits to children subject to a child protection plan (79.1%) and core group meetings (76.5%) taking place, although further improvements are required in these priority areas and for these to be sustained.

Dudley’s plan to visit children on a Care Plan every 2 weeks is more frequent than that of neighbouring Local Authorities in the region.



Our child protection numbers are 38.5 per 10k of the population - lower than the regional and national average. We would not want to go lower but were too high previously- currently 287 in total

The number of children in the Public Law Outline (PLO) process has increased and all children subject to PLO are reviewed by a Head of Service and Legal Services every 6 weeks to prevent any drift and delay. At the end of November 2021, there were 7 families in PLO and a total of 20 children which is an increase from the previous reporting period.

Using our qualitative and quantitative data to better understand our whole system story and continue to drive improvements, we have set up DCS (Director Children's Services) Assurance Performance Clinics from January 2022. These meetings will be whole service wide and will give us the opportunity to have a wider system view of performance and quality, how areas connect and what are our shared targets.

### *Learning Organisation*

Our aim is that children and families will benefit from focused social work support, and they know how to provide feedback about the quality of the services they receive. Through our work with them they are encouraged and supported to find their own solutions and their voices influence and shape services. As part of our learning culture, we will now seek to embed reflective one to one and group supervision to support and develop further restorative solution solving circles and share and disseminate learning in team meetings, practice groups and service development

We continue to focus on our quality assurance activity including changes to our supervision policy and will be issuing guidance for facilitating group and peer supervision and supervision with a Restorative focus

We are establishing routine processes for undertaking and analysing outcomes of observations of supervisions and welfare supervision record audits, on a quarterly basis as set out under the Quality Assurance Framework

As part of our work around listening to staff and obtaining feedback from Social Worker's regarding the quality of supervision they are receiving, we will continue to use the method of a Dudley Dialogue focus group to gain feedback from them.

Compliance with audits has reduced over recent months, although increased again in October 2021 after a refocus with managers. The number of monthly audits judged good or requires improvement is increasing indicating some improvements in the overall quality of our practice and this is also evidenced in dip sampling audit activity.

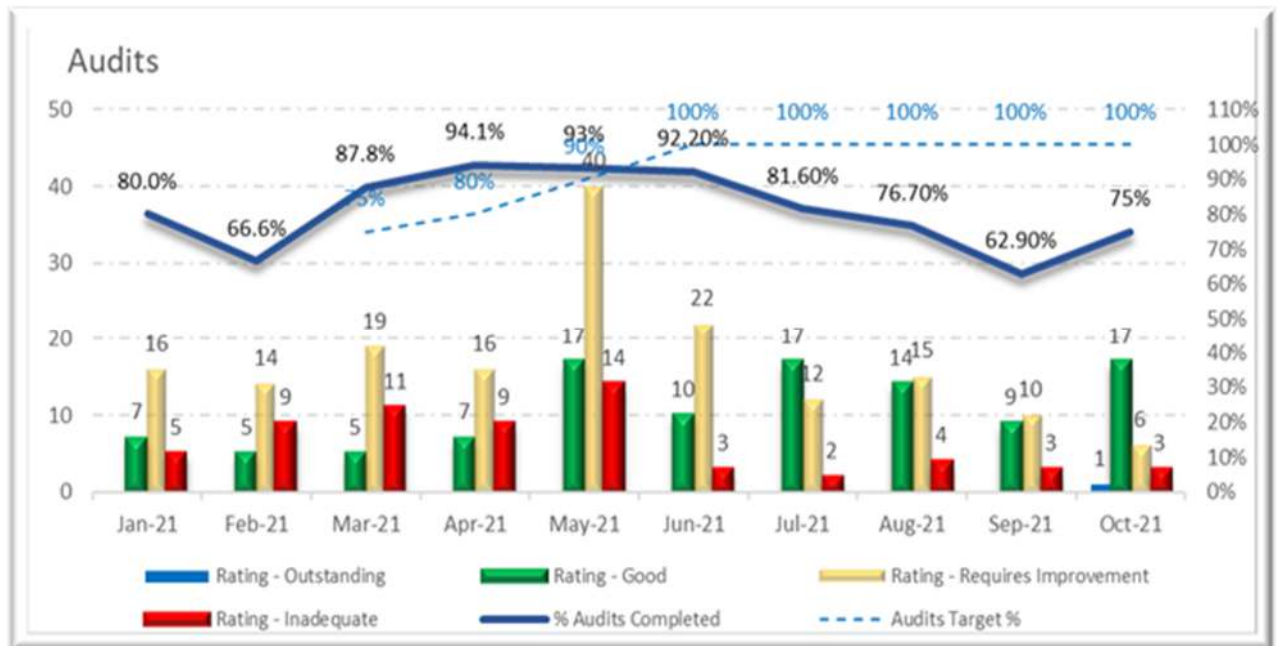
A range of themed audit activity continues to take place, including unborn babies, rates of No Further Action after Assessment, review of care proceedings work and management oversight. Audit outcomes have allowed us to strengthen our processes in these areas.

All managers and leaders have been involved in themed group audit work (permanency in November 2021) – including group learning discussions.



We have embedded reflective audit circles for managers involved in audits to improve their audit skills, practice and decision making for children and to promote a consistent approach to our auditing work

We have also continued with our observations of practice by Senior Managers.



The number of audits judged good continues to improve and we have developed a process to close the loop on audits judged requiring improvement and inadequate

Our recent audit analysis in October 2021 identified that children’s voices were found to be a strength and children were being visited regularly, and there was increased evidence of their participation at review meetings. Stronger examples showed practitioners using a combination of verbal discussions, observations, and direct work to support children to express themselves during visits.

Direct quotes from children were set out in speech marks and highlighted in blue, giving children a sense of identity on their files, and bringing their voices to life. There was also good evidence of Independent Reviewing Officers consulting with children prior to review meetings and writing review meeting records to children rather than about them.

The quality and regularity of supervision and management oversight varied across services. In some cases, there was evidence of regular and reflective supervision supported by clear management oversight and direction. Good examples of supervision records showed use of the Social Discipline Window to support practitioners to reflect upon restorative approaches and their work with children and families.



A key area of our audit activity moving forward is to increase the feedback we receive from children, young people and parents and to also gain feedback at different parts of the child's journey of our work including the Safeguarding and Review Service. We continue to utilise audit circles to reflect, debate, and learn from audit findings and to drive further improvements and we were supported by South Tyneside with this process during November 2021.

A key area of focus is our ongoing learning from complaints and sharing this learning with workers and managers – e.g., focus on communication with families and accessibility of Social Workers

Using DfE funds, we have a dedicated person driving participation across the system.

We are continuing our focus on triangulating the 3 critical areas of Key Performance Indicators, Quality Assurance and family feedback to strengthen our learning culture

### *Partnerships*

Our aim is that children and families are supported at the right time with the right support and are protected from abuse and neglect and feel safer and are happy and healthy and receive an inclusive education where they learn and enjoy. We want to ensure that children and young people's voices influence the improvement quality of services they receive, and we are working closely with our partners at a strategic level to ensure a joined-up response to the needs of children and families across the Borough

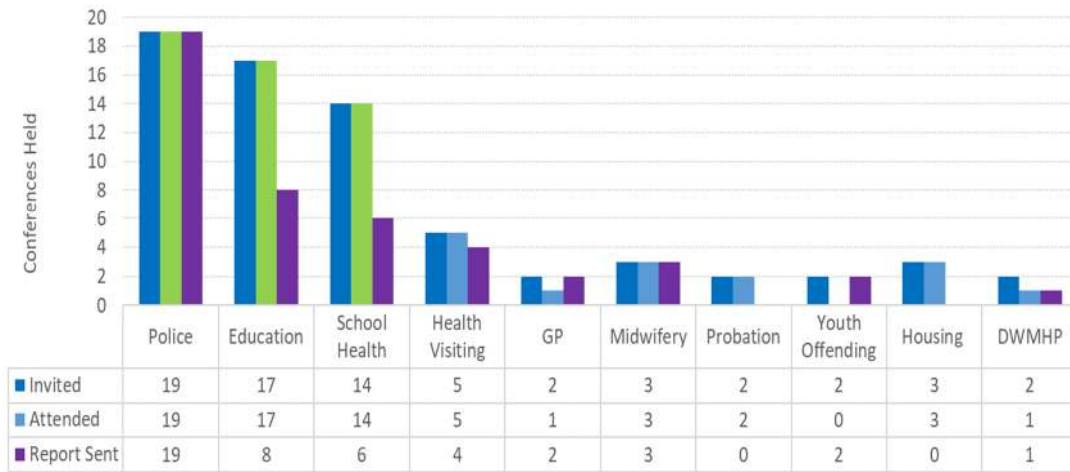
We have further developed Our Dudley Exploitation Hub (DEX) with the addition of 3 Family Support workers. Oversight of children's files indicates these staff have made a significant contribution to partnership working around our most complex children. We are making effective use of the MACE (Multi Agency Child Exploitation) process and work is underway to relocate the Missing Service in DEX by the end of January 2021. Strategies for achieving an increase in Return Home Interviews for children and young people who go missing are being reviewed as part of this work.

A review is underway of commissioned services for family support and for women at risk of repeated removals of babies from their care and we are working closely with our colleagues from Commissioning and Public Health on this area.

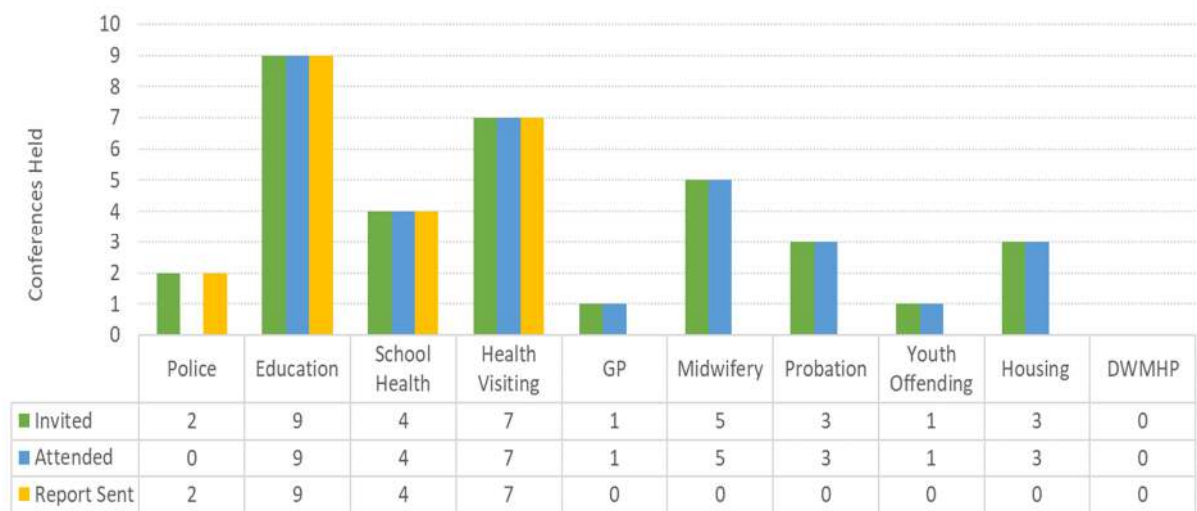
We are seeing good partner agency engagement in meetings including Initial and Review conferences and this supports and promotes multi-agency planning for children and young people



Initial Child Protection Conferences November 2021



Review Child Protection Conference November 2021



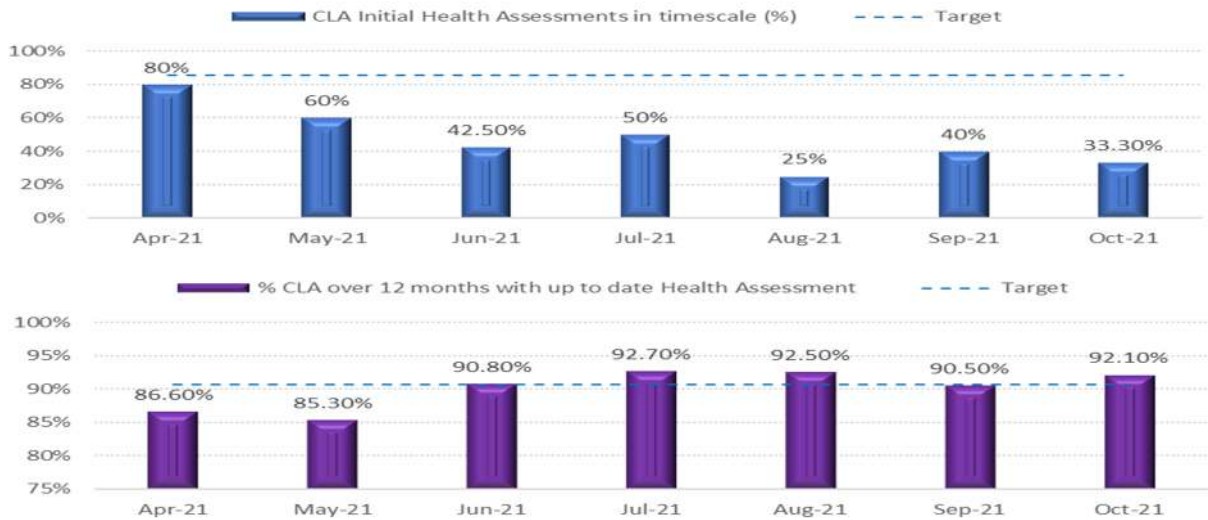
In September 2021, we reviewed and strengthened Terms of Reference to ensure that Health and Education are part of a Complex Cases panel to enable children with complex needs to receive robust jointly funded and planning decisions.

The revised Dudley Lighthouse Links which provides emotional wellbeing support to Children in Care and Care Leavers, is now fully staffed with robust completion of support to children with mental health difficulties. We also have a new permanent Team Manager in the service

Multi-Agency response to improve timeliness of health assessments, dental care and Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs) is now in place with joint monthly performance meetings. We have identified areas impacting on timeliness and have put measures in place to address these. We need to significantly improve timeliness for Initial Health Assessments







### Workforce

Our aim is that children and families benefit from consistent and meaningful relationships and tell their story by ‘saying it once’. We want children and families to receive the support and intervention that is impactful and timely, and we are recruiting and retaining staff within Dudley.

This remains a key priority area for us and whilst we have seen over 2% in our permanent staff since April 2021, we continue to struggle along with others across the region, to attract both permanent and agency social workers and this impacts on our caseloads and the overall quality of our work with children and families.

Caseloads for social workers, remains too high and at the end of November 2021 the average caseload was 23.4 across our Assessment, Safeguarding and Support and Children in Care teams. This is a reduction from previous months. We know that high caseloads impact upon practice and morale. We continue to work regionally to address recruitment issues.

We continue our relentless to focus on recruitment and retention, taking action on issues raised by staff and their feedback. A Market Supplement for our harder to recruit to posts IS in place and we continue to use and review our work via social media platforms around recruitment.

17 ASYEs (newly qualified social workers) have been appointed to social work roles commencing in November 2021 and 9 permanent social workers have left Dudley since the start of September 2021. 9 permanent social workers are due to start by the end February 2022.



We have now put in place Family Support Workers in Assessment and Safeguarding and Support teams to support with work with children and families and will fully evaluate the impact of their work

We are reviewing our support to social workers and with a focus on the systems we have in place and ways to increase their capacity to spend more time with children and families

We now have very few interim Team Managers in post across teams, promoting consistency in decision making and planning for children and families

It has been agreed that the Improving Services for the Children Board will meet bi-monthly throughout 2022 and the refreshed plan sets out our ambitions throughout 2022-2023. The new Improvement Plan will have a focus on driving forward our practice priorities to ensure that we have a consistent model of Restorative Practice, that the whole system offers the right support at the right time, and with a quality assurance and learning framework that supports our journey to delivering good quality services in Dudley that are sustainable.

Towards the end of November 2021, a meeting was held with Managers across Children's Social Care to discuss and share the contents of our current priorities and the plans for 2022.

## 5. **Permanency planning and our work with South Tyneside**

We have continued our work with South Tyneside since the last update and they have been involved in our work around permanency planning for children and young people alongside our quality assurance process around audits and Team Manager decision making. This included them providing support with the design of audits around permanence and following managers undertaking audit activity in November 2021, South Tyneside held a reflective circle with our managers to share and discuss key learning. This allowed for an open and reflective discussion to take place and to consider key themes and learning. As part of their work with us, they are also accessing children's case records as part of this wider support work and audit activity.

The Department for Education (DfE) has endorsed a further plan of continued support from South Tyneside currently until March 2022, building on the work undertaken so far in relation to permanency planning and quality assurance.

As part of our wider work and key Ofsted priority action, we have established early permanence planning meetings for children so to avoid any drift and delay in the care planning for them and we will seek to further embed permanency planning and care planning meetings for all children and young people in our care.

We have been successful in increasing the number of children adopted since April 2021 to 12 and also seen an increase in the number of children made the subject of Special Guardianship Orders increasing to 22 since April 2021.

Matching of children to their long-term carers has also been a priority action and we have achieved this for 98% of children and young people in this cohort and will continue with



this process for new children and young people who have been placed with their carers long enough and are eligible for the matching process to take place.

## 6. Update on the December DfE review

A formal review of our work since May 2021 by the DfE took place on the 13th December 2021. The DfE as part of this Review, met with a range of stakeholders and the Children's Social Care senior leaders. The appointed DfE Advisor, Alastair Gibbons in his role continues to provide support, advice and challenge to Dudley and he is of the view that we have made good progress during 2021 and that the foundation for improvements are in place and we need to continue to build on the progress we have made to date.

The DfE were of the view that our 'One Plan' agreed in November 2021 would be helpful in driving forward further improvements and that having a permanent and stable senior leadership team has had a positive impact. The feedback from partners as part of the review was positive and specifically feedback in relation to communication and the systems in place was really strong.

Staff reported to the DfE as part of the review process that leadership visibility has improved and permanent management has increased, and staff reported that there is stability and support. Also, that the MASH systems have improved, and staff felt engaged in change. Issues with LCS (Liquidlogic Childrens Social Care) were raised and staff reported the need for consistency, support and additional training in this area that we are currently reviewing

Staff reported that supervision had improved, and they were supported in their development and it was considered that overall social workers were cautiously optimistic about the future.

The DfE Advisor reported that there were 4 areas to address including:

- Workforce
- Demand and caseloads
- Quality of practice
- Partnership working

It was reported that our refocussed Improvement plan and work with the ISCB on priorities had been positive with an increasing focus on practice, including embedding the Restorative Practice model, developing a one system approach from Early Help through to Care Leavers with family engagement and feedback threaded throughout.

South Tyneside also contributed to the DfE Review and shared key headings around their work over the last six months, including:

- Visited Dudley in September
- Dip sampling a number of files
- Meeting with a number of staff, managers and foster carers





Colleagues from South Tyneside spoke of specific pieces of work they have supported with around permanency, quality assurance and working with managers on quality assurance activity. They reported that they have enjoyed working with Dudley and have found staff to be open, passionate and that this is a real strength.

The DfE review fully acknowledged all of the progress that has taken place in the last 14 months, including partnership working. It was agreed that the DfE will continue to provide support and supervision to Dudley until the next ILACS Ofsted Inspection takes place.

Whilst we have made progress on most of the targets in May 2021, workforce capacity, high caseloads and our ongoing compliance with audit activity remain key areas of focus alongside embedding Restorative Practice, gaining increased feedback from children, young people and families and further developing our learning culture. We are robustly following this up and we have implemented a number of feedback processes to support this.

## 7. **MASH Diagnostic**

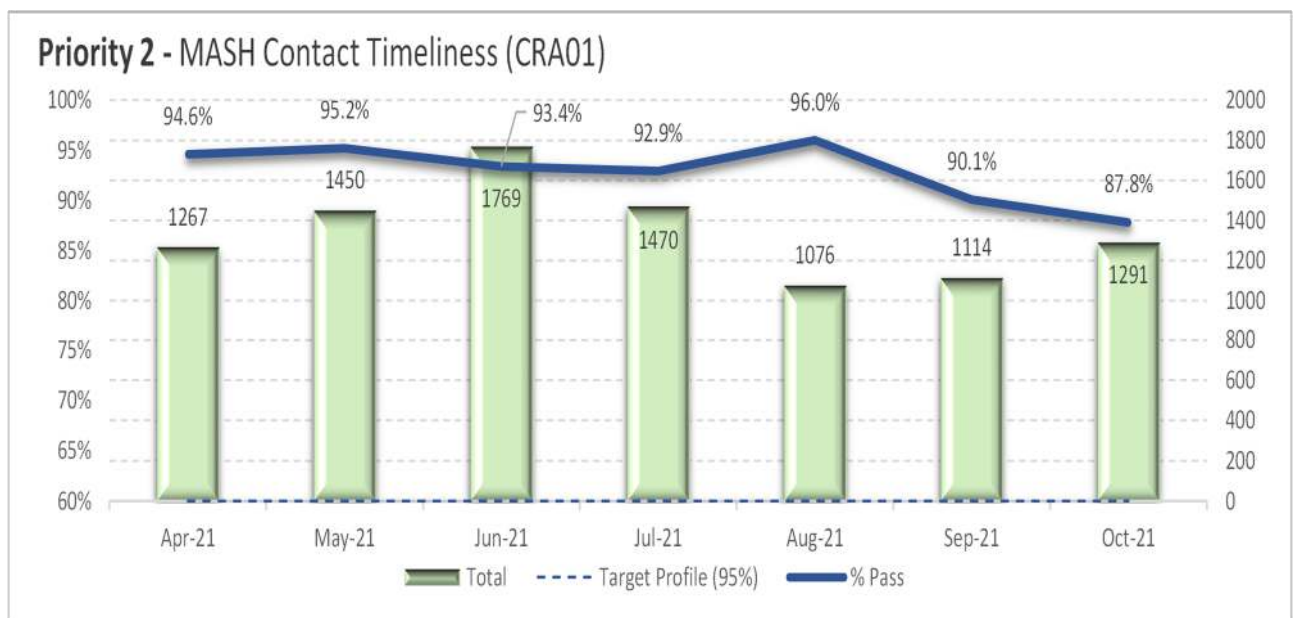
Following the MASH diagnostic by Worcestershire Children First in October 2021, work continues on the key recommendations around processes within the MASH, how work flows through to the Assessment Service, how we avoid duplication of work and also a review of the amount of work taking place in the initial stages of a contact being received. The portals used by partners to submit referrals to social care and early help has been well received, this process is working well and has been received positively by our partners. A benefits analysis of the portals is taking place.

We have in place both operational and strategic meetings within MASH so we can work closely along with partners on the timely decision making for children and young people and ensure the processes in place are as streamlined as possible and agencies continue to fully contribute to information sharing around children and young people in a timely manner.

We have continued to make progress around the timeliness of our decision making for contacts received and this remains over 87% having dropped slightly in October 2021. This has been due to some staff sickness in November, combined with trying to spend more time at the decision-making stage. We have seen an increase in the total number of contacts received since September 2021 of 1255 in total, this increased to 1291 contacts in October and there was a further increase to 1304 in November 2021.

We have developed a robust multi-agency action plan. The plan includes strengthening our 'whole system' working with Early Help, better use of LCS, review of staffing roles and streamlining processes to reduce duplication. The Partnership, via the MASH Strategic Board has endorsed the need to redesign and streamline our Front Door so that children can be signposted more effectively to Level 3 and 4 services. MASH staff have started to frame conversations with parents and partners in line with Restorative Practice questions (*What's happened, who's been affected, what needs to happen next?*).





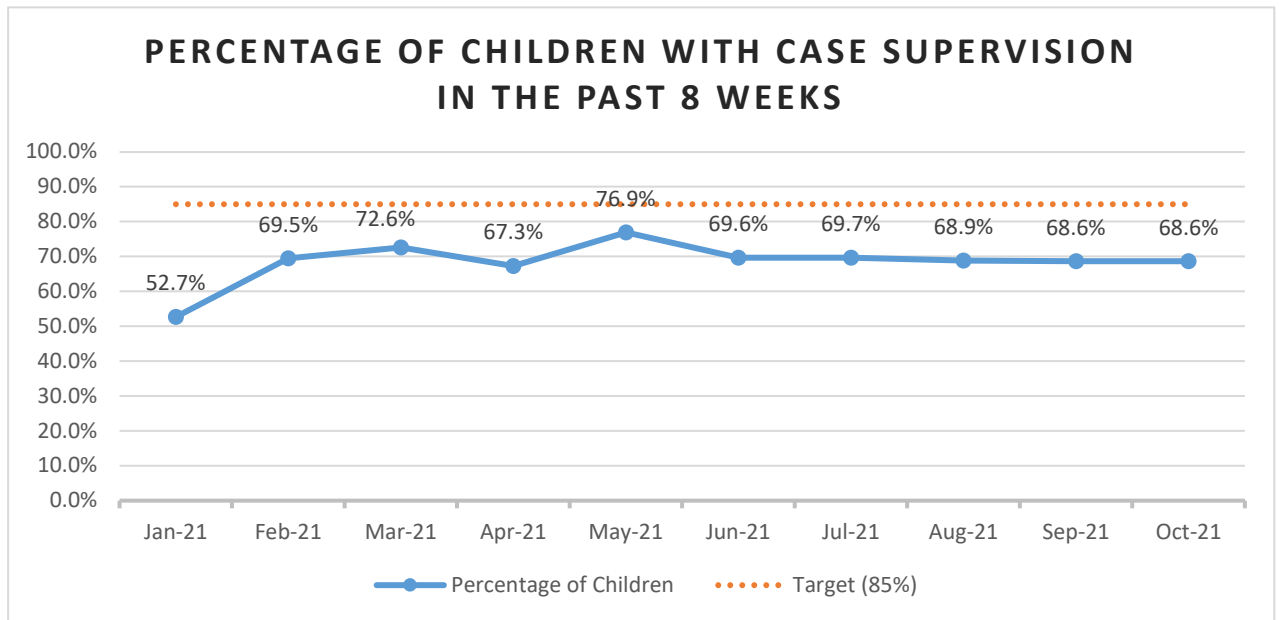
## 8. Case Supervision and Welfare Supervision

We continue to focus our work on increasing the quality of supervision and this will remain a priority area during 2022. The quality of supervision and management oversight remains inconsistent across services and in October 2021, this stood at 68.6% of children’s records evidencing case supervision in the past eight weeks, in line with our supervision policy.

We have undertaken work to update our supervision policy and streamlining the process around case supervision, to increase the frequency and quality and to simplify this for managers. Whilst there are examples of regular and good quality supervision taking place evidenced via our audits, some children’s records do not always demonstrate and highlight the level of reflection and direction needed to support practitioners to progress children’s plans.

As part of our work with South Tyneside, they will be supporting us in 2022 with Team Manager decision making, early permanence planning and embedding this throughout our teams and services.





### *Audits*

As outlined, we continue to focus on our audit activity, and this has included a range of dip sampling and throughout December we focused on visits to children and young people. We are reviewing our quality assurance framework to ensure this remains flexible and that we are targeting our audit in areas where we have some emerging concerns or where we consider key lessons can be learned/improvements made.

As part of our overall quality assurance framework, we continue to learn and reflect on our activity and the different ways we can improve practice and support the workforce, and this includes learning from compliments and complaints and feedback from children, young people and their families.

A key area of our activity moving forward is to increase the feedback we receive from children, young people and parents and to also gain feedback at different parts of the child's journey about our intervention. We continue to utilise audit circles to reflect, debate, and learn from audit findings and to drive further improvements.

### *Training*

We have continued with our commitment to train and support the workforce with their continued professional development and with a wide range of core offer training opportunities available.

106 staff have attended permanency training up until the end of November 2021 with a further 21 booked on and 64 still to book. 117 staff have attended SMART planning training, 29 are booked to attend and a further 44 are due to book on. 110 staff have attended Assessment and Analysis training and a further 22 are booked on and 38 to book on.



We are increasing the number of overall staff training in Restorative Practice with further dates booked in early 2022

The number of staff attending core training continues to rise each month and we have recently launched our training programme for 2022 across Children's Social Care.

All Team Managers have been offered core skills training through Research in Practice (RiP), which was a five-day programme and in October 2021, managers attended **Reflective Supervision for Supervisors** and **Developing Effective Leadership Skills** aimed at developing critical thinking and reflective supervision.

During November 2021 we held a further Practice Week with a key focus on Restorative Practice, observations of practice and the sharing of learning and including capturing the voice of the child and family.

We continue to listen to the feedback from staff around their professional developmental needs and in doing so, ensure our training plan and delivery is aimed at increasing their skills and knowledge and work with children and families and to inform our training plan moving in to 2022 and beyond.

Our training plan is fundamental to our core offer to staff to support them in their day-to-day work, and to develop their practice, and as part of our overall commitment to improving practice and outcomes for children and young people.

## **Finance**

9. There are no financial implications for the Council.

## **Law**

10. There are currently no legal implications for the Council; however, the Department for Education undertook a formal review of the Improvements made to date on Monday 13th December 2021.

## **Risk Management**

11. The challenges regarding recruitment of social workers continues to impact on our workforce and social worker caseloads, which impacts on service delivery.

## **Equality Impact**

12. The Improvement Plan does not have impact on people with different protected characteristics.

No Equality Impacts have been identified.

The effect of the revised Improvement Plan on children and young people is better outcomes on their lived experience.



## Human Resources/Organisational Development

13. There are no Human Resources implications.

## Commercial/Procurement

14. There are no direct commercial or procurement implications.

## Council Priorities

15. The revised and updated improvement plan is in line with the Council's '**Children First and at the heart of all we do**', the vision of a **Child Friendly Dudley** and the Corporate Parenting Strategy.



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