

11 January 2021

Cllr Joy Dennis  
**Chairman of Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee**

Dear Joy,

**Request from Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee**

Many thanks for your letter dated 15 December and for highlighting areas for consideration for scrutiny by the Children and Young Peoples' Scrutiny Committee. I am pleased to be able to provide you with the following update:

In regards to the increase in numbers of Children Looked After and budget pressures, I can confirm that this is something that had been raised by members of the Committee and was discussed at our Business Planning Group meeting on 25 November. Members received a useful update on the work that is being done by the service, including the development of the Family Safeguarding Model which is expected to target and reduce the number of children coming into care, how the rise was in line with national trends and how the budget for the forthcoming year would take into account the rising trend. With the ongoing pandemic, the Committee recognises the importance of continuing to monitor the impact this has on the children looked after numbers, particularly the number of children leaving care. The Committee will carry this out both through its monitoring of the Total Performance Monitor by the Business Planning Group, and also through the Children First Improvement update at each Committee meeting, where members have requested detail on the Children Looked After figures to be included with each report.

The Committee's Business Planning Group has also discussed the budget pressures in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant and its link to the number of children with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs). The Committee is planning to hold an inquiry session on Inclusion at its meeting on 10 March 2021, and this will form part of that session.

I thank your Committee for highlighting these important issues and hope that the above is a useful update in terms of how they are being taken forward by the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Stephen Hillier  
Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee