

Public Document Pack

Tony Kershaw
Director of Law and Assurance

If calling please ask for:

Ann Little on 033 022 22654
Email: ann.little@westsussex.gov.uk

www.westsussex.gov.uk

County Hall
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1RQ
Switchboard
Tel no (01243) 777100



28 October 2020

Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

A virtual meeting of the Committee will be held at **10.30 am** on **Thursday, 5 November 2020**.

Note: In accordance with regulations in response to the current public health emergency, this meeting will be held virtually with members in remote attendance. Public access is via webcasting.

The meeting will be available to watch live via the Internet at this address:

<http://www.westsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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Agenda

- 10.30 am 1. **Declarations of Interests**
- Members and officers must declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any business on the agenda. They should also make declarations at any stage such an interest becomes apparent during the meeting. Consideration should be given to leaving the meeting if the nature of the interest warrants it. If in doubt please contact Democratic Services before the meeting.
- 10.32 am 2. **Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee** (Pages 5 - 8)
- The Committee is asked to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020 (cream paper).
- 10.34 am 3. **Urgent Matters**
- Items not on the agenda which the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances, including cases where the Committee needs to be informed of budgetary or performance issues affecting matters within its terms of reference, which have emerged since the publication of the agenda.
- 10.36 am 4. **The Impact of Covid-19 on Schools and the Educational Outcomes of Children and Young People in West Sussex** (Pages 9 - 28)

Report by Director of Education and Skills

The report outlines how the County Council has been supporting schools and pupils during the pandemic and the work that is underway to prepare for any future lockdowns.

The Committee will hear from a range of witnesses and members of the Youth Cabinet.

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the report and the evidence provided.

The Committee will adjourn for a 15 minute break.

- 12.51 pm 5. **Children First Improvement Programme Update** (Pages 29 - 70)

Report by Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning.

The report updates the Committee on the developments and progress made in the Children First Programme since its last update in September.

- 1.51 pm 6. **Appointments to Business Planning Group** (Pages 71 - 72)

The Committee is asked to appoint five of its members to its Business Planning Group, to include the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, with two of the five being minority party members.

- 2.01 pm 7. **Forward Plan of Key Decisions** (Pages 73 - 88)

Extract from the Forward Plan dated 22 October 2020 – attached.

An extract from any Forward Plan published between the date of despatch of the agenda and the date of the meeting will be tabled at the meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to enquire into any of the forthcoming decisions within its portfolio.

- 2.06 pm 8. **Possible Items for Future Scrutiny** (Pages 89 - 94)

The Committee is asked to review its draft work programme and to mention any further items which they believe to be of relevance to the business of the Scrutiny Committee, and suitable for scrutiny, e.g. raised with them by constituents arising from central government initiatives etc.

If any member puts forward such an item, the Committee's role at this meeting is just to assess, briefly, whether to refer the

matter to its Business Planning Group (BPG) to consider in detail.

2.11 pm 9. **Requests for Call-In**

There have been no requests for call-in to the Scrutiny Committee and within its constitutional remit since the date of the last meeting. The Director of Law and Assurance will report any requests since the publication of the agenda papers.

2.14 pm 10. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 7 January 2021 at 10.30 am. Probable agenda items include:

- Children First Improvement Programme Performance Monitor
- SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and Inclusion Strategy
- Fostering Service Review
- Support for School Governors

Any member wishing to place an item on the agenda for the meeting must notify the Director of Law and Assurance by 18 December 2020.

To all members of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

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Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

24 September 2020 – At a meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee held at 10.30 am at a virtual meeting with restricted public access.

Present: Cllr Barling (Chairman)

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------|------------|
| Cllr Lord | Cllr Hillier | Mr Lozzi |
| Cllr Baldwin | Cllr A Jones | Mr Cristin |
| Cllr Brunsdon | Cllr Oxlade | Mrs Ryan |
| Cllr Hall | Cllr Wickremaratchi | |

Apologies were received from Cllr Bridges

Absent: Cllr Burgess

Also in attendance: Cllr N Jupp and Cllr Russell

17. Declarations of Interests

17.1 No declarations of interest were declared.

18. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

18.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

19. Urgent Matters

19.1 The Chairman asked the Cabinet Member for Education & Skills for an update on the return of children to school. The Cabinet Member said that: -

- Average attendance in west Sussex schools was above 90% (more than the national average)
- There had been some anxiety amongst parents, but confidence was building
- Incidents of Covid amongst staff and pupils was very low at present; two in Early Years/Family Centres, twelve in primary/secondary schools, two in further education settings and none in universities – this was expected to rise

19.2 The Director for Education & Skills added that single school years in four schools had had to isolate with home learning being provided.

20. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

20.1 Resolved – that the Committee notes the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

21. Children First Improvement - Service Update

21.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation by the Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning (copies appended to the signed minutes). The item was introduced by Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People who told the Committee that: -

- The development of Children's Services was accelerating with three new permanent assistant directors joining the service over the next few weeks. This would be supported by some interim staff staying in post to lead on the transformation work, creating a structure that will clearly define people's roles and responsibilities and make them more effective
- A new service model recognised as best practice nationally was being put in place
- A new social worker model was embedding best practice for the new family safeguarding model

21.2 Lucy Butler, Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning and Vince Clark, Children First Transformation Director talked through a presentation on the Children's Services Transformation programme.

21.1 Summary of responses to committee members' questions and comments: -

- It was anticipated that the new service model would be in place in the next twelve months
- Government decided that a Trust would take responsibility for the delivery of Children's Services in West Sussex – the scope of the Trust was yet to be agreed and would be the subject of a Scrutiny Task & Finish Group and decision by Cabinet on 20 October 2020
- It was possible that at some point the Commissioner might decide that a Trust was not necessary, but until then work towards one had to continue
- The Risk Register could be reviewed to see if educational matters should be included
- The Health & Wellbeing Board was establishing a sub-group to look at Children's Services which would help strengthen partnerships with the Police, NHS and Adults' Services. The Local Safeguarding Children Board work would sit alongside this.
- The Committee could hear the voice of young people by inviting members of the Youth Cabinet to future meetings
- The Service was confident that its leadership team had the capacity to deliver the new practice model

- The current social worker offer has been extended to June 2021, with a revised, more comprehensive offer being developed, which would be progressed through the budget setting process
- The new offer would also provide more opportunities for career progression
- All managers would have access to assistance and development programmes
- Staff engagement sessions had provided positive feedback with a commitment to the new service model, and further formal staff consultation would take place as the model progressed
- The Family Safeguarding Model will include support for parents recognising this as a key area to address to improve outcomes for children

21.4 Resolved that – the Committee: -

- i. Welcomes the service redesign proposals and the very positive direction of travel on the improvement journey and congratulates officers for driving this forward
- ii. Welcomes the extension of the social worker offer and supports the need to explore a broader offer
- iii. Requests continued work to ensure the voice and experiences of children and families at all stages of their engagement with the service are included as the new service model is developed and that the Scrutiny Committee is kept informed
- iv. Recognises that the 'parent capacity for change' is a key part of the Proposed Service Model and that having sufficient resources and capacity in this area will be key to its success. The Committee requests to be kept updated on this work through its Business Planning Group
- v. Supports the continued availability of the Transformation Fund to resource the Improvement Programme

22. Education and Skills Annual Report Task and Finish Group Recommendations

22.1 The Committee considered the Education and Skills Annual Report Task and Finish Group Recommendations, Response from the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Draft 2020 Education and Skills Annual Report (copies appended to the signed minutes).

22.2 Paul Wagstaff, Director of Education & Skills told the Committee: -

- A meeting was planned for November to discuss the impact of Covid-19 on pupils
- A key priority for the service was reducing the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their peers – increased capacity and working with the research school would help realise this. The Committee's Business Planning Group would be kept updated on this work. The Cabinet Member for Education & Skills informed the Committee that the report on attainment of disadvantaged children was targeted to be published in December 2020/January 2021

- There would be a thorough analysis across the county to identify variations in achievement and address them

22.3 Resolved – that the Committee notes the Education and Skills Annual Report Task and Finish Group Recommendations, Response from the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Draft 2020 Education and Skills Annual Report.

23. Business Planning Group Report

23.1 Resolved – that the Committee notes the Business Planning Group report.

24. Appointments to the Business Planning Group

24.1 As the current Chairman, Cllr Barling, was standing down following the meeting, the new Chairman, Cllr Hillier, would take his place on the Business Planning Group (BPG) and speak to committee members about filling the remaining Conservative and minority group vacancies on the BPG.

25. Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

25.1 The following topics were suggested as possible items for future scrutiny: -

- a. The development of school federations, impact on small schools and how this affects the progress of the school effectiveness strategy
- b. Educational progress and attainment of disadvantaged children and children looked after
- c. Special guardianships – process and how they are monitored

25.2 Resolved – that topics a and b would be considered by the Business Planning Group and that c should be referred to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

26. Date of Next Meeting

26.1 The Committee thanked the outgoing Chairman, Cllr Barling, for his chairmanship of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.38 pm

Chairman

**Key decision: No
Unrestricted
Ref:**

Report to Children and Young People Select Committee

5 November 2020

Impact of Covid-19 on Schools and the Educational Outcomes of Children and Young People in West Sussex

Report by the Director of Education and Skills

Electoral division(s): All

Summary

Since March 2020 the county has faced a significant and unique situation affecting the education and wellbeing of children and young people, a situation that is unprecedented in the lifetime of educators and leaders. The report aims to provide an overview of how the situation has been managed in schools and the early years sector, and how this has been supported by the local authority. The report is a retrospective review of events and support whilst also outlining key issues and challenges to inform the next 6 months. The report reviews learning that has taken place and areas for consideration in the future.

Overall, the response from schools, academies and their leaders and governors throughout the Covid pandemic has been outstanding. From a state of significant uncertainty in March 2020 with national policy unclear and a lack of confidence in making the right decisions in a changing situation, West Sussex schools and school leaders have stoically dealt with significant challenges on many fronts to maintain a calm and confidence among the school community. This has led to a high level of public confidence in West Sussex schools, high levels of attendance, and a concerted effort to ensure that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged have been supported. The success has been down to a strong partnership across all schools and strategic partners, regular and constructive communication, and appropriate support to ensure that schools had the advice, the tools and support they needed to implement their own risk assessments and local responses appropriate to their schools and circumstances.

The high levels of attendance in schools, particularly that of the most vulnerable, has been recognised externally by the DfE. The continued provision of support services and partnership working across the range of education and broader children's services has ensured that the most vulnerable have been appropriately provided for over the pandemic. This too is recognised externally.

Significant work has taken place to strengthen partnerships across schools and with the local authority's Multi Academy Trust partners for the benefit of all children in West Sussex. The resulting work to strengthen partnerships has provided a significant opportunity for ensuring better working relationships and a greater consensus on key

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issues that directly impact on the way the County Council respond to the needs of West Sussex children.

Whilst much has been achieved that has been positive, there have been challenges and continue to be so as the county plans ahead for the next 6 months and beyond. Such challenges include:

- .1 The significant and ongoing pressure on schools and staffing in schools and Early Years providers to remain open and operational in a period of rising Covid cases;
- .2 The relentless activity amongst school staff and officers to both pre-empt and react to a dynamic situation over the last 7 months has been physically and emotionally draining with no end in sight as the number of positive cases again begin to surge;
- .3 Closing the gaps in learning among children which have increased due to the summer partial closure and missed learning;
- .4 Re-establishing relationships and maintaining the emotional wellbeing of children and reducing anxiety;
- .5 Managing the expectations of parents and families where emerging cases may lead to children having to spend increased time in home-based learning.

Many forms of guidance and support have been drawn together, distributed and supported over the last seven months with insufficient time and space for all of these to have been fully implemented and embedded. Additionally, the mechanism for providing support and professional development for teachers and leaders has had to alter significantly as the opportunities for larger face to face events and training sessions have fallen away. Most of the local authority's training and professional development to support schools is having to be re-written and repurposed into online and virtual support. Whilst this approach has some advantages, it also has challenges in how training can successfully engage group discussion and activity. Further investment in improving the reach and effectiveness of new approaches to training and support is required.

In responding to Covid-related issues, and supporting through the next six months and beyond, there has been the need to repurpose priorities within the education strategic plan due to the need to reallocate resource. The Annual Report on Education and Skills 2020, a report based on priorities set at the end of 2019, was published in July this year and identified key areas of priority and focus for 2020 and beyond. However, the time and resource required to achieve success across all identified priorities may need to be reallocated. Responding to the Covid needs of schools, and ensuring that broader improvement and quality in schools is maintained, whilst also meeting the local authority's strategic and statutory responsibilities, will be challenging. Capacity is finite and decisions on which priorities to pursue will need careful consideration to enable the County Council to continue the broader improvement journey.

We ask the Scrutiny Committee to consider the following key points within the report.

- (1) To acknowledge the significant work undertaken by the local authority and schools to manage education continuity through the pandemic;
- (2) To recognise the issues arising from the pandemic and lessons learned;

- (3) To acknowledge that the established priorities across the local authority's education strategy and forward plan, as set out in the Annual Report 2020, may need resetting in response to current developments.

Focus for Scrutiny

The way in which the local authority responded to the Covid-19 pandemic in schools and supported schools to ensure that children and young people were both safe and supported over the time

Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 Following the first diagnosis of Covid-19 in January 2020, during early March, the number of positive cases rose at an alarming rate, from 271 on 8 March to 3,269 on 16 March and 8,077 a week later. Due to the rapid increases and spread of the virus, the Government took strategic action to reduce the pressure of the National Health Service and to also reduce the risk of the virus spreading further. A key decision was taken nationally to reduce school attendance from 23 March by keeping schools open only for children of critical workers, those who were vulnerable with a social worker, and children with an EHCP. For all other pupils, learning was to be home based. Due to the rapid pace of decision making, implication of policy on a number of practical issues including school meals, PPE availability, and both staffing and HR implications, it was left to local authorities to interpret messages and guidance, establish agreements, and provide clarity for schools.
- 1.2 From the start, the Education and Skills team within the Children, Young People and Learning Department set a clear strategy and course of action to support schools through the following:
- Ensuring schools were safe and staffed to be able to meet the Government's guidelines to provide for key workers and the vulnerable;
 - Establishing a cohesive approach across the County's maintained schools and academies;
 - Effective communication with schools to clarify and contextualise the significant range of guidance, with local procedures for school meals, organisation and HR issues;
 - Responding to school issues and concerns rapidly;
 - Maintaining the confidence of schools and staff in continuing to provide for the core groups of pupils;
 - Ensuring Government guidelines were appropriately interpreted and implemented by schools; and
 - Ensuring the most vulnerable and disadvantaged were supported.

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- 1.3 Despite a national ambition for all primary aged pupils to return to face to face schooling by the end of the summer term 2020, this was altered in May and a phased return was planned for particular year groups in primary and secondary schools in addition to those core groups already qualifying. Schools were supported in preparing for the phased return and then subsequently for the full return from September 2020. In addition to the work undertaken to support school leaders and governors in relation to guidance around maintaining safeguarding, risk assessments and planning for curriculum continuity, work also continued in areas which remained statutory responsibilities for the local authority during this time including SEND, transport, Children Looked After (CLA), and school admissions.
- 1.4 The entire Covid period has required a different way of working with schools and with individual children. It has also led to resetting some of the Department's key priorities for the coming year. The period between March to October 2020 has had its challenges, with some of these challenges continuing as we head into the winter months. However, it has also provided some opportunities for the local authority to reset its ways of working and has also led to some strengthening of relationships, particularly with the local authority's Multi Academy Trust (MAT) partners, the Department for Education (DfE), and strategic partners, including Public Health.
- 1.5 During the period March to July 2020, almost all schools and academies in West Sussex remained open for pupils and schools, academies and early years settings ensured provision remained available for those in need through the Easter and May holidays. Disadvantaged pupils were able to access free school meals through the holiday periods, and the County Council worked to ensure that its most vulnerable children were supported in attending school where this was felt the most beneficial option for them. The West Sussex Virtual School worked with schools and carers throughout the pandemic to ensure that school attendance was prioritised where this was the most appropriate for Children Looked After (CLA) and to ensure that where children were working from home, they had appropriate access to technology. Against a mixed national picture, most West Sussex maintained schools remained open. Attendance in school, particularly over the period of phased return in June and July, was consistently above average for all pupils, and also for particular groups including children looked after, those with a social worker, and also those with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). Since September, again all schools and academies re-opened and school attendance has remained strong and above the national average through to the end of the first half term despite an increase in the number of positive Covid cases, and therefore the need for some children to self-isolate.

2 Communications

- 2.1 The Education and Skills team recognised that the pace of national directives and guidance, along with developing uncertainty in March, risked undermining the confidence of school leaders and governors. Guidance was produced nationally that remained too open to interpretation and did not necessarily reflect some of the detailed situations and concerns being expressed in the context of individual institutions. From the outset a clear communications strategy was implemented to maintain a direct and daily connection with school leaders, governors and strategic partners. A local email contact, E&SWelfareGroup@westsussex.gov.uk, was established to manage and respond to questions and queries, as well as to swiftly escalate concerns. The

Directorate quickly worked to establish regular communications with representative Executive Headteachers, Multi Academy Trusts, Diocesan authorities and unions. The Directorate worked to engage partners towards a consensus approach in key areas, ensuring guidance was agreed and being interpreted consistently by all parties. It also worked to ensure that issues of concern could be raised and resolved collectively to avoid confusion and parents being unsettled by differences in the way policy and guidance was being implemented.

2.2 A regular newsletter was produced for headteachers, governors and stakeholders. These began as daily communication and moved to being twice weekly from June. The first newsletter was sent on 11 March 2020 and in total, 87 were issued (up to 6 October 2020). This channel has been used to communicate a vast amount of key information including: the latest Government guidance and contact details for schools and other settings; how to report cases and outbreaks; support from the Local Authority; answers to headteachers' questions; letters for parents/carers; and a large number of guidance attachments produced by the Council's E&S and Safeguarding teams. The newsletters have regularly reached 1,625 subscribers (as of 08/10/2020), made up of:

- All maintained primary, secondary & special schools in West Sussex
- All academies, free schools and faith schools
- All INMISS schools
- Independent schools
- Head teachers and governors
- Further Education Colleges
- Education and Skills staff and wider WSCC staff
- WSCC Members
- The school staff unions

2.3 The E&SWelfareGroup@westsussex.gov.uk email and the contact centre managed over 3,100 direct contacts from schools, staff and parents relating to Covid issues and requests for information between March – August 2020. The top themes that were core to these contacts from schools included:

- **Free school meals** –This was the most popular topic in the early weeks and guidance on the provision in place to ensure access to food for those in school and those at home were communicated to schools. The challenges posed by the national voucher scheme increased traffic in this area as the local authority worked to support local solutions until the national issue was resolved.
- **HR matters** - Addressing the mass of questions from schools for situations including who should and shouldn't be required to attend work through to pay arrangements for agency and supply teaching staff. These were addressed through the Director's daily communications and a dedicated FAQ page on West Sussex Services for Schools (WSSfS).
- **PPE** - A lot of enquiries were received about access to this resource and significant anxieties about the disease and their risk of infection. Information on Health & Safety and how to access supplies of cleaning and sanitising solutions has been provided along with when to utilise PPE. Over 8,000 pieces of PPE were provided by the local authority

to schools for use should a child or staff member present with Covid-19 symptoms whilst on school premises, along with information about how to use the PPE effectively.

- **Safeguarding** – The areas particularly raised were linked to looking after the most vulnerable children and protecting pupils working predominantly with online technology and continuing to keep them safe in school or at home. Teams provided guidance to support schools in fulfilling their duties in these unusual circumstances including 'keeping in touch' guidance to assist schools in contacting their vulnerable children in particular, those for whom the school had concerns but were not allocated a Social Worker. Close work with colleagues in safeguarding in education and social care has been imperative and continues.

- 2.4 School Effectiveness staff restructured the way they worked with dedicated Covid Link Advisers assigned to maintain regular update calls with their schools to check in with headteachers and offer support and guide them to resources as appropriate. Issues raised were able to be escalated rapidly and where this required policy decisions or clarification, this was able to be finalised and provided for schools. Some of the regular communications provided an opportunity for the sharing of good practice between schools. The 'Services to Schools' website was updated to provide Covid support with key documents and FAQs for schools developed and revised in response to questions from schools and a changing environment.
- 2.5 During the school summer holidays, the communications team worked to support parents and families in answering questions about the safe return to school in September through a dedicated '[Return to School](#)' webpage. By the end of August, the webpage had exceeded 13,500 visits. A video produced by schools and featuring pupils who had returned to school during the summer term and aimed at reducing anxiety on the return was viewed over 2,000 times.
- 2.6 The breadth of communication employed by the County Council to support school leaders and governors in their decision making, and in ensuring that they had the correct information upon which they could make decisions, was instrumental in helping build the confidence of leaders and governors, and providing the clarity that schools needed to support their decision making.

3 Direct Support and Intervention

- 3.1 In addition to communicating with schools and partners, the Education team developed additional resources and guidance to support schools through the Covid pandemic. These resources and guides involved cross County Council activity including input from the Public Health team, the Health and Safety team as well as broader expertise from across Children's Social Care. To support schools in their planning, and in supporting pupils both in school, as well as those working from home, the School Effectiveness Service co-developed and provided the following range of documents and guidance booklets which were distributed to schools and with many being supported with additional support and training:
- A shared Memorandum of Understanding for all schools on clustering arrangements should schools need to close and pupils accommodated in other schools;

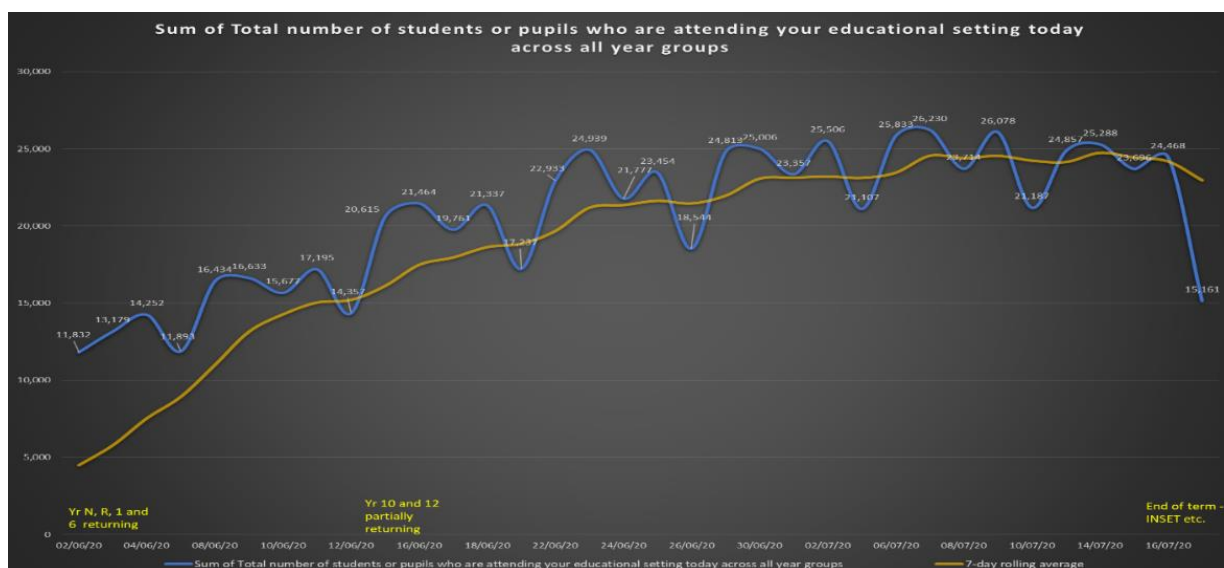
- The Safeguarding for Education (E4S) toolkit for self-evaluating and creating a safeguarding curriculum for pupils;
- Guidance for parents, school leaders and governors on providing on-line learning during Covid;
- A Framework for schools in planning and risk assessing their Phased Re-opening in June along with a Risk Assessment Tool for school governors and senior leaders;
- Guidance for schools in supporting the transition process from primary to secondary schools during Covid;
- Relationship, Sex and Health Education Curriculum update and support;
- Guidance for School Leaders on the phased return of Year 10 and Year 12;
- The Principles of Flexible Learning – guidance for school leaders;
- Framework for the full re-opening of schools along with a revised Risk Assessment Tool for the full return from September 2020;
- Guidance and support for promoting everyone’s emotional wellbeing on return;
- Formative Assessment Guidance for School Leaders;
- Guidance for schools on Re-setting and Re-starting the curriculum for September and support for disadvantaged pupils;
- Inclusion Framework and self-evaluation tools to help schools consider their planning for the return; and
- Safeguarding Self-Reflective Toolkit.

- 3.2 The Government provided a scheme for the allocation of 223 laptops and devices to support disadvantaged pupils in Years 10 and 12 in West Sussex secondary schools. They also provided an opportunity for online devices to be allocated for circa 900 West Sussex children with social workers. Due to the way the team managed the national laptop scheme, we were able to also provide up to an additional 900 devices to primary and secondary schools particularly to support disadvantaged pupils who were working from home and unable to access online learning.
- 3.3 By reallocating internal resource and redeploying staff within the Directorate, the Education and Skills team worked closely with schools, Children’s Social Care team and the Virtual School to RAG rate the most vulnerable children and to triangulate activity with schools to promote school attendance. This had a positive impact on reducing risks to the most vulnerable children whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements for education and care were in place. CLA remained a key priority and regular contact with schools, carers and children ensured that the Virtual School was able to respond to support needs and continue to ensure that CLA had a Personal Education Plan (PEP) to meet their needs over this period. By the end of the summer term, the completion of PEPs had reached 91.3%, the highest in more than 3 years. These had ensured that appropriate education provision for the County’s children in care was clear and supported by all parties.
- 3.4 Where schools struggled to maintain provision along with their improvement work, the local authority was able to intervene with additional brokered support from other schools and also from National Leaders in Education (NLE) through the Regional School’s Commissioner. Where schools were not following national guidance in ensuring a safe return for pupils in June whilst also giving priority for the key groups identified by the DfE, the Directorate

intervened, supporting schools in moving to the position required through Government guidance.

4 Impact of action on school attendance and school operation

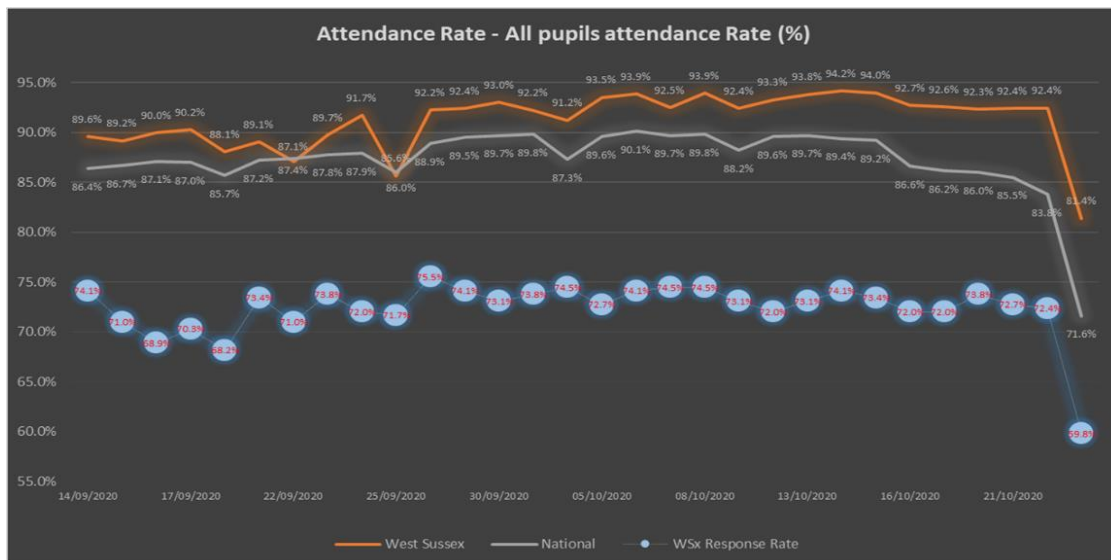
- 4.1 Despite uncertainty and the unprecedented situation facing school leaders and governors, a combination of communication, practical support and intervention, along with work in reducing potential tensions between different interest groups and stakeholders, has maintained the confidence and tenacity of schools throughout the period. It has ensured that schools have remained open and children safe. Whilst recognising that this has been an extremely pressured time for those working in schools, success has been seen through the goodwill exhibited by staff in schools; through the leadership of headteachers and governors; and through the positive relationships maintained between all parties.
- 4.2 Almost all West Sussex Schools and Academies remained open throughout the summer term. A number of schools remained open for the children of critical workers through the Easter and Spring Bank holidays and this also extended to public holidays. A range of childcare provision was scoped out with the Early Help team and communicated across districts for cover during the summer holiday for those parents needing this.
- 4.3 On the initial announcement of the restricted opening of schools in March, school attendance dipped at the outset of the pandemic to circa 1.7% - 2.0% of the County's total number of pupils on roll. By mid-April, this had increased to between 2.5% - 3% of the total school population, and to over 4% in May. However, the proportion of children in vulnerable groups continued to grow through this period. Where the percentage of CLA children attending school at the beginning of the Covid lockdown was 13%, through working with schools, children and carers, this had increased to 67% of CLA attending school on a regular basis by July. As schools embarked on the phased return from June, attendance across all categories in West Sussex exceeded the national average, with a rolling average through June and July increasing steadily until the summer holiday period.



By 6 July 2020 21% of West Sussex pupils were in school with the following

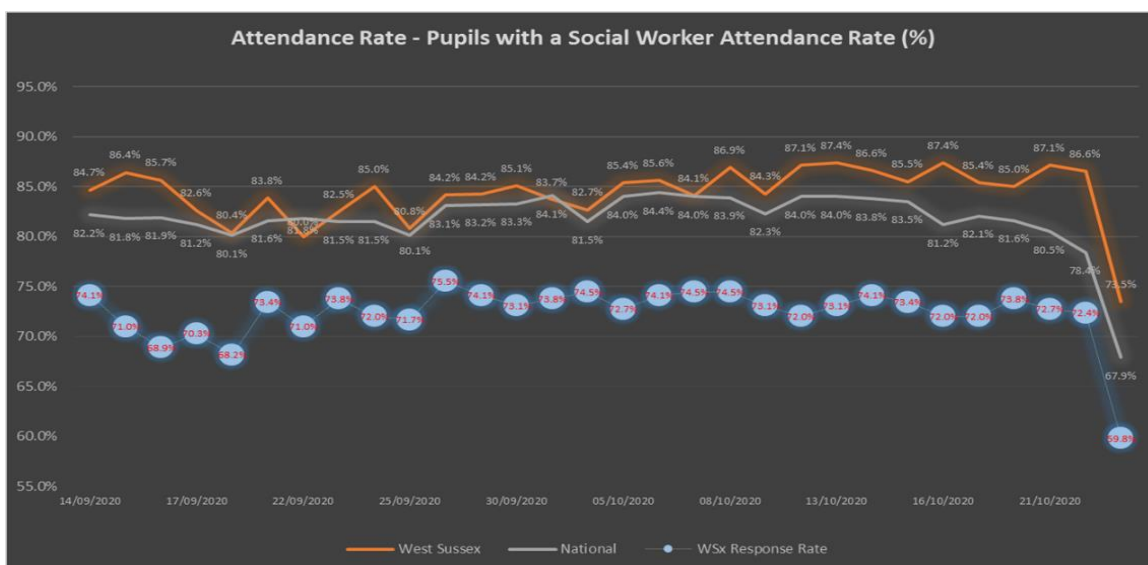
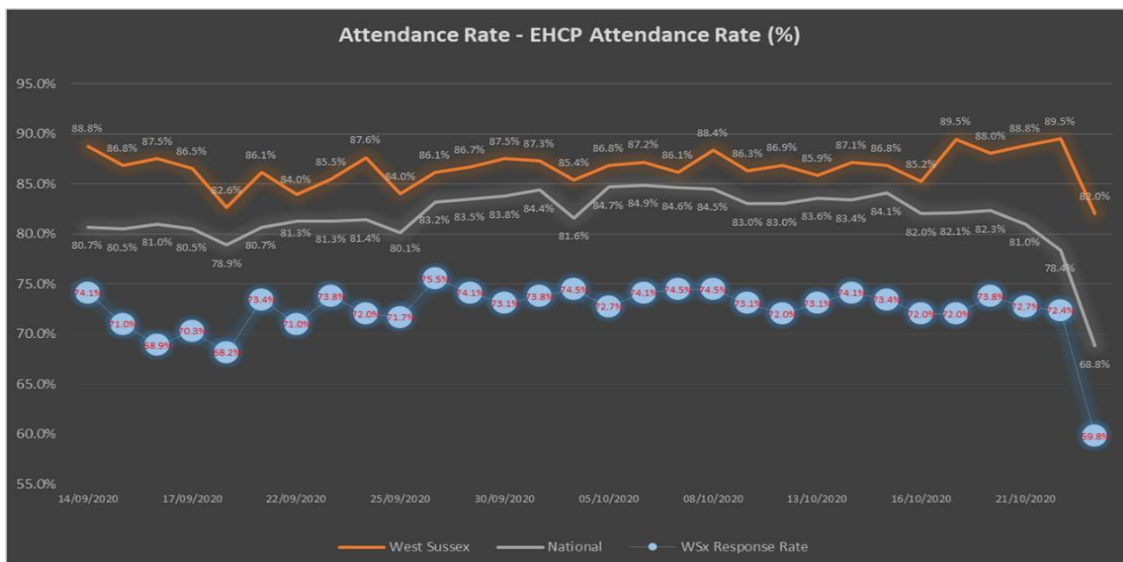
| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Nursery | 34.6% |
| Reception | 46.2% |
| Year 1 | 40.6% |
| Year 6 | 51.9% |
| Year 10 | 17% |
| Year 12 | 12.6% |
| Other Year Groups | 11.2% |

4.4 From September 2020, school attendance has been consistently higher than national comparisons. Despite an increase in the number of confirmed Covid cases, attendance remains high among children with social workers and also among those with EHCPs. By the 22 October, attendance was consistently around 93% against a national declining trend in school attendance.



4.5 The attendance of pupils with an EHCP similarly has remained high at 89.5% compared with a decline nationally to 76.4%. Over the same period, attendance of children with a social worker remained high with 86.6% of pupils with a social worker attended school compared with 78.4% attending nationally by 22 October.

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- 4.6 Although there has been a rise in individual Covid cases among children and adults working in schools, this has not led to a local surge in cases through poor control systems and schools being the source of infection. Where schools have had individuals identified, swift actions have been taken to isolate learning bubbles where required. Schools’ own risk assessments have been thorough, moderated and challenged by the school’s Link Adviser, and measures have been in place to manage infection risk. To date therefore, only one school has had to close in full, this being a specialist academy for pupils with special educational needs. Schools have become increasingly confident in managing risks in school through hygiene routines and social distancing.
- 4.7 The confidence and rigour of school risk assessments, the clarity of Covid safety procedures in schools, along with the continued diligence of school leaders and governors, reflects an ambition to maintain continuity of provision underpinned by a well-informed approach. Whilst there are many facets helping to achieve this confidence and rigour, communication, clarity, support, and partnership working have been central. They have contributed to reducing isolation and ensuring a mechanism for strengthening professional knowledge and confidence.

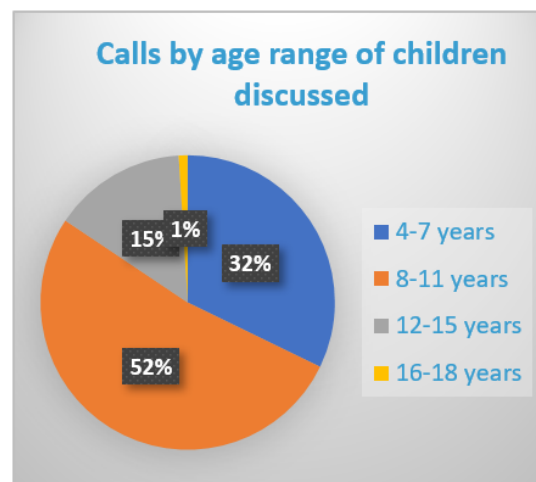
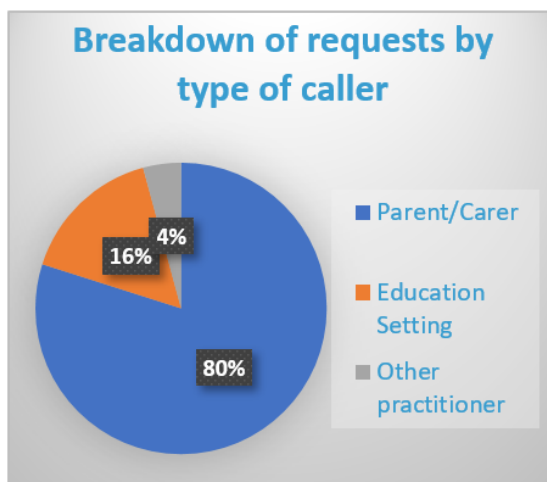
5. The Early Years Sector

- 5.1 The priority from the start of lockdown in March was to ensure sufficient childcare places for Vulnerable Children and children of Critical Workers, as per the Government's definitions. During the partial closure of Early Years and Childcare Settings (from the start of lockdown until 1 June 2020), 45% of group based early years settings were open, and 75% of childminders. Settings reported that around 1,300 children were attending during this time. Following the Government announcement that providers could begin to re-open to all children from 1 June, 94% of group settings and 89% of childminders opened and offered places, in the first instance to those in priority groups, followed by those starting school in September 2020, and then everyone else. Numbers of children in attendance were over 8,000. As of September 2020, 99% of early years providers were open, as well as 95% of childminders. Despite a cohort of children leaving to attend school, there are still currently around 8,000 children attending early years provision.
- 5.2 Since the beginning of the Covid-19 response, the Early Years team modified the support to early years and childcare providers to ensure they received the information and support they needed as quickly as possible. The following key strategies were implemented:
- Monitored the open/closed settings each day;
 - Carried out weekly surveys with providers, to understand the numbers of children in provision, broken down into priority groups;
 - Sent out broadcast emails with communications initially daily similar to schools, but then which decreased to 3 times per week. Since September, these are now sent twice weekly to provide updates and guidance to settings, including sharing all the Government guidance;
 - Frequently Asked Questions were provided through the broadcast and on the website;
 - The training programme has been revised to include on-line training and webinars for providers to support in key identified subjects such as business recovery and safeguarding;
 - Early Years and Childcare Advisors (EYCA's) held regular conversations with providers, supporting them with their planning and risk assessments, providing challenge as appropriate, particularly with those settings who remained closed;
 - A brokerage service was provided for parents wanting to find childcare;
 - Information was collated and shared on practitioners who were available to work in different settings as their usual place of work was closed. Some 61 practitioners volunteered to support in an open setting.
- 5.3 The vulnerable children in early years were identified using the information stored by the local authority and, by triangulating information with social workers and providers, the Early Years team contacted settings at least every two weeks for those children who were of concern. The contacts checked on attendance, well-being and to identify any risks. Where vulnerable children were not currently attending, the setting notified the child's social worker and find ways to keep in touch with the family on a regular basis to monitor their wellbeing, as well as providing them with home learning support. This was also monitored every two weeks.

6. Special Educational Needs and Support

6.1 During the early days of the national lockdown, the law was altered with regard to timeframes for the completion of Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs) and EHCPs. This was to reflect the additional challenges being faced in completing, assessments whilst children may not have been in school and face to face assessments challenging. However, the Directorate redeployed members of staff to ensure that children with EHCPs were being appropriately supported whilst also continuing to work to maintain the priority of completing assessments, particularly for those who would be transferring to new schools at the end of the summer term. The Specialist Teaching Team have provided continued support to schools and the Education Psychology and Portage teams have continued to provide support to schools and parents over the period of Covid.

6.2 A community call back service was introduced by the Educational Psychology team for parents, school settings and any other professionals working with West Sussex children and their families. This was to support where there was a question or concern about learning, behaviour or emotional wellbeing. The service ran throughout the Summer term (April-July) 2020 and offered morning, afternoon or evening slots. Some 213 people contacted the team and requested a call back. A full 100% of requests were responded to. After three unsuccessful attempts at contacting people, eleven were sent an email explaining that we had attempted to call 3 times. Some 202 consultation calls were undertaken.



6.3 Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs) continued through the summer term. The Education Psychology team responded creatively and resourcefully to ensure detailed assessments which would enable effective decision making regarding the issuing and the content of an Education Health Care Plan. The team worked collaboratively to share electronic resources and assessment that could be used virtually which children and their families. From the last week of March to the end of August 2020 the Educational Psychology service completed 313 Education Health Care Needs Assessment. Of these only 20 needed further direct assessment or observation to ensure appropriate decision making could be made. Completing assessments and EHCPs remained a key priority to ensure that pupils undergoing assessment could have their plans finalised to enable appropriate placements and provision was secured in readiness for the full return to schools. Nationally, under a non-Covid

environment, the average rate of completion of EHCPs within the 20-week deadline rests at circa 60%. West Sussex has consistently been above the national average with a completion rate of 75 per cent. During the summer completion rates continued to increase and by August were at 76.19%.

- 6.4 A key concern for the Directorate and schools was to ensure support for children and staff's emotional health and wellbeing in preparing for the return to school. A cross Directorate and Service group created the 'Return to School: Promoting Everybody's wellbeing'. This guidance document provided advice to schools on ways to promote resilience and drew on research of the nationally recognised five key principles of recovery. A graduated response to need was identified so that schools could identify need, provide support and monitor this and where appropriate refer to external services. The resource was shared and promoted by DfE Mental Health Implementation Lead South East.
- 6.5 Training was provided for emotional literacy support assistants (ELSAs) working in schools to feel confident in adapting to their role in supporting vulnerable pupils (directly or virtually) during COVID, as well adapting to a more strategic wellbeing role within schools due to restrictions that 'bubbles' created. Education Psychology supervisors were provided with telephone or email support and guidance documents shared. Guidance on how to maintain remote contact with vulnerable pupils was provided.
- 6.6 A major Education Wellbeing programme has been developed through the summer with a major launch and training for every school scheduled from November 2020. This multi-agency offer is due to commence with the Educational Psychology Service and Mental Health Support Teams in Schools developing and delivering training to key members of school staff and other services. The training aims to equip and enable school staff to recognise, understand and respond confidently and appropriately to needs they see, as well as knowing when and how to refer to appropriate agencies. The training is planned to be complemented with Education Psychology support to help schools plan and embed their learning into their own settings to respond to emerging and additional issues as they arise. The project will lay foundations for future co-ordinated core and traded wellbeing offer to schools.

7. School Meals

- 7.1 As the Government initiated the partial closure of schools in March, it was left to local authorities to make arrangements for ensuring that children who qualified for a Free School Meal (FSM) were able to access food, even if not attending school. For the first two weeks of school closures, before the Easter holidays, the Council provided food parcels to FSM children not in school through the corporate catering contracts. Advice was issued to all schools not in corporate contracts as to their options for providing this FSM food provision at home. Initially the Government did not intend supplying FSM to children not in school during the Easter holidays.
- 7.2 The DfE subsequently developed a centrally funded national voucher scheme to support schools, with the requirement to provide food support to FSM children who were not in school. This funding was additional to existing free school meal budgets. However, following the launch of the Government's Ednred system, it became clear that the system was fraught with problems and vouchers were not always being received by those families in need. The

County Council therefore established a local voucher system as an alternative for schools to use.

- 7.3 During the Easter holiday, FSM children attending a school in a corporate catering contract received packed meals, whilst at non contracted schools the need to supply FSM meals at school continued. During the first half of the summer term, all schools in a corporate catering contract were provided with hot meals for children in school. Whilst the DfE guidance for meals in school only relates to FSM we negotiated for the authority's corporate contracts to supply hot meals to all children in school, thus supporting additional children who may be vulnerable but not eligible for FSM, as well as the children of key workers. This was at no additional cost to the Council. During the phased return in June, hot school meals continued to be provided for children eligible for a FSM in school with vouchers being ordered for those who were eligible but working from home. Hot school meals have been provided fully for those eligible for a FSM since September.
- 7.4 As a local authority, the catering and contracts team have worked closely with the Communities teams and with contractors to ensure continuity of provision of meals in school and also, until the national voucher system was fully operational, to ensure access to food for families who were isolated at home. The work done collectively with contracted suppliers to ensure no disruption to service has been an example of effective partnership and creativity.

8. Practical support for schools

- 8.1 A range of practical actions have taken place to support schools and young people through the period of Covid, and to help schools in reducing pressures to enable them to function and manage their local arrangements safely. These have included the following:
- Initial distribution of emergency packs of PPE to schools and replenishing when used;
 - School transport flexibilities and some additional taxis where required and where feasible, particularly for those pupils attending during holiday periods;
 - Co-ordinated working between the Pupil Entitlement team, Children's Social Care, the Virtual School and schools to identify and prioritise work with those vulnerable children who were not attending school;
 - Deploying the Directorate's Post 16 Careers Support team to support parents and students over the summer holiday through the examination's results process;
 - Securing co-ordinated agreement between all partners on key issues to avoid schools being set against each other;
 - Managing complaints about schools and dealing with individual parents who were challenging school decisions and risk assessments;
 - Providing additional health and safety, and specialist support to schools where this was required;

- Working with Public Health partners to ensure practical agreements on issues that were unclear nationally, e.g. Aerosol Generated Procedures (AGP), the use of PPE, local lockdown and Covid reporting procedures.

9. Issues arising from the Covid First Wave

- 9.1 Whilst much has been successfully achieved in partnership between staff within the Children, Young People and Learning Department, the broader council, along with schools and academy partners, there are a number of issues that have arisen over the last 6 months which are pertinent in schools and with children. Some of these are issues which need to feed into future strategic plans. Some are learning points to be considered should a similar situation arise in future. These include:
- 9.1.1 **Pressures on school staffing and leadership with the implications on broader practice and support for pupils:** The last seven months have required significant additional work for most school-based staff, particularly school leaders, many of whom have not had a full break since prior to Covid. Due to the organisation of learning bubbles and managing staff who may be vulnerable or shielding, many schools are at their limit with staffing and do not have the flexibility to deploy additional staff where there may be additional challenges. As we move into the winter, there is a further risk of staffing under pressure with schools being unable to flexibly cover absence in the ways they have previously. The Education team is working with governors to ensure staff wellbeing is constantly reviewed. The Employee Assist Programme is available for all staff and the County Council is working with representative headteachers and an external provider to commission a wellbeing support and counselling service specifically for school leaders.
- 9.1.2 **Financial pressures on schools:** Schools are reflecting that Covid related expenses, including employing supply staff due to the more limited flexibility of existing staffing arrangements are adding pressures on already tight budgets. Some claims against Covid related expenditure can be made for reimbursement but these are limited and not expected to be longer term. The Council's Schools Finance team are working with schools to review three-year budgets to gain a better understanding of implications
- 9.1.3 **Home Based Learning:** During the initial lockdown and through the summer, schools were guided by Government advice on the range of online resources available to support children at home. Almost all schools worked towards this guidance as a minimum. Some schools went beyond with online lessons and creative ways of keeping families engaged. As schools have returned to full time provision, expectations have been upgraded through Government guidance on what should be expected as an offer should schools or learning bubbles have to close. The use and access to technology remains an issue for some children. The preparation of online and virtual lessons and content is time consuming for staff in schools who may also be providing face to face tuition throughout the day. Getting the balance right and providing meaningful home based and self-study learning is a challenge, particularly for children with SEND, or younger children who lack independence.
- 9.1.4 **Closing the gaps in learning:** It is widely recognised that children who were unable to access face to face teaching during the summer term may have gaps in knowledge and understanding. It is widely recognised that disadvantaged pupils and those who were unable to maintain a learning routine at home,

have potentially being disproportionately affected. As it is not yet clear how external examinations will take account of this. Some Year 11 and 13 students particularly are already anxious about their courses for the year. For children who are disadvantaged and were already achieving behind their non-disadvantaged peers, further gaps may have arisen and the difference between pupils widened. The School Effectiveness team have launched a Disadvantaged programme working with Durrington Research School to focus on closing this gap. The National Tutor Scheme has been launched to help close the gap, and schools are currently completing their assessments around pupils in order to plan for the remainder of the year.

- 9.1.5 **The increasing number of children electively home educating:** The number of children declared as electively home educated has risen over the Covid period and in October 2020 was 1,243. This represents a 20% increase from the same point in 2019 and an increase of 152% since October 2015. Whilst not possible to determine a direct link between the rise and Covid, the increase is greater this year than in previous years. The Elective Home Education (EHE) team are triaging each case and triangulating information with schools and Children's Social Care so as to prioritise visits and secure confidence on the provision being made. Parents have the right to electively home educate. They are not required to register or seek approval from the local authority to educate their child at home. Local authorities do not have the authority to routinely monitor the quality of education at home.
- 9.1.6 **The ability to maintain provision through Wave 2 and a winter flu pandemic:** Schools are already stretched in relation to staffing and resources. To date, despite a growing number of positive cases, schools have creatively tried to minimise disruption to pupils through having to isolate at home. Significant concerns are being expressed about the capacity of schools to maintain this position if also hit with winter flu virus. The local authority has already negotiated local partnerships between schools where safeguarding and first aid cover is not available due to staff illness. If staffing becomes a greater concern, managing this will be increasingly difficult. To support schools, Public Health have agreed to fund flu vaccination for all front-line school-based staff this season.
- 9.1.7 **Responding or pre-empting the publication of guidance:** A challenge faced several times during the summer 2020 was whether to provide a local authority stance on issues at the request of schools, or to await the publication of national guidance which was sometimes delayed. Guidance on free school meals vouchers and cover during holidays was late and sometimes confused. National guidance on school transport arrangements for the return to school in September was not published until late August. West Sussex worked to rapidly clarify national guidance when it was published and also to provide local clarity on any changes as they occurred. In some cases, schools sought more direction in some from the local authority in key areas that went beyond the national guidance. Examples included transfer arrangements, physical or virtual open evenings at schools, and determining how many children should be accommodated in a classroom. Policy decisions were provided in some areas which led to some practice promoted and supported by West Sussex County Council being different to that in other local authorities. We kept to our strategy that local decisions should take account of local context and schools' own risk assessments. This did create challenges as some parents compared schools and their practices. However, only where practices were deemed to be unsafe or where they went against national guidance, were they challenged.

10. Business as Usual

- 10.1 Whilst reporting on Covid activity and support to schools, it is important to note that, in addition to the significant work undertaken to support schools and children and young people, the Education Directorate also delivered on non-Covid related activity in the following key areas over the same period:
- Completing the academisation of Blackwell Primary School, Milton Mount Primary School, St Joseph's RC Primary School and Rumboldswyke CE Infant School;
 - Completing the consultation on the change of character to co-education for St Andrew's CE High School for Boys in Worthing and The Forest School in Horsham in time for the secondary admissions round for 2021;
 - Continued implementation of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy across schools;
 - Completion of the 'mini in-year primary admissions round' in June 2020;
 - Launch of the Education For Safeguarding (E4S) curriculum tool;
 - Development of the SACRE new RE Agreed Syllabus (to be launched in January 2021);
 - Publication of guidance on School Federation and a new CPD training programme for schools using technology and online platform delivery;

Paul Wagstaff

Director of Education and Skills

Appendix 1 – Youth Cabinet Response on Covid-19

Background Papers – none

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Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

5 November 2020

Report by Youth Cabinet

The Impact of Covid-19 on Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People

Young people were asked for their thoughts on the closure of schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent return to schools. Their responses are represented below:

What worked well/didn't work so well during lockdown?

- Some things that have worked well during lockdown have been the fact that we can video call to have meetings because I don't have to travel to have meetings;
- Some bad things about lockdown is that we weren't able to see another in person and sometimes the WiFi on the meetings didn't work so it took up time in the meetings.
- I think that, from a youth voice perspective, we were able to adapt and develop our campaigns smoothly during lockdown. From a personal perspective, the clear understanding of basic rules and regulations, shared by WSCC made it more understandable than, potentially, the Government direct guidelines.

Did students have sufficient access to home learning?

- I think that I had pretty good access to school work but I didn't know about my Google Classroom account until about 2 months into lockdown other than that it was OK.
- I think most students at my school had access to home learning, everyone I have spoken to did.
- I found YouTube videos of teachers going through lessons more helpfully than Powerpoints, because having the answers properly explained helped my confidence in understanding the lessons.
- The home learning worked well during lockdown because it was interesting and the work was varied. The only problem was that at the start there was lots of it and it was hard to do it all.
- I did because we have a computer but if students did not have access to the internet, they would not have been able to do it.
- Personally, due to being the GCSE year affected, I feel unable to answer this question.

How has the return to school been – how have students felt/how have they been supported?

- I think my schools have been pretty good in going back and we've kept everything clean and the years separate in bubbles.
- Students have been supported going back to school, teachers at my school have been very helpful on the most part, and I have felt safe at school.
- Teachers being more mindful of how long work can take without support in the classroom, and reassuring students it is OK if you don't understand everything if you are trying.
- The return to school has been good and I have felt supported as the rules were made clear and safety measures put in place.
- The return to school for many has been mixed, due to different schools taking different approaches – for example, at my school, the return feels like normal, with certain contingencies, like wiping down where you have been.

What are students' main concerns/worries moving forward?

- I'm a little worried about there being another lockdown as the cases and deaths are going up.
- The work becoming too overwhelming and too much to catch up on.
- When will things be able to get back to normal? Will the schools have to shut again?
- Moving forward, I worry that social anxiety will rise in people, young people especially, in an age where many prefer to text rather than talk, which could cultivate a generation of nervous people, meaning that communication won't ever be restored to what it once was.

Any suggestions for things that could be done differently to help support students in any future lockdown?

- I think they could handle the way the work is shown online and I wish my school held more online schools lessons.
- Online presentations and practicals demonstrated so we could do them at home.
- I wouldn't know what to improve, as I did not experience the 'student' experience of lockdown, due to waiting for results rather than learning.

Harley Collins
Youth Cabinet

Background Papers – none

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| Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee |
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| 5 November 2020 |
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| Children First Improvement – Service Update |
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| Report by the Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning |
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| Summary |
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To assist the Committee in its role of scrutinising the Children First Improvement Programme, this report updates the Committee on service developments since its last meeting on 24 September 2020. The report sets out the following:

- a) Arrangements for the creation of a Children's Trust following the decision taken by Cabinet on 20 October 2020 to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out the formal commitment for establishing the Trust.
- b) The resumption of the Ofsted inspection arrangements and detail of the Ofsted Focused Visit conducted between 12-22 October.
- c) A summary of the recent service developments and the continuing service transformation agenda.
- d) An overview of the measures taken in response to Covid-19 to ensure service continuity.
- e) An outline of the Mind of My Own App (MOMO) as an example of helping to improve outcomes for children and young people.

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| The focus for Scrutiny |
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The Scrutiny Committee is asked to assess the progress made on the Children First Improvement Programme.

Key areas for scrutiny include:

- a) Whether the evidence provided demonstrates sufficient progress on the improvement journey and gives assurance that there are/will be improved outcomes for children and young people.
- b) To consider how the Committee wishes to be engaged in the work to establish the Children's Trust over the coming months.
- c) The progress being made towards establishing a new service model and whether this provides satisfactory evidence of continued improvement.
- d) Whether the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and plans to deal with the ongoing restrictions (Appendix 1), are sufficiently robust to meet the continued needs of vulnerable children and young people.
- e) What further evidence is required (in addition to the Mind of My Own work outlined in Section 6 and Appendix 2) to demonstrate the impact on improving outcomes for children and young people.
- f) Assessment of the actions being taken to address the risks set out in Section 8, and identify any issues for future scrutiny, to include the focus and desired outcomes.

The Chairman will summarise the output of the debate for consideration by the Committee.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report builds on the previous update report made to the Committee at its meeting on 24 September 2020. That report set out initial service redesign proposals, including plans for restructuring and a social work offer, together with a new service delivery model – all aimed at strengthening the workforce to provide a good service for children, young people and their families in West Sussex. These broad proposals were welcomed and endorsed by the Committee. The latest developments in this programme are summarised in Section 4.
- 1.2 At the same time, processes have been continuing both with regard to the setting up of a Children’s Trust, as instructed by the Department for Education (DfE); and a programme of Ofsted inspections of Children’s Services.

2. The Children’s Trust

- 2.1 The Trust proposal was initiated by the recommendation in the report of the Commissioner for Children’s Services (dated October 2019) that an Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) is necessary to secure a sustained improvement in services in West Sussex. The Secretary of State for Education accepted this recommendation, and accordingly issued his second Direction to the County Council, requiring the Council to commence arrangements for the setting up of a Children’s Trust. This is consistent with the DfE presumption that, in cases of persistent or systemic failure, children’s social care services will be taken out of direct local authority control. The normal form for an ADM is a Children’s Trust.

The Decision

- 2.2 The Cabinet meeting held on 20 October 2020 agreed to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department for Education (DfE). In so doing it made a formal commitment to establish a Children’s Trust, and further agreed the conditions under which it will operate. In advance of this decision, on 9 October the proposed MoU, together with a supporting Business Case, was examined by a Task and Finish Group (TFG) of members drawn from this Committee.

Task and Finish Group Preview of the Decision

- 2.3 The Task and Finish Group (TFG) made comments and recommendations as follows, which the TFG Chairman reported to Cabinet on 20 October 2020; the TFG:
 1. Supported the rationale for the inclusion of children’s social care, early help and education services into the scope of services of the Children’s

Trust.

2. Highlighted the importance of ensuring the make-up of the Trust Board includes a wide range of skills and expertise that represents and supports education, social care and early help
3. Recommended that the future running and potential termination costs of the Children's Trust are highlighted as a risk in the decision report as conversations are ongoing with the DfE, and that this is considered as an area for future scrutiny.
4. Recommended that disruption to staff and the implications for morale and retention are highlighted as a potential risk in the decision report, given that staff will be moving into the Trust.
5. Supported that the Trust is implemented for an initial period of 5 years with an implementation date of 1 October 2021, recognising that the operating period of the Trust may change subject to the performance of the Trust.
6. Supported the proposal that the County Council's Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning be appointed as Chief Executive of the Children's Trust.
7. Requested that detailed consideration be given in the Service Level Agreement of how the Trust will engage with other services within the County Council, upon which Children's Services rely, and how these relations will be managed.

Cabinet on 20 October 2020 noted the support given for the proposals and accepted the TFG recommendations for further action as the process of setting up the Children's Trust unfolds. Further detail on the Children's Trust can be found in the [Cabinet Decision Report](#).

Workstreams for delivering the Trust

- 2.4 In order to deliver the implementation of the Children's Trust by 1 October 2021 a full programme of work has been mobilised and is increasing following the Cabinet decision and agreement of the MoU. The purpose is to ensure that a fully functioning Children's Trust can go-live and that the implications for both the Children's Trust and the County Council are fully understood and mitigated as necessary.

Programme oversight

- The Children's Trust implementation programme is being overseen by a Strategic Project Board, which includes senior WSCC representation, the Commissioner and the DfE. Supporting the Strategic Project Board is an Operational Project Board, which comprises the WSCC work stream leads responsible for delivering the Children's Trust.

Work streams

- A total of ten work streams have been developed to manage the implementation of the Children's Trust. Each work stream has a WSCC lead, responsible for designing and implementing their specialist area. The work streams are:
 - Set-up
 - Commissioning
 - Legal
 - People / HR
 - Communications
 - Finance
 - Support services
 - Property
 - IT
 - Service design

Additional resources and capacity

- The implementation of a Children's Trust is a significant programme of work. In order to support this, and to ensure that the County Council and Children's Services can continue to deliver service improvement, additional resources and capacity have and will be provided. The County Council has procured a specialist external consultancy to advise the Council and support the detailed work to set up a Children's Trust. Specialist external lawyers have also been engaged. The County Council is in the process of recruiting additional officers to provide capacity to the work streams. Discussions are ongoing with the DfE to agree a grant to fund the additional costs incurred by the County Council in setting up the Children's Trust.

Summary

- 2.5 The Committee will be kept updated as the work to establish the Trust progresses through these service update reports and will have the opportunity to shape and comment on the proposals as they come forward, building on the work of the Task and Finish Group discussed above at 2.3.

3. Resumption of Ofsted Inspections

- 3.1 Subsequent to the Ofsted judgement in May 2019 and the report of the Inspector of Children's Services in November 2019, West Sussex Children's Services were subject to a regular programme of Ofsted Monitoring Visits. There was one such visit in December 2019, leading to broadly positive feedback from Ofsted, but thereafter the process was suspended due to the national Covid-19 crisis. Ofsted recommenced its inspection programme in September 2020 and notified West Sussex of its intention to conduct a Focused Visit between 12-22 October.
- 3.2 A Focused Visit has a broader scope than an Ofsted Monitoring Visit, but with a particular focus on the quality of decision-making for children. Fieldwork takes place over 3 days in order to deliver this broader scope, and the team

of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) comprises 4 Social Care HMI and 1 Schools HMI. It will typically cover a service area or cohort of children whilst also looking at the impact of leadership and management. In this case, Ofsted gave notice that they wished to examine the following areas:

- The service's response to Covid-19
- Leadership and Transformation
- Children Looked After (CLA)
- Health and Protection of children

Preparation and Self-Evaluation in advance of Ofsted Visit

- 3.3 The service has been preparing for the resumption of inspections throughout the Summer; this has included an emphasis on ensuring timely completion of case records, and awareness and identification of good practice within individual work programmes. The Ofsted process is welcomed to provide objective feedback to validate the service improvement journey and identify further areas for attention.
- 3.4 In preparing for the Ofsted Focused Visit the service produced a self-evaluation which summarises progress being made as previously reported to this Committee, as well as areas requiring further focus. The response to Covid-19 has been robust, with clear evidence that safeguarding, services to vulnerable children and to education and schools have remained sound. The creation of a strong leadership team geared to the transformation of the service has been well documented, together with the creation of a broad management development programme. Ofsted endorsed the service transformation agenda and direction of travel as part of the Annual Conversation in July 2020. In terms of the Children Looked After service, tangible improvements and 'green shoots' can be demonstrated. The Health and Protection of children is acknowledged to require further input, based on the improvement of working practices: these have not yet achieved a consistent standard, but plans to address this important issue are in place.

The Ofsted Focused Visit, October 2020

- 3.5 The Inspectors completed off-site evaluation and analysis work from 12–16 October inclusive, and were then on-site for three days' fieldwork from 20 - 22 October. The process included the detailed examination of a sample of cases for evidence of good practice. The inspectors wished to hear from front-line staff and also children, young people and their families. The feedback at the end of the Focused Visit from Ofsted was broadly in line with the self-evaluation that the service submitted
- 3.6 The formal results of the visit are expected to be published by Ofsted in early December 2020. It should be noted that this is a Focused Visit by Ofsted and will therefore not be judged on the formal Ofsted scale but will be a narrative report only. The Committee will be kept informed of outcomes, and a briefing on the Visit and its implications will be presented to the next meeting on 7 January 2021. The future programme of Ofsted scrutiny thereafter is expected to revert to Monitoring Visits on a roughly quarterly basis.

4. Service Improvement Update

- 4.1 The previous Update report to the meeting on 24 September gave a detailed overview of the elements of the Service Transformation Programme, and this design work continues at pace. Senior management has now completed an initial 'Whole Service' mapping exercise, to set out and explain how the existing service model can move to a new dynamic structure, capable of delivering the new Family Safeguarding Model effectively, and thereby helping to realise the service benefits described in the previous report. The next stage is undertaking a set of detailed service workshops with managers and staff from all service areas. These workshops have been delayed by three weeks because of the Ofsted inspection but they are being undertaken during November for reporting back to the senior leadership team in January 2021.

Staff Engagement & Consultation

- 4.2 It is essential that staff are familiar with the current position of the service and understand the next steps of a journey in which all are involved. To promote this awareness a substantial Staff Engagement exercise has been undertaken (July to October 2020), comprising 15 face-to-face events and 2 virtual sessions, welcoming over 450 staff from across the breadth of Children, Young People and Learning. Following completion of the next phase of service re-design as outlined above, it is expected that detailed options will be laid before this Committee at its meeting on 4 March 2021.
- 4.3 The following is a summary of recent and forthcoming developments within the service improvement agenda:

Staffing

- As part of the continuing Covid-19 Recovery phase, face-to-face visits with children and young people continue to increase; more staff for whom working from the office has been deemed 'business critical' have returned to offices.

Service Redesign

- Work is progressing on the 'Whole Service' model, based on the Family Safeguarding model of practice, as described above;
- The Assessment and Development programme for managers mentioned in the Update at the last meeting has now been developed and is out to tender;
- Work is underway to review and streamline the management structure across the service;
- The new Offer for Social Workers is being finalised and the existing retention scheme will remain in place until the new scheme becomes operational in July 2021;
- The financial aspects of the Service Redesign will be incorporated into the budget proposals for 2021/22 in due course.

Operational Highlights

- 97% of plans for Children Looked After (CLA) are in place and being reviewed in the CLA teams;
- A new and updated Leaving Care Local Offer has been launched, which can be found [here](#);
- The new Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy 2020-2024 is expected to be agreed by the Cabinet Member for adoption in November 2020;
- The previously closed children's residential homes (Cissbury Lodge and May House in Worthing, and Seaside at Shoreham) remain on course to reopen in the Spring of 2021;
- The proposed improvements to the in-house Fostering Service, including a review of the allowance scheme, are due to be considered by this Committee at its 7 January 2021 meeting.

5. The Service Response to Covid-19

5.1 The service has provided a strong and robust response during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been driven by effective leadership and oversight during Covid-19 which has included the implementation of regular (daily during the peak of the pandemic) Covid-19 management coordination meetings. The strong and robust service response has ensured that all vulnerable children and young people are safe and supported to attend school where required. The West Sussex response is outlined in detail in the attached Covid-19 position statement which was submitted to Ofsted at their recent Focused Visit and was acknowledged by the regulator as a demonstration of good practice (Appendix 1). Some of the key points outlined within the position statement include:

- Risk assessing all open cases – to prioritise the most vulnerable children for a service;
- A strong commissioning response to Covid-19 – supporting providers and meeting the needs of West Sussex children and young people;
- All practice guidance and procedures were reviewed in line with Government guidance;
- The County Council maintained good reporting and monitoring throughout the crisis;
- The workforce was well supported, which resulted in a low staff sickness and absence throughout the pandemic and enabled the service to re-introduce face-to-face visiting early in the Summer.

6. Positive Change to Children's Lives – Mind of My Own (MOMO)

6.1 The previous meeting of the Committee agreed to receive a regular sequence of reports on engagement with children and young people throughout their journey of care, to illustrate the positive impact that the service has on young lives. Accordingly, the first of these topics is attached as Appendix 2. MOMO is a digital App designed to cater innovatively for the needs of children

in a wide variety of circumstances, encouraging them to express their feelings, needs and wishes. It has clear relevance to children’s mental health issues that are recognised to be of primary importance for general wellbeing, not least during Covid-19 restrictions. The report in Appendix 2 explains the technology, examining its impact in a broad social care setting, using case studies and testimony, both from the young people themselves and from frontline workers; some statistics are added in terms of usage rates, with plans to increase uptake.

Continued Scrutiny of Service Improvement Topics

6.2 The Committee has previously received regular updates on activity in specific areas of the service, where Ofsted had identified a need for improvement. It is intended that these reports will continue to be received periodically as part of the scrutiny process of the journey of improvement.

7. Issues for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

7.1 The Committee is invited to review the material presented here and confirm that it is satisfied with the pace and quality of positive change being manifested in the various topic areas reported on.

8. Consultation

8.1 Not applicable – this is a report for information.

9. Risk Implications and Mitigations

9.1 For an undertaking of the magnitude of Children’s Services Improvement, it is natural that there will be a wide range of risks, both relating to the improvement agenda and more widely. A summary of the risk areas identified in the current risk log, and the associated mitigating factors, is given in the table below:

| Risk Area | Examples of Mitigating Actions |
|--|---|
| The Covid-19 Pandemic may continue to impact the delivery of the service in various ways: safeguarding of children must be assured; staff need to be kept safe from infection; protective equipment must be sufficiently available to support face-to-face interaction with children and families, and in residential settings | The service has dealt well with the Pandemic to date; much learning has resulted, and new ways of working have been developed. This risk is thought to be under control with safeguarding and wellbeing issues being soundly catered for. The Ofsted Focused Visit will provide further objective evidence of the position. |
| A surge in demand following the cessation of Covid-19 restrictions, return of children to school etc | As expected, there is an increase in demand across the service: there has been a rise in MASH contacts; higher caseloads in Assessment & Intervention; |

| Risk Area | Examples of Mitigating Actions |
|--|--|
| | and an increased number of children subject to Child Protection Plans as well as Children going into Care. The service planned for these factors in advance, and the situation is under control. Service Redesign and the new Service Model (Family Safeguarding) will support greater efficiency in the management of future demand. |
| Knowing that the service is safer for children | Every aspect of the improvement agenda is orientated towards this fundamental issue, from Workforce through Practice Improvement, to Performance Management, Governance, Scrutiny and use of Technology: it is a whole-system issue. Again, the service transformation work will further enhance outcomes in the round. |
| Understanding and applying quality practice | A Practice Improvement project is in progress to implement quality standards and assurance and will increase in effectiveness in a redesigned workforce. |
| Multi-agency capacity and capability | The joint undertakings with partners are very strongly stressed in the design principles of the proposed changes. |
| Demonstrating to the Commissioner, Ofsted and the DfE that the service can continue its improvement journey | The service has demonstrated to the Commissioner, to Ofsted and the DfE that it has the ambition and capacity for comprehensive change. The Commissioner has signified that he is satisfied with the direction of travel to date. Feedback from the Ofsted Focused Visit in October was further evidence that the service has an accurate self-evaluation and that improvement plans are appropriately focused on key service areas. |
| Leadership capacity and capability | New permanent leadership team now coming into place. |
| Organisational morale & retention of experienced social work staff, in the context of national market scarcity and competition from other authorities for their services | This risk will be comprehensively addressed in the new Service Redesign proposals. |
| Social workers encumbered with administrative burdens are less effective | Within the Service Redesign the need has been recognised to remove unnecessary |

| Risk Area | Examples of Mitigating Actions |
|--|--|
| | administration and to maximise productive professional time with clients. |
| Data management not supporting good practice | Using technology to improve service is recognised as a priority; planning is in hand to deliver a project, allied to quality improvement. Much has been learned from managing Covid-19 about effective use of technology. |
| Preparedness for cycle of Ofsted monitoring visits | The December 2019 Ofsted visit and its outcomes were satisfactory. The service is considered to be in a good position to face current and future Ofsted scrutiny. The Ofsted Annual Conversation in July yielded good outcomes. Initial informal feedback from Ofsted following the recent Focused Visit indicated a well-conducted event, with inspectors receiving all the evidence requested. |

10. Other Options Considered

10.1 Not applicable – this is a report for information.

11. Equality Duty

11.1 The service recognises the primary importance of child safeguarding, sound family relationships, good parenting and the nurture of children to fulfil their potential. The provision of the service is based on need, as determined through formal assessment protocols. This need is not explicitly related to formally protected characteristics, but any such characteristic is and will continue (as now) to be respected in compliance with equality principles and taken into account in the way in which the service is delivered.

11.2 In terms of those with a protected characteristic, the service will ensure enablement and support across all relevant categories, and this will both continue and be enhanced through the Children First agenda.

12. Social Value

12.1 The Children First agenda and measures for service recovery discussed in this report will directly support improved delivery of the West Sussex Plan priority to give every child the Best Start in Life. Enhancing the protection of young lives and support for family life will continue to build resilience and social capital and contribute towards stronger and more effective communities. The implementation of the service improvements will also respect sustainability principles in accordance with the County Council’s strategic policies.

13. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 13.1 There are positive implications for Sections 17, 37 and 39 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in the prevention and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, and in reducing offending and re-offending by young people, all of which are affected by the progress activity discussed in this report.

14. Human Rights Implications

- 14.1 The County Council has an overriding duty to safeguard the Human Rights of children in need, and this has been recognised in the Children First agenda. The Council is mindful of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights – The Right to Respect for Family and Private Life - and has taken relevant factors into consideration in preparing this report. The processing of personal and special category data is subject to the Council's Data Protection Act policies and procedures in relation to discharging the Council's and its partners' legal responsibilities.
- 14.2 The County Council is also mindful of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - which states that all children have the right to be consulted and to have their opinions heard on any decision that affects them. Hearing, understanding and acting upon the voice and experiences of the child is a key design principle of the Children First service improvements.

Lucy Butler,

Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning

Contact:

Vince Clark, Children First Transformation Director

Lance John, Business Manager – 03302 222511

Appendix 1 – Covid-19 Position Statement

Appendix 2 – Mind of My Own App

Background Papers – none

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Appendix 1

Children, Young People and Learning (CYPL)

COVID-19 Position Statement

OFSTED October 2020

Introduction

This position statement seeks to inform OFSTED of the work that West Sussex Children, Young People and Learning department have undertaken as a direct consequence of Covid-19. It should be read in conjunction with the department's Self-Assessment.

Each service area has produced its own report on its Covid-19 response, this statement seeks to bring key themes together in one place, it does not cover absolutely everything. Individual service reports are available if required.

The position statement is set out as follows;

1. Ensuring effective leadership and oversight during Covid-19 – managing and leading through a time of unprecedented challenge. This section sets out the leadership structure adopted for the pandemic.
2. Children's Operational¹ response to Covid-19 – knowing the children most at risk, ensuring effective provision and oversight, meeting children's needs during the pandemic. This section reports on our response using the following key themes;
 - Effective management decision-making and oversight
 - Providing effective practice guidance
 - Knowing and responding to those most at risk
 - Meeting the physical, emotional well-being and mental health needs of children and young people

¹ Across early help, social care, corporate parenting, quality assurance and education – i.e. all operational services in the department.



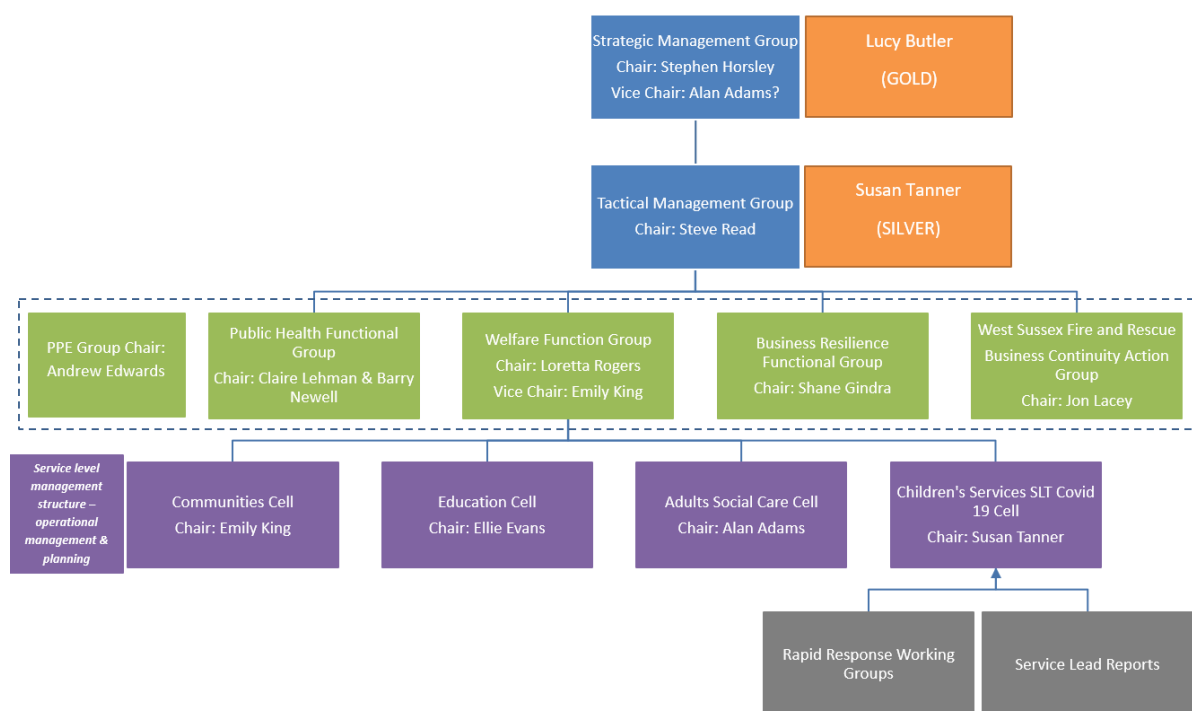
- Maintaining effective contact with children and young people
- Supporting parents and carers
- Working effectively with partners
- Supporting staff

3. Commissioning response to Covid-19 – supporting our providers and meeting the needs of our children and young people

1. Ensuring effective leadership and oversight during Covid-19 – managing and leading through a time of unprecedented challenge

1a. Clear command and control structure established, both across the corporate structure and within Children, Young People and Learning;

COVID 19 Command and Control Structure for WSCC



1b. Common Operating Picture (COP) reports produced regularly by each of the departments in WSCC for review and executive oversight at Strategic Management Group,



ensuring Chief Executive and all senior directors fully appraised. Regular Cabinet Reports produced, ensuring political leadership oversight [evidence: COP and Cabinet Reports].

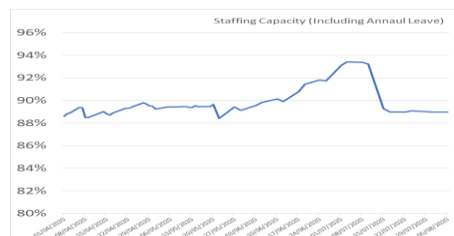
1c. Cross departmental issues, and departmental updates, covered at Tactical Management Group ensuring good lines of communication across all departments [evidence: TMG meeting notes].

1d. During the emergence and height of the pandemic Children, Young People and Learning Covid-19 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) departmental meetings² were held twice daily (now weekly), this ensures;

- Clear and highly visible leadership across the department
- Capacity to respond to issues, as they arise, at pace
- Consistency of response and clear communications. [evidence: Notes of Daily Meetings]

1e. These departmental Covid-19 meetings focus on;

- Responding to newly published government guidance – all relevant guidance logged, and implementation tracked [evidence: Guidance Tracker]
- Monitoring staffing levels across the department – ensuring that staff levels maintained in critical areas. Staff levels monitored at team level, and have remained good throughout [evidence: Daily Staffing Level reports]



- Responding to Covid-19 related service issues and risks. At the onset of the crisis we established a system of daily (now reduced to weekly) service lead reports – this

² Whilst there was a separate Education Cell (of necessity, to focus on the complexity of the impact of Covid-19 on education) this reported into the CYPL SLT Covid19 Cell, ensuring that the DCS had full oversight across the department.



facilitates clear, well documented lines of communication between services and the senior leadership team. [evidence: Service Lead Reports, Action Tracker, Risk Log].

1f. We also established a system of Rapid Response Working Groups (RRWG) to respond at pace (within 5 working days) to emerging critical issues and risks. To date there have been seven RRWGs; see Annex A for specific examples.

- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- Complex SEND children and young people
- Placement issues and risk
- Domestic Abuse provision
- Court proceedings and PLO issues
- Responding to Family Emergencies
- Establishing a departmental duty rota to provide additional support to the Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

These RRWG have enabled the senior leadership team to make clear informed decisions about how to respond to emerging issues and risks, and to make timely decisions about the allocation of additional financial resource, where required. [evidence: RRWG Reports]. This ensured senior leaders are fully sighted on issues and can act proactively in response to issues as they arise and before they became a problem (e.g. additional out of hours staffing etc). See specific e.g. in Annex A.

2. Children’s Operational³ response to Covid-19 – knowing the children most at risk, ensuring effective provision and oversight, meeting children’s needs during the pandemic.

2.1 Effective decision-making and management oversight

2.1.a Early Help Service Leaders developed internal COVID action plan, and held daily Covid-19 management meeting. These meetings oversaw;

- RAG rating children and dip sampled of 90 RAG rated to ensure quality of thresholding
- Ensuring that supervision was prioritised

³ Across early help, social care, corporate parenting, quality assurance and education – i.e. all operational services in the department.



- Ensured that step across panel moved to a virtual meeting
- Implemented an Early Years and Childcare strategy group

2.1.b Clear focus within children's social care on responding to children's needs regardless of COVID-19, resulting in;

- Management oversight and COVID health risk assessment completed on all cases
- Twice daily RAG rating report to ensure all children were RAG rated and visits to children prioritised, based on need and level of risk to the child
- Reporting of children RAG rated red and proportion of face to face visits completed
- Changes made to Mosaic to capture where children seen by other professionals to ensure oversight of our most vulnerable children

2.1.c Officers from the Pupil Entitlement team worked alongside colleagues in Early Help and Social Care to identify vulnerable children and to work with schools to engage with, and support families in encouraging school attendance.

- Weekly discussions focused on individual children and encouraged schools to communicate and join-up their work with families to increase attendance.
- This led to a significant increase in the attendance of our most vulnerable with CLA attendance increasing from 13% at the start of Covid-19 to 67% by July.
- For children with social workers, school attendance increased but, due to the provision of 900 computers to our children, learning engagement was increased through virtual activity.

2.2 Providing effective practice guidance to staff during the pandemic

2.2.a The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus Amendment) Regulation 2020 was discussed at a Covid-19 SLT meeting where it was agreed that we would not fully adopt the permissions (they were used only in a very limited way). This decision was made to retain focus on practice standards and ensure that the highest standard of care and protection remains consistently in place. However, we have used the permissions to respond to the delays in medical reports for the assessment of foster carers and to the use of virtual visiting to children during the pandemic.

2.2.b Practice guidance is kept under regular review, updated and circulated to practitioners as required.



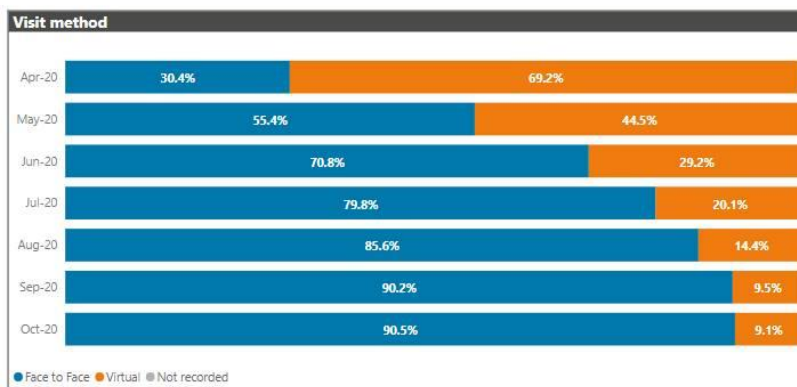
2.2.c Weekly REACT meetings were held with the DFE to clarify guidance for education settings.

2.3 Knowing and responding to those most at risk during the pandemic

Assessing risk

2.3.a Before lockdown the decision was made to RAG rate all children’s cases – in both social care and early help. These RAG ratings were updated in line with changing circumstances for both children and Government). The Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) and Child Protection Advisors (CPAs) provided additional scrutiny on the RAG rating decisions for cases held in social care. CPA and IRO team managers reviewed all escalated Red RAG cases on a weekly basis to ensure that sufficient safety planning was in place [evidence: children’s case files and guidance on Tri-Ex]. This enabled;

- Effective and timely oversight of risk
- Management oversight
- Efficient workload prioritisation – initially contacts virtual, increasingly these have moved to face-to-face as the department has embedded its recovery plan, and guidance has allowed – see table;



Where virtual visits are considered proportionate, management oversight is placed on file to formally record reasons for this decision.

All social care visits are now face-to-face, unless there are clear risks that prevent this from happening. Practitioners undertake pre-visit risk assessments with households. Cases are no longer RAG rated in social care as the presumption is face-to-face visits.



In Early Help children RAG rated as Red and Amber received a mix of face-to-face and virtual visits, parents of children requiring a level 2 response receive virtual contact. Early Help completed weekly RAG rating during lockdown and monthly since.

Supporting access to education and learning

2.3.b The Portage service have continued to maintain close contact with families, even when face-to-face visiting has not been possible, using creative and innovative means. These have included sending pre-recorded videos highlighting activities parents can do with their young child. The service also supported families in finding other early years settings when theirs was not open as usual and provided on-going emotional and practical support throughout. 136 children and families received a service over the summer period.

2.3.c Early Help staff maintained termly consultations with schools and working with colleagues in Education and Skills provided an enhanced offer to 20 schools in areas of high need offering additional access to link workers to discuss and respond to any emerging concerns. They also made regular calls to schools to monitor vulnerable children and supported schools to make effective contacts with families (including supporting schoolwork and attending joint home visits). 94% of schools received a termly conversation in the summer term, with 154 additional consultations undertaken.

2.3.d As a result of work undertaken by the Early Years team, with colleagues across the department, almost 1,800 young children accessed early years provision through the partial closure period. This included 237 who met the vulnerable child criteria. There was specific tracking for our vulnerable children and if they were unable to attend their own Early Years placement alternative provision was sourced to ensure regular sight of the children.

- If an identified vulnerable child's usual setting was closed, and it was agreed that it is in the child's best interest to be attending childcare provision, brokerage support was given to find that child a place. A new online form was developed for professionals working with vulnerable children to request specialist brokerage support and an enhanced level of brokerage was offered to children of Critical workers. To date we have had 130 COVID brokerage cases; 103 for critical workers; and 23 for vulnerable children.



2.3.e The Education and Skills service, together with colleagues across the department, undertook some exceptional work to ensure that our facilities remained open and attendance of vulnerable pupils and those of critical workers was amongst the highest in the country during lockdown. There was a specific piece of work carried out reviewing all vulnerable children using the RAG system to ensure they were appropriately attending school and where they were not this was followed up by Social Workers and teachers. As we know, being in education is a significant protective factor for children.

- Attendance dipped to circa 1.7 – 2% of the county’s total number of pupils on roll at the onset of lockdown, by mid-April this had risen to between 2.5 – 3% of total school population, and to over 4% in May. The proportion of vulnerable children attending school continued to grow through this period. By the beginning of July 21% of pupils were in school. Attendance has been consistently above the national average
- All West Sussex maintained schools remained open throughout the summer term, except for two which had to temporarily close for deep cleaning following positive cases. Most schools remained open during the Easter and Spring Bank Holiday breaks to support critical workers. All maintained and academy schools opened for phased return throughout the second half of the Summer term. Local Academy Trusts agreed to work with us to provide spaces for children registered at other schools during school holiday period – again, ensuring regular sight of most vulnerable children.
- Since schools have fully re-opened in September attendance has risen confidently and is at 93.9% (compared to a national average of 89.6%) – data as at 09/10/20. For those with an EHCP, this is currently at 87.2% (84.8% nationally). For pupils with a social worker, attendance is at 85.6% (84.5% nationally)

2.3.f Attendance of CLA was monitored through a new in- house system. At the beginning of lockdown 13% Children looked after attended school. This figure steadily rose over the summer term and by July 2020, 67% of our children were accessing school on a regular basis.

- The PEP documentation was changed to reflect the pandemic and to provide the opportunity for all to reflect on the provision that was being offered/ received.
- Virtual School team members attended as many PEPs as possible and ensured that children not attending schools were regularly monitored. During the summer term, 91.3% of children looked after had a PEP completed.
- The Virtual School maintained regular contact with foster carers and social workers to ensure that all guidance regarding school attendance was clear and acted upon.



- Access to, and use of, pupil premium funding was streamlined to ensure that resource was made available to all children as and when it was required

2.3.g Through the SEND and Inclusion Support teams, schools were provided with specific, specialist support in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND. This included;

- Specialist resources to support attendance and learning
- Additional equipment
- Information about guidance and support available to pupils and their families
- Professional support to educators

2.3.h The Children with Disabilities team (CWD) maintained close contact with the special schools in relation to some of our most vulnerable children, ensuring that their educational needs continue to be met in school wherever possible.

2.3.i Likewise the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Advisory Service (EMTAS) service provided additional support schools to meet the needs of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT).

2.3.j Through the IT support scheme, run by the local authority, 2,160 laptops and devices were distributed to schools and the Alternative Provision College for use by children who are disadvantaged and unable to access learning at home, or those who are care leavers or children with social workers. This scheme was able to be extended beyond the target core group (Year 10 and 11 pupils) and into primary and KS3 phases.

Ensuring access to the School Meal Service

2.3.k During the lockdown period, despite a number of significant challenges, arrangements were in place to ensure that meals were available for all children attending school and that food parcels were delivered to all children eligible for free school meals, and this was sustained through the period of difficulty with the national voucher scheme.



Responding to increased risk of domestic abuse

2.3.l The Domestic Abuse emergency duty response was extended to include 7-day support, the team work closely with police and EDT to ensure a rapid response. The service undertook additional promotion activity (social media, advertising on refuse lorries, pharmacy bags and in supermarkets) to ensure that victims and children aware of the support available.

2.3.m The Domestic Abuse service decided early in the pandemic to secure emergency accommodation for families fleeing abuse, in the event that other services were not available due to either demand or closure as a result of Covid-19.

2.3.n Family Support and Protection (FSP) staff agreed a coded word with at risk families that could be used in virtual meetings to alert staff to domestic abuse.

Securing permanency

2.3.o Covid-19 transition risk assessment developed to ensure that that adoptions progressed safely, but at pace.

2.4 Meeting the physical, emotional well-being and mental health needs of children and young people during the pandemic

2.4.a All young people known to the Youth Emotional Support (YES) team, in Early Help (approximately 1,200) were contacted at the start of the pandemic and an appropriate plan of support was put in place.

- 01/04– 29/05/20 - 653 telephone 1:1 sessions and 187 video 1:1 sessions were held.
- Some young people elected to wait until face-to-face support could be provided, which enabled the service to prioritise those ready to access support
- An on-line self-assessment referral was launched to support quick and easy access
- Duty line runs daily (9.30 – 4.30pm) to allow young people and parents direct access to a worker to discuss any emotional well-being or mental health concerns
- A wide and creative range of resources has been developed and is available to everyone. This includes podcasts and mindfulness sessions, resource packs for parents and young people to work through, virtual support groups, etc



2.4.b The Children Looked After service has many examples of innovative and creative ways in which they have worked to support children's emotional well-being and enable social workers to carry out virtual direct work. These include;

- Adapting communication styles and using digital contact methods to ensure engagement and oversight (using on-line activities, games etc). In some cases, this has meant far more engagement than was seen pre-Covid-19. Advanced practitioners led training sessions for social workers focussed on engaging creatively virtually
- Child friendly resources were secured and shared with children to help them make sense of the changes. Post lockdown, children were sent a certificate to congratulate them on getting through it. Children identified as struggling were sent cards and care packages, and some received vouchers to help them get out and about
- Leaflets and information about Covid-19 translated and shared with our asylum-seeking children and young people. Use of interpreters via video link to ensure effective engagement

2.4.c Intervention team in Adolescent Family Resource Service (AFRS) undertook direct, trauma informed pieces of work with young people throughout the lockdown period and have focussed specifically on impact of Covid-19 on emotional health and well-being.

2.4.d The Educational Psychology service introduced a community call back service for parents, school settings and other professionals to provide support about learning, behaviour and emotional well-being. 213 contacts were made, and 202 consultation calls undertaken. Feedback on this has been overwhelmingly positive.

2.4.e This service also continued to support schools to meet the needs of staff and pupils following sad events, and to prepare in advance for such events.

2.4.f School Effectiveness team have produced and communicated a number of support documents to schools – including Return to School – promoting everyone's emotional well-being.

2.4.g The Mental Health Support Teams in Schools (MHSTs) adapted their work so that it could be continued virtually, and all 1:1 work with children was offered online using the Attend Anywhere digital platform. Referral routes were expanded to include parent/ carers,



School Nursing, Youth Emotional Support (YES), and Community Mental Health Liaison (CMHL).

2.4.h CAMHS and physical health support was maintained, and adaptations made to better meet need during the pandemic;

- CAMHS for children looked after (known as CHAMPS) maintained therapeutic relationships by doing virtual sessions throughout lockdown
- CHAMPS and the Education Psychologist offered weekly consultations to foster carers and social workers to identify strategies to meet the needs of children struggling
- Specialist CAHMS worker is supporting the Child Asylum Team to meet the emotional needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) during Covid-19 as some of these young people find the situation particularly challenging
- CAMHS support provided for children in residential provision and contact with the Looked After Children (LAC) Nurse
- LAC medicals continued, albeit virtually, to ensure medical needs identified and addressed
- Since restrictions have eased, staff in the residential homes are now ensuring that important, but not critical, missed appointments (physio, dentists, opticians etc) are caught up

2.5 Maintaining effective contacts with children and young people during the pandemic

2.5.a The intervention team in Adolescent Family Resource Service (AFRS), and other services, undertook 'walk and talks' with children and young people to enable critical face-to-face contact. Equally all teams have embraced the use of digital technology to ensure that contact, even when not possible face-to-face, is continued, and in many cases enhanced.

2.5.b Flyers prepared to give to children and young people to help them understand what face-to-face visits will look like, and how they will be safely managed.

2.5.c The independent reviewing officers and the corporate parenting service have supported children's well-being by use of Mind of my Own (MoMo) app for regular contact, sending out letters to children introducing themselves and their roles to increase confidence and contact.



2.5.d In our residential homes we;

- Provide activities and resources to support children, including social stories
- Hold regular meetings with children in the non-disability home to talk about Covid-19, and its impact and how to manage this well
- Support children to have access to friends and families via skype, facetime, emails and letters

2.5.e Children and young people with SEND have continued to be engaged in the Young Voices Forum, which moved from fortnightly meetings to weekly virtual meetings, backed up by emails, texts and phone calls. Child focussed animation videos were produced helping children make sense of the pandemic and getting them ready to think about returning to school.

2.5.f The Leaving Care Service, and others, continued to provide face to face visits throughout the period of lockdown to provide emotional and practical support to young people identified as particularly vulnerable, or high risk. They also;

- Increased contact using virtual visits and maintained regular lines of communication by text
- 108 young people have been supported practically and financially through the provision of food parcels and/ or vouchers
- Act as a source of advice and support on physical and well-being health issues, and where required support access to the relevant health professionals

2.5.g We have noticed that virtual visiting and digital contacts have been beneficial for some children – there has been increased contact with some groups of young people who may not previously have engaged as well with staff, and others have found it easier to give their views independent of their parents' (particularly our children with disabilities), some simply just prefer digital contact (for example when talking about their mental health).



2.6 Supporting parents and carers (including foster carers) during the pandemic

2.6.a Child Protection chairs have continued to ensure that pre-meets happen before conferences, so that there is opportunity to receive support, and share views and experiences. Child protection plans have been revised to ensure that children's emotional needs are at the centre of practise, outcomes are clearly defined and tracked.

2.6.b Parents have been supported to participate in meetings and hearings in council run buildings (if required) and with appropriate technology and hardware.

2.6.c Families of children and young people with disabilities are regularly contacted by Children with Disabilities (CWD) social workers and child and family workers. These conversations are recorded on Mosaic. The team have also worked to ensure that families are able to access more flexible personal budgets to support their children's needs during this time.

2.6.d Colleagues across commissioning and operational services worked to co-ordinate RAG ratings for all children and young people with SEND across agencies, identifying a lead contact for each family. [evidence: Power BI database]

2.6.e The West Sussex Parent Forum have worked hard to ensure parent carers are well informed and supported. Through Reaching Families we were able (within two weeks of lockdown) to develop a FAQ and information resource for families. Families were also able to access befriending services, counselling support and training workshops through this route.

2.6.f The Short Break offer was refocussed to meet constraints of lockdown, so all families continued to receive holistic support and creative on-line breaks (Zoom karaoke, cookery, on-line experiments and social calls). Over 5,000 hours of virtual short breaks delivered in the first part of the year to approximately 2,000 children and young people. Additional sensory items were procured and delivered to families at home (e.g. indoor trampolines and arts and crafts supplies for children shielding). Short Breaks Wiki developed (Rix Foundation have listed this as an example of good practise) as a way of collating and sharing information with families.



2.6.g The Fostering and Adoption teams ensured that foster carers were supported and able to best meet the needs of our children, including through;

- Virtual support groups
- Regular communications and newsletters [evidence: communication files]
- Respite needs addressed (and properly risk assessed) [evidence: case files]
- Additional resources provided such as a food hamper, £100 additional funding for foster carers and activity packs for children distributed via the foster care association

2.6.h In our residential homes, we made regular check-ins with families who would otherwise have been using the short break facilities in the disability homes, either by phone, email or video call.

2.6.i Crisis support (582 requests made for crisis support) mobilised delivering food parcels, vitamin packs and prescriptions to families in need. Staff undertaken this work were equipped with 'best questions to ask' to ensure that situations fully understood and appropriately responded to.

2.7 Working effectively with partners during the pandemic

2.7.a At the start of the pandemic a system of regular (daily) newsletters for headteachers, governors and other education stakeholders was implemented, this moved to twice weekly in June. As at 06/10/20, 87 newsletters have been issued to 1,625 subscribers. This has ensured that key information (government guidance, contact details, how to report and respond to cases, support available from the local authority, letters for parents/ carers, HR advise etc) is well communicated, and that education partners have maintained confidence. [evidence: copy communications].

2.7.b The School Effectiveness team have developed and distributed a wide range of materials and guidance to schools, including Learning during Covid-19, Framework for re-opening schools, Curriculum beyond lockdown, etc.

2.7.c Education and Skills established a Welfare Group contact group at the beginning of the lockdown period, between March and August they managed over 3,100 direct contacts from schools, staff and parents relating to Covid-19 issues. Key issues raised include;

- Delivering the free school meals programme (particularly for those pupils not in school)



- HR issues
- Access to personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Safeguarding
- Data on school provision (ensuring close oversight on schools open, closed, partially open)

2.7.d By March, the School Effectiveness team allocated every school a linked Covid-19 Advisor who undertook weekly calls with the headteacher (and sometimes the Chair of Governors). This ensured that there was consistent, informed contact and support provided to schools, and that the local authority had good information about issues of concern to schools.

2.7.e Throughout the pandemic, the Education and Skills service have worked closely with Public Health and others (including the DfE, University etc) to ensure that there are effective and efficient lines of communication, that good practise is shared with settings, and to identify early any concerns.

2.7.f Early Help teams worked with schools to implement virtual team around the families, ensuring that vital planning and monitoring continued. This enabled families in crisis to be identified early and supported appropriate returns to full time education and access to support (including free school meals).

2.7.g Early Help reassigned a manager, and several staff, to the Communities Department Hub duty team. The team assisted with daily calls to vulnerable people in the community, developed a pathway to identify families contacting the Hub to ensure that all were triaged by Early Help to ensure wider concerns identified and addressed. Early Help staff worked with the Hub to review phone scripts, with an informed focus on safeguarding.

2.7.h Likewise, the Early Help service worked closely with Districts and Borough community response teams, supporting the identification of risk and early help screening.

2.7.i Pan Sussex working group (meeting fortnightly) established for domestic abuse services to ensure sharing of best practice, effective service demand mapping, and joined up partnership working.



2.7.j The Safeguarding Partnership Board held two exceptional Covid-19 meetings (April and June) as a result of which it was agreed that lead partners and strategic leads met monthly between April and July to focus on relevant issues and concerns.

- Three Covid-19 briefings have been sent out to partners, updating them on partnership planning (April, May and June)
- 'See Something, Say Something' campaign developed – a media campaign developed to keep the needs of children visible in communities during lockdown. Information on the campaign was widely disseminated

2.8 Supporting staff during the pandemic

2.8.a Personal protective equipment (PPE) was initially difficult to secure and supply (national supply chain issue), however working through the Command and Control PPE Cell arrangements were quickly put in place to secure and supply adequate supplies to social workers, other practitioners, education and child care settings. Service prioritisation plans developed in event that PPE supplies are disrupted. [evidence: PPE Prioritisation Plan]

2.8.b Principal social worker has shared tools for workers to use supporting children and families to understand the pandemic and how best to keep safe. Advanced practitioners have developed a standard narrative on pandemic restrictions to support staff in their communications with children and families. Child and Family Intervention Service (CFIS) hold a resource folder that staff can access for additional information and support on Covid-19 related matters.

2.8.c Advanced practitioners ran life story consultations to support direct work in the context of lockdown to support our social workers.

2.8.d A new webinar for practitioners has been developed on Youth Mental Health First Aid, supporting them to identify and meet need.

2.8.e Staff safeguarding training moved on-line to ensure that all mandatory training continued.



2.8.f Extended duty team developed to support the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) over weekends and bank holidays – this included domestic abuse, commissioning/placements, supervising social workers, staff from the Communities department, etc enabling the EDT to meet increased and complex demand.

2.8.g Staff from some teams (eg Early Help) have been redeployed at times to support other areas of service where demand has exceeded capacity, including into the Leaving Care Service, Communities Hub (responsible for distribution of food packages, community contacts etc), and Appropriate Adult work.

2.8.h Additional staffing hours agreed to support service areas experiencing additional and complex demand – including for example the Domestic Abuse team.

2.8.i The Early Years team working closely with colleagues in Family Information Service (FIS), children's social care and SEN Assessment team, developed a support programme to ensure that vulnerable children and children of critical workers (including our local authority staff) were able to access childcare, even when their usual provider was unable to deliver.

2.8.j Regular promotion of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) enabling staff to access 24/7 confidential advice and support on a range of wellbeing issues, including access to specialist advice on bereavement and counselling. Launch of a new mobile app (MY Healthy Advantage') providing a set of wellbeing tools at staff fingers tips. The EAP provision includes early referral for support for stress and mental health issues and advice for managers in these situations. All staff returning to work in an office or undertaking face-to-face visits supported by a risk assessment to assess and mitigate risks. Organisational Development Team providing on-line Team Time interventions to support emotional wellbeing of social work teams.

2.8.k Operational teams have, in many cases, been running daily huddles to ensure that staff have regular peer contact and ensure appropriate management support in place. DPR (external consultancy supporting some of our operational teams' practise development) supported some teams to undertake group supervision to facilitate and foster increased sense of team and support.



3. Commissioning response to Covid-19 – supporting our providers and meeting the needs of our children and young people

3a. Established a 9am – 9pm 7 day a week Commissioning Duty Line (March – June incl), dedicated email address and telephone number for Covid-19 related issues. Regular communications with links to OFSTED and government guidance circulated. [evidence: Commissioning files]

- Providers felt well supported, had clear contact routes for assistance and guidance
- Providers supported to access appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when nationally supplies limited
- Commissioners able to respond at pace and proactively to any threats to service stability

3b. Commissioners called in all Business Continuity Plans (BCP) in March, updated provider BCPs requested October, including for all independent non-maintained special schools. [evidence: Commissioning files]

- Commissioning oversight of BCPs ensuring that the safety of children and young people in external placements is well managed and planned for

3c. Developed and maintained a Covid-19 related spreadsheet capturing information about independent non-maintained special schools, including whether school open, closed, partially open, robustness of business continuity plans (BCPs) etc. [evidence: Daily spreadsheet, commissioning files]

- Commissioner oversight of pupil risk assessments, ensuring child needs met
- Ensured that alternative education/ support models appropriate and within guidance
- Specific oversight of provision for any child with a CLA or CiN status, ensuring that colleagues in social care, and elsewhere, aware of any changes to education provision in a timely way

3d. Young person Covid-19 symptom tracker developed and maintained. [evidence: Tracker, Commissioning files]

- Ensuring effective record of young people with symptoms, dates of isolation and test outcomes
- Ensuring appropriate CLA Nurse and Public Health involvement



3e. Programme of quality assurance of commissioned services revised to accommodate virtual monitoring. [evidence: Commissioning records]

- Full programme of quality assurance has continued to be delivered, ensuring children and young people are in safe and appropriate placements and that outcomes continue to be met
- Regulation 44 reports reviewed with additional Covid-19 checks to ensure any issues arising from Covid-19 picked up
- Additional information is now being sought from providers in areas where there are stringent local lockdowns (currently three children in such placements), ensuring that we have close oversight of provision in these areas and children's safety and outcomes are assured

3f. Additional placement services commissioned to meet need arising from Covid-19. [evidence: Contract files]

- Commissioned Covid-19 Isolation staffed house (6 beds) in April, now extended to February 2021. Primarily for newly arrived UASC, developed to ensure temporary, safe accommodation before moving into existing long-term provision. Has protected our young people in existing provisions and prevented service closures
- Care Leaver accommodation (18+), fully staffed accommodation to ensure that care leavers did not become street homeless during lockdown and to prevent the need for them to make a homeless application to district and boroughs
- 2 fostering placements and 1 residential bed retained for the first 2 months of the pandemic for under 16 UASC or children newly CLA who may need self-isolation. The need for this provision is now kept under constant review

End.

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| Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee |
| Date: 5 November 2020 |
| Update on Mind Of My Own App (https://mindofmyown.org.uk/) |
| Report by: Caz Evans – Digital Participation Lead |

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 Mind Of My Own is an App which is currently managed by the Voice and Participation team in Children’s Services. The App is used by children and young people to voice their views, thoughts and feelings to their worker. It is also used by workers in Early Help and Children’s Social Care to capture the voice of children and young people during any visits and sessions. The App therefore has a very wide application for promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young people through self-expression across a broad range of contexts and circumstances. The Mind of My Own licence has currently been renewed for two years (July 2020 – July 2022) with the intention to increase usage of the App amongst staff teams.
- 1.2 To explain Mind Of My Own in more detail, young people from West Sussex Children in Care Council created a YouTube video on using the Mind Of My Own App which can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/Qqqla0rRtH0>.

2. Benefits of using the App

- 2.1 The impact and benefits of the App can be summarised as follows:
- An easier and a more fun method of communicating for children and young people, compared to the more traditional paper forms.
 - Reduces the burden of writing up reports by sending workers a PDF of what their children and young people have said, giving workers more time to spend understanding their children’s views, wishes, and feelings. If the worker account is used in session with the young person (through a website rather than an app for this), then notes can be directly added to the worker account which they can review with the young person before submitting as they will be with them (or over the phone in current climate). This means that after submission a PDF is automatically emailed to the worker to be able to upload straight to the appropriate database related to their service. This can save the worker a huge amount of time.
 - Promotes earlier reporting of worries such as bullying, but also a chance for a more detailed statement as young people can submit in their own time and take more time to do so.

- Encourages deeper dialogue with children and young people that can help workers find out more about their lives at school and at home through their own eyes, increasing the ability to improve the relationship with the worker and their situation.

3. Impact for Young People

- 3.1. Each month an impact report is produced which highlights what young people have said about the App.

Young people who have used the App have reported the following:

- It gave me confidence to speak about my problems;
- It made it easier for me to explain my problems to my worker;
- It helped me talk about what was going on and it don't tell anyone but the one I send it to;
- It is useful and gives great help;
- I can help other children with talking to the people that they know and trust.

Case Studies

- 3.2 Outlined here are some case studies which demonstrate the difference the App is making:

A young boy submitted a 'problem statement', asking for his contact with his mother to be moved to an hour later than normal, because his mother was always half hour late. By moving it, would mean she would be half hour early. The social worker did this and then a week later the young person submitted a 'share good news' statement in full capital letters: "I HAD FULL CONTACT WITH MY MUM TODAY, THANK YOU".

A young girl submitted a statement to her Youth Emotional Support worker saying she was having major anxiety with entering her exam room with everyone. It was affecting her concentration and making her extremely anxious all the time. The Youth Emotional Support worker worked with the school and the young girl now enters the exam hall 15 minutes earlier than others and is already seated before everyone comes in. This helps keep her calm and relaxed.

A foster carer provides respite for a young boy, seeing him once a month for a weekend. Sometimes he is happy, sometimes he is anxious about it, and the App has allowed for him to send through the way he is feeling before he arrives which allows the foster carer to be able to make any needed adjustments before his arrival.

One worker had spent five hours in person with a young girl who was choosing not to communicate. She introduced her to the Mind of My own App and asked her to try and express her views in her own time, away from the session. The young girl did and submitted a statement every other day at the beginning, with the first statement providing more information to the worker than she'd been able to glean from all the previous face to face sessions. This has now strengthened their working relationship and the young girl opens up better during sessions alongside continuing to use the App.

Professional Perspectives

3.3 Feedback from workers includes:

- "Total Game Changer! Got two great Voice of the Child (VOC) today through it, a 10-year-old and 12-year-old. It allowed me to get so much more out of them. The 10-year-old was like, can I go back to the family icon, I want to add more, it was visual and easy to navigate. The 12-year-old was using it on her phone while I was doing it on my laptop. They really engaged with it and it was great to be able to show them the summary of everything they had said at the end. Love it!! I shall spread the word."

(Family Support Worker)

- "One of the young people completed the App every week during the 9 planned 1-1 sessions I had with him without prompting from myself. I found it very useful incorporating it into my sessions and would start with reviewing his scores each time and talking it through before the sessions so I do feel he did benefit from thinking about his emotions and doing this through the App made it easier for me."

(Youth Emotional Support Personal Adviser)

- "I use the MOMO 'My Worker is Visiting' tool as a one off with a child and have never used it more than once with the same child as this works well in the assessment team to hear a child's voice. However now that I think about it I could use this with some of my CIN cases for longer term use. Currently the children I have used it with do not have the App themselves. It is useful as a tool to hear a child's voice. I find that some like to type it up themselves which gives them some ownership and control over the situation and also the question about how they are feeling currently at the beginning of the tool helps me gauge how much I can probe taking into account their feelings. The questions used help to gain information from a child without the use of direct questions, so I find that naturally worries come out. I find that this tool does save time in terms of write ups and is nice to have the child's own words without any worry about misinterpretation when they write it themselves."

(Child Assessment and Intervention Social Worker)

4. Performance data

- 4.1 Through the App, young people can enter their thoughts and views, which are then structured into a 'statement' about their experiences. This is then delivered to their chosen 'trusted adult' as a PDF.
- 4.2 Between February 2018 and October 2019, the App had **487** statements submitted. This was a percentage increase of **507%** over the 18-month period. This meant that West Sussex usage of the App, went from a position of being 67th out of 68 local authorities, to 2nd out of 75 local authorities who currently use the App.

To provide some further comparison data:

- 4.3 From Jan 2018 – December 2018 - **127** statements were submitted. From Jan 2019 – December 2019 – **417** statements were submitted. This represents an increase of **328%** in use during these time frames.
- 4.4 From Jan 2019 – May 2019: **139** statements were submitted. From Jan 2020 – May 2020 – **285** statements were submitted. This represents an increase of **205%** in use during these time frames.

5. Young people's usage of the App

- 5.1. There is considerable potential for increasing usage of the App in conjunction with staff teams adopting it as part of case-working practice. There are currently **386** young people who have accounts on Mind of My Own. 215 accounts submitted **417** statements between the period of January 2019 – December 2019. **218** new young people accounts have been created between January 2020 – September 2020.
- 5.2. A total of **441** statements have been submitted between January 2020 – September 2020. Mind of My Own keeps accounts until they are deleted, and we do not have access to this data in order to delete the accounts when children and young people have finished working with us. Mind of My Own only has access to this data and can delete; (see infographic below related to this information).

6. Staff training and usage of the App

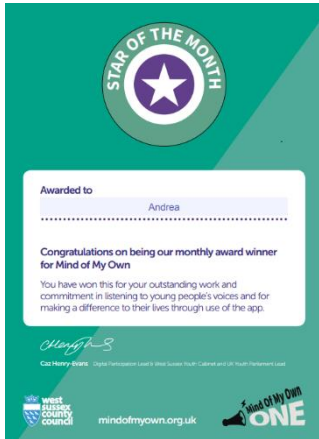
- 6.1. **Over 850** staff have been trained in the use of Mind of My Own between October 2018 and February 2020. Of these staff, 737 staff have a worker's account.
- 6.2. **75** staff have used the App between January – September 2020. There is considerable potential to increase staff engagement with the App, and plans

are being prepared to encourage its wider adoption within the service. A guidance target has been discussed at Senior Management Team where it was agreed that we would aim for a 50% usage increase in staff teams from September 2020 – September 2021. This will be supported through the delivery of training in team meetings and promotion of the App through different networks.

- 6.3. Each month, an infographic is produced by the Voice and Participation Team to highlight the use of the App during that month (and one for the year so far in total). These infographics along with the stats spreadsheets are analysed by the Voice and Participation Team and shared with the Assistant Director of Early Help/Corporate Parenting. It is also shown at during any Steering or Champion group meetings. The latest infographic showing the usage between January and September 2020 is shown below.



- 6.4 In addition, a 'Star of the Month' award is presented to a staff member for their work and commitment in listening to young people's voices through use of the App.



6.5 A document has also been created for staff to help outline the benefits and how to use the system, in an easy to understand format (see below).



What does Mind of My Own App do?

- Makes one-to-one conversations with young people (from 8 to 21) easier.
- Creates statements as PDFs of their views which can be uploaded straight away to the databases you work with online.
- Helps them prepare for meetings, share good news, raise problems or ask for something.
- Facilitates problem solving and saves you and them time.
- A fun and interactive way to work with young people, either together or for them on their own.

How to use it

- Understand it first by signing up to Workers Mind of My Own (see p3).
- Introduce it to your young person when you meet or visit.
- Help them sign up for a young person's account, letting them be in control.
- Use it together to guide your conversation, creating a record of their views.
- Ask them to send their views to you or any other workers they choose.
- Encourage them to use it solo when you're not there.

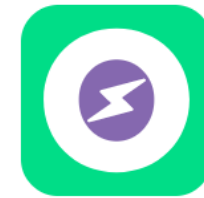
Get your Workers Mind of My Own account

- Go to: workers.mindofmyown.org.uk (Save as a favourite or put a link on your desktop)
- Click 'Sign up', enter your details and wait for your account to be approved by the Digital Participation Lead.
- After approval you'll receive an email - follow its instructions carefully
- Sign in and go to 'Existing profiles'. Select 'Test Profile' and have a practice!
- Create a profile in Workers Mind of My Own for you to use it with them.
- Remember to sign your young people up to their own accounts if you can.

Co-use it with your young person on:

- their tablet, computer or Xbox (best is their tablet).
- foster carer's tablet or computer.
- your tablet, laptop or large screen phone.
- placement's computer.
- school computer.
- any device with internet access.

Young people can sign up on one device then log in again from any other, including their smartphone, as often as they like.



One app: Helps young people to share their views and supports workers to evidence them.





Accessibility

This option can be used during a session with a young person or by the young person



My worker is visiting

Why not help them prepare for an important meeting. Help



Get ready for a meeting

Your young person can update you with some good news,



Share my good news



Prepare for a Child Protection Conference

What if they need some help? Get them to



Sort a problem



Planning for adulthood



Get ready for a foster care review



How did the meeting go?

Why not get feedback from your session together to help shape your



My education



My wellbeing

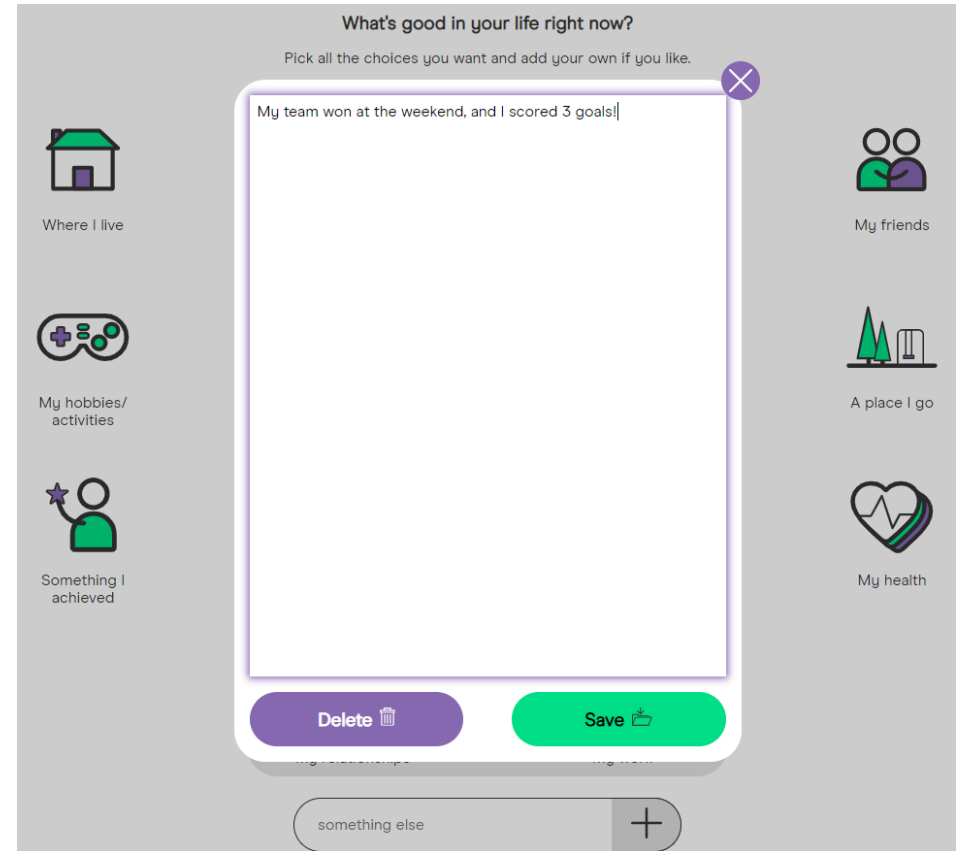
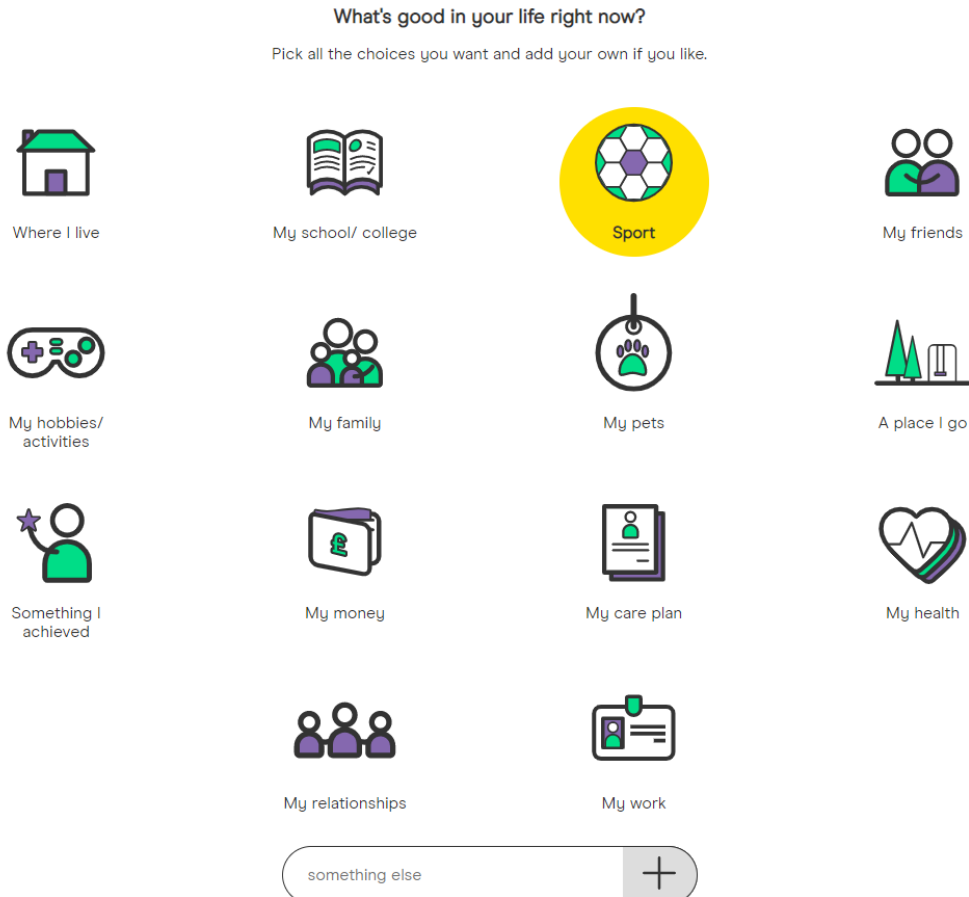
A more in-depth version of My worker is visiting. This one gives you more questions and



Return from missing

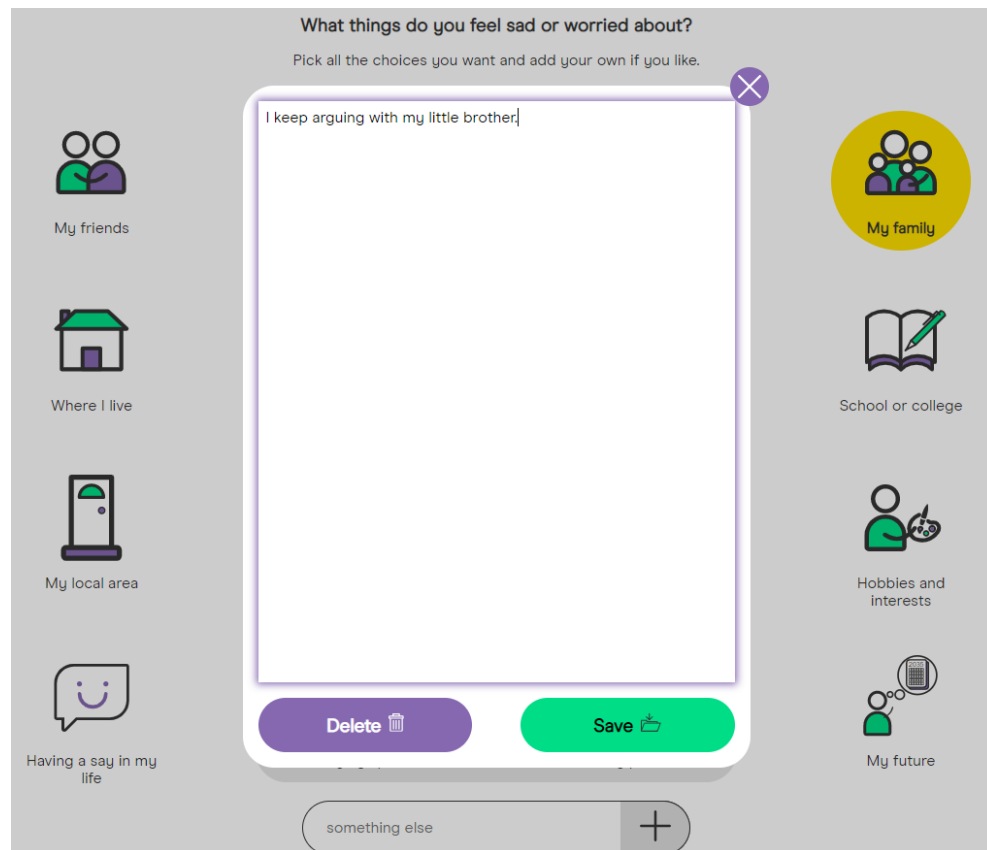
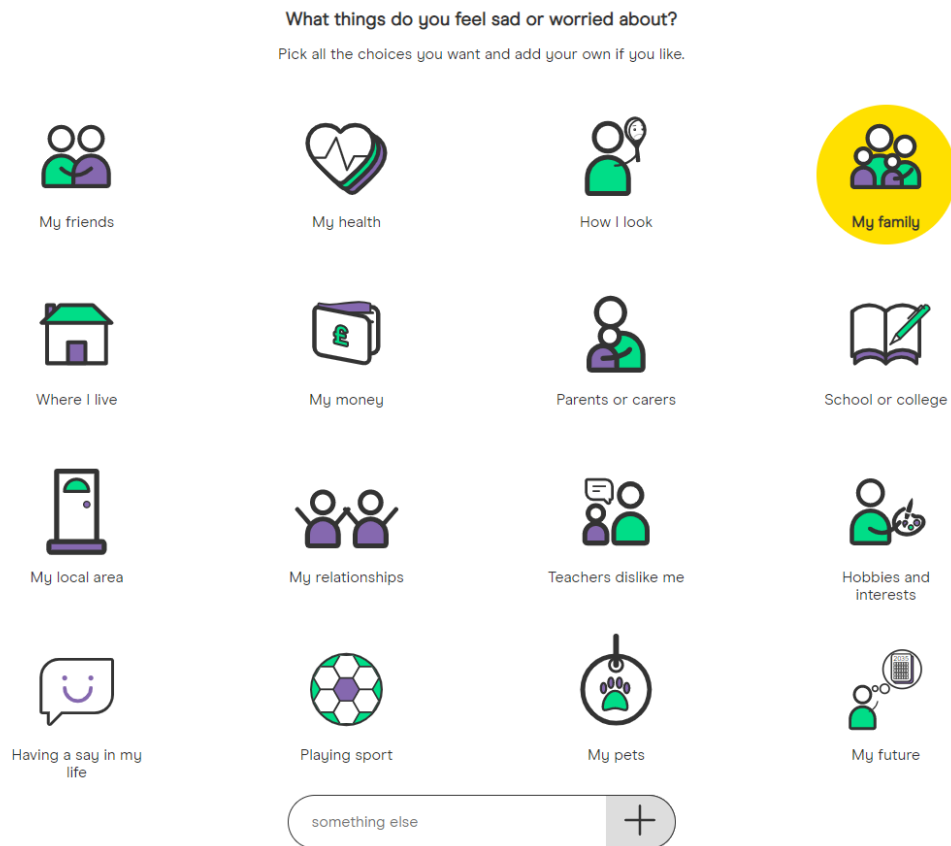
My worker is visiting:

- an example question below that can be done with young people in during a session but also by the young person before they see you, so you can discuss this further.
- Select an option and type in the box using keypad.



My wellbeing:

- an example question below that can give you a more in-depth conversation with your young person and can be done in session but also by the young person before they see you, so you can discuss this further.
- Select an option and type in the box using keypad.



Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

5 November 2020

Report by Director Law and Assurance

Appointment of the Committee's Business Planning Group

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As set out in the County Council Constitution, each Scrutiny Committee must set up a business planning group (BPG) to oversee the Committee's work programme and prioritise issues for consideration by the Committee.
- 1.2 BPGs should have five members, be cross-party (three members from the majority political group on the County Council and two from the minority group(s)) and include the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. Other members of the Committee may be invited to attend individual meetings as appropriate. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee will be the Chairman of the BPG. Membership is reviewed annually. Members should not serve on more than one BPG.
- 1.3 In consultation with the Chairman, the BPG membership is proposed as follows: Cllr Stephen Hillier (Chairman), Cllr Kirsty Lord (Vice Chairman), Cllr Andrew Baldwin, Cllr Brenda Burgess (remaining majority group members), and Chris Oxlade (remaining minority group place).
- 1.4 BPGs meet approximately quarterly, but they also carry out their work outside meetings (e.g. reviewing and discussing issues via e-mail; virtual meetings using teleconferencing facilities).
- 1.5 The Committee is asked to agree the appointment of five members to the Business Planning Group (with the membership as set out in paras 1.2 and 1.3 of this report).

2. Role of Business Planning Group (BPG)

- 2.1 BPG responsibilities include:
 - Overseeing the work programme for the Committee and prioritising issues for consideration by the Committee, including the proposed methodology and time tabling.
 - Agreeing objectives and planned outcomes for agenda items, and any witnesses to be invited and/or any visits or further information required by the Committee prior to its formal scrutiny of an issue.
 - Establishing Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups (TFGs)
 - Monitoring service performance

3. Reporting the BPG's work to the Committee

- 3.1 The Committee's Work Programme will be shared at each Scrutiny Committee meeting. The Committee will be asked to support the outline work programme as recommended by the Business Planning Group and to consider any other matters referred by the BPG.

4. Implications

- 4.1 There are no resource, risk management, social value, Crime and Disorder Act or Human Rights Act implications arising directly from this report.

Tony Kershaw

Executive Director Law and Assurance

Contact: Katherine De La Mora, Senior Advisor, 03302 222535

Background Papers – none



Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The County Council must give at least 28 days' notice of all key decisions to be taken by councillors or officers. The Plan describes these proposals and the month in which the decisions are to be taken over a four-month period. Decisions are categorised according to the [West Sussex Plan](#) priorities of:

- **Best Start in Life** (those concerning children, young people and schools)
- **A Prosperous Place** (the local economy, infrastructure, highways and transport)
- **A Safe, Strong and Sustainable Place** (Fire & Rescue, Environmental and Community services)
- **Independence in Later Life** (services for older people or work with health partners)
- **A Council that Works for the Community** (finances, assets and internal Council services)

The most important decisions will be taken by the Cabinet. In accordance with regulations in response to the current public health emergency, Cabinet meetings will be held virtually with councillors in remote attendance. Public access will be via webcasting and the meetings will be available to watch online via our [webcasting website](#). The [schedule of monthly Cabinet meetings](#) is available on the website. The Forward Plan is updated regularly and key decisions can be taken on any day in the month if they are not taken at Cabinet meetings. The [Plan](#) is available on the. [Published decisions](#) are also available via the website.

A key decision is one which:

- Involves expenditure or savings of £500,000 or more (except treasury management); and/or
- Will have a significant effect on communities in two or more electoral divisions in terms of how services are provided.

The following information is provided for each entry in the Forward Plan:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Decision | A summary of the proposal. |
| Decision By | Who will take the decision - if the Cabinet, it will be taken at a Cabinet meeting in public. |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Which of the five priorities in the West Sussex Plan the proposal affects. |
| Date added | The date the proposed decision was added to the Forward Plan. |
| Month | The decision will be taken on any working day in the month stated. If a Cabinet decision, it will be taken at the Cabinet meeting scheduled in that month. |
| Consultation/ Representations | How views and representations about the proposal will be considered or the proposal scrutinised, including dates of Scrutiny Committee meetings. |
| Background Documents | The documents containing more information about the proposal and how to obtain them (via links on the website version of the Forward Plan). Hard copies are available on request from the decision contact. |
| Author | The contact details of the decision report author |
| Contact | Who in Democratic Services you can contact about the entry |

Finance, assets, performance and risk management

Each month the Cabinet Member for Finance reviews the Council's budget position and may take adjustment decisions. A similar monthly review of Council property and assets is carried out and may lead to decisions about them. These are noted in the Forward Plan as 'rolling decisions'.

Each month the Cabinet will consider the Council's performance against its planned outcomes and in connection with a register of corporate risk. Areas of particular significance may be considered at the scheduled Cabinet meetings.

Significant proposals for the management of the Council's budget and spending plans will be dealt with at a scheduled Cabinet meeting and shown in the Plan as strategic budget options.

For questions contact Helena Cox on 033 022 22533, email helena.cox@westsussex.gov.uk.

Published: 22 October 2020

Forward Plan Summary

Summary of all forthcoming executive decisions in West Sussex Plan priority order

| Decision Maker | Subject Matter | Date |
|--|---|---------------|
| Cabinet Member for Education and Skills | Allocation of Section 106 Funding towards Education Infrastructure Capital Projects and Design Fees | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Education and Skills | Parklands Primary School, Chichester - Funding for remedial works programme | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Education and Skills | Phase 2 Special Support Centre Programme - Allocation of Design Fees | October 2020 |
| Director of Property and Assets | Award of contract for construction of new school hall at Thorney Island Primary School | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Education and Skills | Slinfold CE Primary School - Funding for Replacement of Modular Teaching Accommodation | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Education and Skills | The re-designation of Post 16 provision at Oak Grove College, Worthing | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Children and Young People | Children Looked After and Care Leavers' Strategy 2020-2024 | October 2020 |
| Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning | Children's Trust Phase 2 Procurement | October 2020 |
| Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning | Extension of Dynamic Purchasing System for 16+ services | October 2020 |
| Director of Property and Assets | Award of contract for installation of Modular Teaching Block at Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Special School, Horsham | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Education and Skills | Replacement All Weather Pitch at Tanbridge House School, Horsham | November 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Education and Skills | Provision of an All Weather Pitch at The Forest School, Horsham | November 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Education and Skills | Procurement of a Dynamic Purchasing System for Independent Alternative Provision for children with SEND | November 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Education and Skills | Expansion of Palatine Primary School, Worthing | December 2020 |
| Executive Director Place Services | Award of Contract: Crawley Growth Programme Eastern Gateway Scheme | October 2020 |
| Executive Director Place Services | Award of Contract: Crawley Growth Programme Manor Royal Scheme | October 2020 |
| Executive Director Place Services | Award of Contract: Enabling Works Contract, Horsham Enterprise Park | October 2020 |
| Executive Director Place Services | Award of Contract Partial Demolition Crawley County Buildings | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure | Emergency Active Travel Fund (tranche 2) | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure | Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy and Policy | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure | Review of the Integrated Parking Strategy | October 2020 |

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| Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure | Bus Gate Enforcement | October 2020 |
| Executive Director Place Services | Endorsement Design Fees Burgess Hill Stations and Western Gateway Improvements | October 2020 |
| Director of Highways, Transport and Planning | Award of Highways Improvement Contracts, Lots 4, 5 & 6 | December 2020 |
| Director of Highways, Transport and Planning | Contract award: A24 Robin Hood Roundabout Improvement | February 2021 |
| Interim Executive Director Adults and Health | New model of delivery for Community Mental Health social work for adults in West Sussex | October 2020 |
| Director of Environment and Public Protection | Electric Vehicle Charging: Contract Award | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Environment | Proposed Modifications to the Soft Sand Review of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources | Procurement of an Occupational Health Contract | November 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Environment | West Sussex Tree Plan | November 2020 |
| Interim Executive Director Adults and Health | Supported Living Contracts Extension | November 2020 |
| Interim Executive Director Adults and Health | Extension of contracts for the provision of Specialist Health Services for people with learning disabilities and autism in West Sussex | December 2020 |
| Interim Executive Director Adults and Health | Care and Support at Home Framework Extension | October 2020 |
| Interim Executive Director Adults and Health | Financial Support to the Care Sector | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Adults and Health | Residential Care and Support Services Block Contracts Procurement | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Adults and Health | Procurement of Public Health Social Support Services for Older People | October 2020 |
| Interim Executive Director Adults and Health | Award of Block Contracts for Residential Care and Support Services | November 2020 |
| Interim Executive Director Adults and Health | Health and Social Care Seasonal Pressures - Contract Award | November 2020 |
| Interim Executive Director Adults and Health | Award of Extra Care Housing Contracts | November 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Finance, Leader | Total Performance Monitor (Rolling Entry) | Between April 2020 and March 2021 |
| Cabinet Member for Finance | Property Review (Rolling Entry) | Between April 2020 and March 2021 |

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| Cabinet Member for Finance | Endorsement: Council Building Accessibility Improvements | October 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources | Procurement: Construction Framework Arrangement | October 2020 |
| Director of Finance and Support Services | Award: Agency Workers Recruitment Contract | November 2020 |
| Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources | Procurement: Concession Contract SmartHubs Work Package 8 | November 2020 |
| Cabinet | Endorsement: West Sussex County Council Economy Reset Plan 2020-2024 | November 2020 |
| Cabinet | West Sussex Plan Re-set | November 2020 |

Best Start in Life

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

| Allocation of Section 106 Funding towards Education Infrastructure Capital Projects and Design Fees | |
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| <p>Developer contributions towards education provision are secured by means of conditions attached to planning permissions under Section 106 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Contributions are sought by the Education and Skills School Organisation and Development Team and collected either direct by the County Council or, in some cases, by the District or Borough Council on the County Council's behalf.</p> <p>The contributions are required to mitigate the impacts of development and/or make the development acceptable in planning terms. When secured, the funding usually has a 10 year 'life' in which funds should be spent, in accordance with the criteria in the Section 106 agreement.</p> <p>Following a detailed review of Section 106 funds received for Education the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will be asked to approve the allocation of Section 106 funds to deliver a number of Education capital projects across the County.</p> | |
| Decision by | Cllr N Jupp - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 22 June 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | <p>Schools</p> <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills via the author or officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.</p> |
| Background Documents (via website) | None |
| Author | Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

| Parklands Primary School, Chichester - Funding for remedial works programme | |
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| <p>Following the completion in 2018 of the expansion at Parklands Primary School in Chichester to create a 2 form entry (2FE) school a range of defects have been identified within the new school building which require addressing.</p> | |

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| The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will be asked to approve the allocation of capital funding from the Basic Need Capital Programme for the remedial works required at Parklands Primary School. | |
| Decision by | Cllr N Jupp - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 11 June 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | Legal Services Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken |
| Background Documents (via website) | None |
| Author | Philippa Hind Tel: 033 022 23041 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

| Phase 2 Special Support Centre Programme - Allocation of Design Fees | |
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| <p>There is a need to reduce the number of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) moving from maintained schools and academies into costly out of county education provision. Increasing provision for children and young people with SEND through the creation of additional places in Specialist Support Centres that are attached to mainstream schools and academies will assist with the aim of enabling children to attend school locally.</p> <p>In December 2019 Cabinet approved the proposal to develop phase two of the project for opening additional Special Support Centres in accordance with capital governance processes (decision reference CAB03(19/20)). Since that approval feasibility studies have been undertaken for school sites identified within the Phase 2 Special Support Centre Programme.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will be asked to approve the allocation of capital funds to enable design work to progress for the prioritised projects following the completion of feasibility studies.</p> | |
| Decision by | Cllr N Jupp - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 1 July 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |

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| Consultation/ Representations | Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills via the author or officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken. |
| Background Documents (via website) | None |
| Author | Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Director of Property and Assets

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| Award of contract for construction of new school hall at Thorney Island Primary School | |
| <p>The County Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for all children who need a place. Over recent years there has been an increase in pupil numbers at Thorney Island Primary School and an enlarged school hall is now required to provide sufficient and suitable accommodation for the additional children.</p> <p>In June 2020 the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approved the allocation of capital funding from the Basic Need Capital Programme to enable the project to proceed and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Assets to award the contract for the works (Decision reference ES01 (20/21)).</p> <p>Following receipt of this approval from the Cabinet Member, the Director of Property and Assets will be asked to award the construction contract to deliver the enlarged school hall.</p> | |
| Decision by | Andrew Edwards - Director of Property and Assets |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 27 April 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | <p>School</p> <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Director of Property and Assets via the author or officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.</p> |
| Background Documents (via website) | Cabinet Member Decision Report ES01 (20/21) |
| Author | Liam Hayward Tel: 033 022 22002 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

| Slinfold CE Primary School - Funding for Replacement of Modular Teaching Accommodation | |
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| <p>The County Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient primary and secondary school places for all children who need a place. Slinfold CE Primary School is a 5 class Primary School with a broad range of buildings including a double modular unit which was installed on the site in excess of 30 years ago. The modular unit has significant suitability issues and requires replacement with new teaching accommodation that meets current required standards for construction.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will be asked to approve the allocation of capital funding from Section 106 contributions and a procurement exercise to undertake a project to replace the modular classrooms with new purpose built classrooms.</p> | |
| Decision by | Cllr N Jupp - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 8 July 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | <p>School Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources</p> <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.</p> |
| Background Documents (via website) | None |
| Author | Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

| The re-designation of Post 16 provision at Oak Grove College, Worthing | |
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| <p>Oak Grove is a special college in Worthing that offers provision for students with learning difficulties from Years 7-14.</p> <p>One of the aims of the County Council’s Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2024 is to support the inclusion of all children and young people with SEND to participate in local mainstream schools and educational settings. Following assessment of options for post-16 provision for children with SEND it is recognised that many of the pupils with less complex needs who currently undertake their post-16 studies at Oak Grove could be successfully educated within mainstream Further Education Colleges, thereby enabling Oak Grove College to focus provision for students with more complex needs.</p> | |

A public consultation on the proposal that post-16 provision at Oak Grove is redesignated to become more specialist and cater for pupils with complex needs including; Complex Autistic Spectrum Condition, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties and Severe Learning Difficulties will be undertaken during the autumn term.

Following assessment of the outcome of the consultation the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will be asked to consider whether to proceed in approving the redesignation of post-16 provision at Oak Grove College to become more specialist focussing on pupils with complex needs with effect from September 2021.

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| Decision by | Cllr N Jupp - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 8 July 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | Schools Governing Bodies Parents and Carers Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken. |
| Background Documents (via website) | None |
| Author | Oliver Lane-Smith Tel: 033 022 23105 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Children Looked After and Care Leavers' Strategy 2020-2024

The current Children Looked After and Care Leaver's Strategy (2018-21) is being updated following the Ofsted inspection of 2019 and the appointment of a Commissioner to work with West Sussex County Council

The update is necessary to ensure a strategic approach and evidence our commitment to ensuring that children who are looked after by the authority are happy, healthy, and safe and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

The proposed new strategy is the product of consultation with the Children in Care Council, Corporate Parenting Panel and partners. It will have an annually updated action plan to enable the service to measure delivery against the objectives outlined in the strategy and ensure resources are targeted so as to improve the quality of life for children and young people in the care of the local authority.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People is asked to support the adoption of the Children Looked After and Care Leavers' Strategy 2020-24.

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| Decision by | Cllr Russell - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People |
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| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 2 March 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | <p>Corporate Parenting Panel - 12 March 2020, 25 June 2020 Children in Care Council Health Education Local Safeguarding Partnership Staff and Young People living in County Council Children's Homes</p> <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People via the author or officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.</p> |
| Background Documents (via website) | Cabinet Member Decision CYP04 (17/18) |
| Author | Louise Warren Tel: 033 022 24653 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning

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| Children's Trust Phase 2 Procurement | |
| <p>In order to meet the requirements of the Direction made by the Secretary of State, Department for Education (DfE) on 17th December 2019, the County Council is taking steps for a range of its Children's Services to be delivered through an alternative delivery model (referred to as a Children's Trust) as set out in the agreed Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the DfE (due to be agreed during October 2020).</p> <p>The Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning will be asked to approve the commencement of a procurement process to appoint a contractor to manage the process of establishing the West Sussex Children's Trust and the transfer of the agreed services to that Trust (as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding).</p> | |
| Decision by | Lucy Butler - Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 18 March 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | Representations concerning this decision should be made to the Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning via the |

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| | officer contact by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken. |
| Background Documents (via website) | None |
| Author | Vince Clark Tel: 07402 338396 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning

| Extension of Dynamic Purchasing System for 16+ services | |
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| <p>In April 2016, the Cabinet Member for Children - Start of Life approved the commencement of a procurement process for providing accommodation for those young people aged 16+ who are looked after (decision reference CH01(16/17)). The services offer a leaving care/independent living service in preparation for living independently.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member delegated authority to the Executive Director to let the contract. The procurement resulted in the establishment of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to enable the purchase of the accommodation services. The DPS opened in April 2017 and ran for an initial term of 3 years to March 2020. The contract allows for an extension period of two years and it is proposed to exercise this option.</p> <p>New applicants are currently waiting to join the DPS, which would increase the supply of services available to young people. Extending the DPS will also allow the Service time to consider options for recommissioning the services, including redesigning the service model.</p> <p>The Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning will be asked to reopen the DPS portal and to extend it for 2 years from the point of closure, to 31st March 2022.</p> | |
| Decision by | Lucy Butler - Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 28 September 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | <p>Procurement Legal Finance</p> <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.</p> |
| Background Documents | Original Cabinet Member Decision Report CH01(16/17) |

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| (via website) | |
| Author | Shelly Dichello Tel: 033 022 24131 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Director of Property and Assets

Award of contract for installation of Modular Teaching Block at Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Special School, Horsham

Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School (QEII School) in Horsham caters for a wide range of Special Educational Needs, for children aged between 2 and 19 with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or complex needs.

Over recent years additional pupils have been accommodated by the school but without the supporting investment in accommodation. Pupil numbers have increased from 85 in 2017 to 105 in 2019.

In July 2020 the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approved the allocation of capital funding from the Basic Need Capital Programme to expand the school and delegated authority to the Director of Property and Assets to award the contract for the works (Decision reference [ES02 \(20/21\)](#)). The building project will provide a three class modular teaching block with associated group room, hygiene provision, storage and external works.

The Director of Property and Assets will be asked to approve the award of contract for the expansion works at QEII school.

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| Decision by | Andrew Edwards - Director of Property and Assets |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 3 August 2020 |
| Month | October 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | School Parents and local residents Parish and District Councils Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Director of Property and Assets via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken. |
| Background Documents (via website) | Decision Report ES02 (20/21) |
| Author | Liam Hayward Tel: 033 022 22002 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

| Replacement All Weather Pitch at Tanbridge House School, Horsham | |
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| <p>As part of the secondary school curriculum, Physical Education is a core subject and suitable provision is required to enable a wide range of sport to be offered and ensure children are given the Best Start in Life.</p> <p>Tanbridge House School has an All Weather Pitch facility which is in a deteriorating condition and is now at the end of its life. The pitch requires replacement to ensure continued provision for sport.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will be asked to approve the allocation of capital funding, from Section 106 contributions, to undertake a project to replace the All Weather Pitch at Tanbridge House School, thereby ensuring ongoing sports provision to meet the needs of the secondary school curriculum.</p> | |
| Decision by | Cllr N Jupp - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 3 August 2020 |
| Month | November 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | <p>School Parents and local residents Parish and District Councils</p> <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken</p> |
| Background Documents (via website) | |
| Author | Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

| Provision of an All Weather Pitch at The Forest School, Horsham | |
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| <p>As part of the secondary school curriculum, Physical Education is a core subject and suitable provision is required to enable a wide range of sport to be offered and ensure children are given the Best Start in Life.</p> <p>The Forest School does not currently have an All Weather Pitch (AWP) facility. Following the Cabinet Member Decision in July 2020 (Decision reference ES02(20/21)) that approved the siting of additional accommodation for QEII School on some of the existing playing field at The Forest School installation of an AWP is now required to mitigate the impact.</p> | |

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| <p>The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will be asked to approve the allocation of capital funding from Section 106 contributions to undertake a project to provide an All Weather Pitch at The Forest School thereby ensuring ongoing sports provision to meet the needs of the secondary school curriculum.</p> | |
| Decision by | Cllr N Jupp - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills |
| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 3 August 2020 |
| Month | November 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | <p>School Parents and local residents Parish and District Councils</p> <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken.</p> |
| Background Documents (via website) | Cabinet Member Decision ES02 (20/21) |
| Author | Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

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|---|---|
| <p>Procurement of a Dynamic Purchasing System for Independent Alternative Provision for children with SEND</p> | |
| <p>The County Council has a statutory obligation to provide suitable education for all pupils including those who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; this is termed Alternative Provision</p> <p>Currently the need for Alternative Provision is predominately for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and is commissioned on a case by case basis with Individual Placement Agreements (IPAs) ensuring that the provision meets the needs of the child/young person for each placement.</p> <p>Whilst the County Council provides some of these services, the demand is such that a significant amount of provision has to be purchased from the external market and evaluation shows this is a trend expected to continue. In order to meet this demand, it is proposed to set up a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to enable the efficient sourcing of Independent Alternative Provision services from qualified suppliers.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will be asked to approve the commencement of a procurement to set up a DPS to enable the purchase of Independent Alternative Provision services for children with SEND.</p> | |
| Decision by | Cllr N Jupp - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills |

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| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in Life |
| Date added | 16 October 2020 |
| Month | November 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | <p>Consultation with the market – current and potential providers Legal Finance Procurement</p> <p>Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, via the officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken</p> |
| Background Documents (via website) | None |
| Author | Helen Johns Tel: 07715 616560 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

| Expansion of Palatine Primary School, Worthing | |
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| <p>The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2024 aims to provide high quality local education provision for children and young people with SEND and optimise value for money from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. As part of the development of the SEND Strategy, the County Council has identified an increased demand for extra provision in Special Schools across West Sussex to meet increasing needs. There is a requirement to both increase places at certain special schools and to ensure existing school accommodation meets the needs of the pupils on roll.</p> <p>Following a review of current numbers on roll, projected needs and the existing accommodation at Palatine Primary School in Worthing the need for additional accommodation has been identified, to meet a projected increase in pupils from 153 to 178. The school caters for a wide-range of Special Educational Needs and Disability for pupils aged between 4 and 11, including children with moderate and severe learning difficulties, complex social and communication difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties.</p> <p>A proposed project to deliver an increase in capacity would enable the school to offer suitable accommodation and support spaces for 178 pupils.</p> <p>The feasibility work for the project to accommodate the pupils has been completed. Following detailed design and associated cost estimates the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will be asked to approve the allocation of the funds required to enable the project to proceed.</p> | |
| Decision by | Cllr N Jupp - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills |

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| West Sussex Plan priority | Best Start in LIfe |
| Date added | 1 April 2020 |
| Month | December 2020 |
| Consultation/ Representations | School, parents and local residents Parish and Borough Councils Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources Representations concerning this proposed decision can be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills via the author or officer contact, by the beginning of the month in which the decision is due to be taken |
| Background Documents (via website) | None |
| Author | Leigh Hunnikin Tel: 033 022 23051 |
| Contact | Wendy Saunders Tel: 033 022 22553 |

Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme June 2020 – March 2021

| Topic/Issue | Purpose of scrutinising this issue & Source | Timing |
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| CYPSSC – September 2020 – March 2021 | | |
| Children First Improvement Programme | Performance monitoring - To seek assurance and evidence that appropriate progress is being made on the children first improvement journey and outcomes are improving for children and families. Focus: To include detail on preparation/outcome of OFSTED monitoring visit and detail on the stability of Social Care workforce (including plans to mitigate any impact of the cessation of the current recruitment and retention offer), and how this is impacting on the outcomes for children and families. There will also be details of the transformation programme. | 24 September 2020 |
| Report from Education and Skills Annual Report TFG | Performance monitoring - To review the output of the Education and Skills Annual Report TFG of July 2020 to monitor educational attainment (see below). | 24 September 2020 |
| Children First Improvement Programme | Performance monitoring - To seek assurance and evidence that appropriate progress is being made on the children first improvement Journey and outcomes are improving for children and families. Focus: | 5 November 2020 |
| Impact of Covid-19 on Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People. | Service Improvement - Assessing the impact of school/college closures on children and young people; measures to support the return to education and preparedness for any future emergencies. External Witnesses to be invited (DfE/RSC, School Governors etc) | 5 November 2020 |
| Children First Improvement Programme | Performance monitoring - To seek assurance and evidence that appropriate progress is being made on the children first improvement Journey and outcomes are improving for children and families. Focus: tbc | 7 January 2021 |

| Topic/Issue | Purpose of scrutinising this issue & Source | Timing |
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| SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and Inclusion Strategy | Performance Monitoring - To review the effectiveness of the strategy after its first year of implementation, how objectives are being met and any recommendations/areas for improvement/focus. To also include detail on implications for Home to School transport. This could also include the appropriateness of placements for SEND children (as raised by Committee on 4 March) | 7 January 2021 |
| Fostering Service Review | Policy development – To review the proposals on the fostering service review (foster carer remuneration, recruitment and retention)- implementation expected in Spring 2021. | 7 January 2021 |
| Support for School Governors | Raised at CYPSSC on 14 April & 9 January- to identify any areas of improvement for the support, training and guidance provided to school governors and to consider recruitment and retention issues. | 7 January 2021 |
| Children First Improvement Programme | Performance monitoring - To seek assurance and evidence that appropriate progress is being made on the children first improvement Journey and outcomes are improving for children and families. Focus: TBC | 4 March 2021 |
| CYPSSC –Confirmed items for timetabling | | |
| Adoption of the Children First Strategic Approach | Pre-decision scrutiny – (cross-cutting with PFSC) - to review the proposed Children’s First Strategic Approach. Work is being progressed through the newly created Children Sub Group that reports to HWB. Scrutiny to be determined following work of the group. | TBC |
| Early Help Redesign | Pre-decision scrutiny – to assess the draft proposals for the redesign of early help. NB – further work being carried out in light of Covid-19 and reset and reboot proposals. Therefore, a new timeline is being established. | TBC |
| Regional Adoption Agency | Service Improvement - To assess the impact of the Regional Adoption Agency (requested by BPG in | April/May 2021 |

| Topic/Issue | Purpose of scrutinising this issue & Source | Timing |
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| | February 2020 & SC in 2019) and scrutinise its first year of operation (established April 2020). | |
| Children Looked After Strategy | Service improvement/Pre decision scrutiny- To review the Draft CLA Strategy. To be shared virtually with the Committee for comment on the content prior to its adoption. Was reviewed by Corporate Parenting Panel on 25 June 2020. | Complete – was shared virtually with Committee members in September. |
| High Cost Residential Placements and Residential Homes | Service Improvement – To review plans for post-16 residential placements and the re-opening of some children’s residential homes. (requested by BPG in February 2020). | TBC |
| Visits to residential homes | To form part of a training day for CYPSSC members (originally scheduled for June 2020). Will be linked with above agenda item. | TBC |
| Enquiry Days | | |
| Sussex Wide Children and Young People Emotional Health and Wellbeing Report | Performance Monitoring - To review emotional health and wellbeing support for children and young people, jointly with the HASC and the West Sussex Youth Cabinet. (following the publication of the Sussex Wide Children and Young People Emotional Health and Wellbeing Report). | February 2021 |
| Task & Finish Groups | | |
| Education and Skills Annual Report | Performance Monitoring - To review the performance of West Sussex Children in academic year 2019-20 and progress towards achievement against targets in the WS Plan. The TFG will be invited to put forward any recommendations to the Cabinet Member and identify any priorities for further scrutiny. | Complete – met 8 July 2020 |
| Home to School Transport | Performance Monitoring - Suggested by PFSC as a cross cutting TFG to explore the service provided and contract. Scoping meeting took place on 1 October 2020. Agreed that a TFG is not required at this stage and the impact on Home to School Transport will be included in the SEND Strategy item at Committee on 7 January 2021. | Complete |

| Topic/Issue | Purpose of scrutinising this issue & Source | Timing |
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| Proposed Scope of Services for a Children's Trust | Pre-decision scrutiny. A one off TFG meeting on 9 October to review the proposals ahead of the decision being taken by Cabinet on 20 October. | Complete – met 9 October 2020 |
| Business Planning Group – items for BPG to consider for Scrutiny (including those raised by Committee Members under 'Items for Future Scrutiny'). | | |
| Post-16 and NEETS | Performance Monitoring - To focus on the impact on young people on the changes to the services following the cessation of ECF funding in December 2020. | Spring 2021 |
| IT in Children's Social Care | Raised at CYPSSC on 4 March. To assess and review if the IT support and provision available for Social Workers is sufficient and robust. | A briefing note to be circulated to the Committee (no agenda item required). |
| Allocation of funding of SEND provision in early years. | Raised at Committee in January 2020. Detail to be explored at future BPG. | TBC |
| Elective Home Education | Performance Monitoring - Discussed at BPG in March 2020 – agreed to await government feedback/guidance on EHE before considering if further scrutiny is required. | TBC |
| Attainment Gap for disadvantaged Children and Children Looked After | Performance Monitoring – to understand reasons for attainment gap and explore how this can be reduced, including Early Years. To include monitoring progress of disadvantaged children and Children Looked After. BPG to review and identify any areas for future scrutiny. | November 2020 |
| School Federations | Performance Monitoring – BPG to review how this is proceeding with schools and how it is assisting with the delivery of the school effectiveness strategy. BPG to review and identify any areas for future scrutiny | TBC |
| Business Planning Group – to monitor | | |

| Topic/Issue | Purpose of scrutinising this issue & Source | Timing |
|--|--|---|
| Woodlands Meed | BPG to monitor progress and identify any areas for scrutiny as the project progresses | Ongoing |
| Adult Community Learning Curriculum | To review the current curriculum and performance and consider any areas for future scrutiny | November 2020 |
| Total Performance Monitor | To review the latest performance monitor at each BPG and consider any areas that require scrutiny. | At each meeting |
| Work Programme Planning | To consider updates from the services and stakeholders and consider whether any issues should be subject to formal scrutiny by CYPSSC (when assessed against the BPG checklist). | At each meeting |
| Contract Monitoring | The BPG agreed to look at contract monitoring twice a year and identify any areas that may require further scrutiny. | Twice a year |
| Children and Young People Services Training (as requested by Committee) | | |
| Children's Safeguarding Partnership (focus on neglect) | Suggested as a full member day to inform members of the work of the Safeguarding Partnership with a focus on neglect (requested by CYPSSC 4 March 2020). | Virtual Member Day scheduled for 17 November 2020. |
| Exclusions and Alternative Provision | Suggested as a Member Day to inform members of the processes, roles and responsibilities, voice of child, quality assurance and members role with local residents requesting assistance. | Member day being explored with Member Development Group |

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