



Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on: **Tuesday 27 June 2023 at 6.00 p.m.**

Meeting at: Walsall Council House.

Public access to meeting via: [Walsall Council Webcasting Portal](#)

MEMBERSHIP:

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Chair: | Councillor. Hicken |
| Vice Chair: | Councillor. Jukes |
| | Councillor. Garcha |
| | Councillor. Harrison |
| | Councillor. Horton |
| | Councillor. Latham |
| | Councillor. Nasreen |
| | Councillor. Rattigan |
| | Councillor C. Statham |
| | Councillor Whitehouse |
| | Vacancy |

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor S. Elson.

Note: Walsall Council encourages the public to exercise their right to attend meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees. Agendas and reports are available for inspection from the Council's Democratic Services Team at the Council House, Walsall (Telephone 01922 654767) or on our website www.walsall.gov.uk.

AGENDA

| | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1. | Apologies To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee. | |
| 2. | Substitutions To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting. | |
| 3. | Declarations of interest and party whip To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda. | |
| 4. | Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda (if applicable). | |
| 5. | Minutes of the previous meeting To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting that took place on 18 April 2023. | <u>Enclosed</u> |
| <u>Scrutiny</u> | | |
| 6. | Areas of focus 2023/24 For the Committee to consider and agree its areas of focus for the municipal year 2023-24. This will include receiving a presentation on services within the remit of the committee including the Portfolio Holder priorities for the forthcoming year. | <u>Enclosed</u> |
| <u>Overview</u> | | |
| 7. | Date of next meeting To note that the date of the next meeting will be 26 September 2023. | |

The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

| Subject | Prescribed description |
|---|--|
| Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation | Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. |
| Sponsorship | <p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p> |
| Contracts | <p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p> |
| Land | Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority. |
| Licences | Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer. |
| Corporate tenancies | <p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p> |
| Securities | <p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p> |

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Conference Room 2, Walsall Council House

Tuesday 18 April 2023 at 6.00 p.m.

Committee Members Present

Councillor A. Hicken (Chair)
Councillor T. Jukes (Vice-Chair)
Councillor S. Cheema
Councillor P. Kaur
Councillor L. Harrison
Councillor F. Mazhar
Councillor L. Rattigan
Councillor C. Statham
Councillor V. Waters

Portfolio Holder

Councillor S. Elson - Children's Services

Officers Present

Colleen Male - Director (Childrens Social Work)
Isabelle Vanderheeren - Director (Early Help)
Zoe Morgan - Head of Service (Support and Protection)
Katie Storer-Young - Young Principal Exploitation Reduction Officer
Nikki Gough - Democratic Services Officer

Partners Present

Sally Hodges - Independent Safeguarding Chair (Walsall
Safeguarding Partnership)
Helen Matthews - CEO (Street Teams)
Ruth Rackshaw - Operations Manager (Street Teams)
Sara Roach - Violence Reduction Unit
Phil Dolby - Chief Superintendent West Midlands Police
Alison Jones - Designated Nurse (Walsall ICB)

54/22 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Nasreen, Councillor Horton and Councillor Garcha.

55/22 Substitutions

There were no substitutions.

56/22 Declarations of interest and party whip

There were no declarations and no party whip of interest.

57/22 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to be considered in private session.

58/22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2023 were considered by the committee.

Resolved

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 March 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

59/22 Children at Risk of Exploitation

The Head of Service introduced the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The report provided an update in respect of Walsall's arrangements and work completed to support Children and Young People that may have been at risk of exploitation in the last 12 months. The Committee was reassured that the issue of child exploitation was a significant focus for the Council, Local Safeguarding Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership.

A description of Child Exploitation and the ways in which children could be exploited was provided to Members. The Committee was provided with details of the exploitation strategy and operation response – this included a 'hub approach' which was a virtual multi agency approach to identifying exploitation. Alongside this community programmes of work were carried out by the partnership.

The 12 month exploitation pilot was described and Members were informed that it focused on delivering bespoke packages of support to individual children that were identified and selected through the exploitation triage. The team consisted of social workers, youth workers and linked in with key partners such as health, police, education and the youth justice team. This team had case holding responsibility for up to 20 young people deemed as medium risk of exploitation. A final evaluation report of the pilot will be completed and shared across the partnership in September 2023.

In response to a series of questions from Members, the Chief Superintendent (West Midlands Police) explained that a new team had been created to enable a higher level of surveillance – with the next phase being to improve arrests and conviction rates of adult perpetrators. Members were informed that there were good regional arrangements to tackle county lines and the area had successes in relation to this. Wherever possible intelligence was shared (within legislation).

Following a question from a Member, the Principle Exploitation Officer explained that intelligence in relation to exploitation came from schools, neighbours, and community

figures. It was clarified that return home interviews still took place, however some young people refused to participate.

The Designated Nurse (Walsall ICB) confirmed that there was not a health representative within the daily exploitation triage meeting, and that this was being considered as a priority. There was a mental health nurse (DWMHT) operating across the Black Country, and as an interim measure, MASH nurses were being asked to contribute. The Committee were informed of a trial where by the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust were providing a nurse to the hub one day a week.

Further detail was provided on funding for the 'is this ok?' campaign which provided young people with a digital safe space to share exploitation concerns. Benchmarking had taken place to consider how other Violence Reduction Units were delivering this, and this would be reported back to the Partnership Board for further consideration.

A Member questioned the number of young people that went missing, asked if there were any patterns identified and how young people who repeatedly went missing were supported. The Head of Service informed Members that Children's Services were notified each time a child went missing, noting that 'Looked After Children' were one vulnerable cohort who went missing frequently. Support was provided from the exploitation team who had links with schools – work was done to understand the reason why and provide a package of support. It was stressed that not all missing children were exploited. In response to challenge from Members the Principal Exploitation Officer confirmed that the virtual school shared information with schools as part of the triage process. Assurance was provided that parents were educated on digital platforms available to children and young people.

The Chief Executive of Street Teams described free sessions offered to young people and parents within schools, and noted that the team were developing their digital response. A discussion was held around whether it could be compulsory for schools to provide such training. The Chief Superintendent (West Midlands Police) stated that good partnerships were held with schools, stating that there were four dedicated police officers who visited schools across the borough on a regular basis.

The Committee was provided with details of MAST (Multi-agency safeguarding tracker) which combined information from across different partnership systems allowing more effective and efficient sharing of information.

A Member asked the Independent Safeguarding Partnership Chair if she was assured that children and young people in Walsall were being safeguarded from exploitation. She responded to state that the Safeguarding Partnership in Walsall worked well together with a clear and shared understanding. There was a willingness to innovate and develop different initiatives. It was acknowledged that there was always more work to be done and as a partnership there was a willingness to do so and remain vigilant.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Independent Safeguarding Officer set out the future priority areas for the partnership as neglect, exploitation, and a concern around the level of violence amongst young people. With the biggest challenge being the size and scope of the development of issues.

A discussion was held around the transition to adulthood when a child turned eighteen years of age. It was highlighted that a young person's brain was still developing until the age of twenty five – suggesting a whole person approach would be beneficial. The Chief

Executive of Street Teams stated that Walsall was fortunate to have a dedicated transitions service and an all-age strategy.

A Member questioned how Elected Councillors could help the partnership, Officers suggested that communication with the community and sharing of information was key.

Resolved

1. That the Children at Risk of Exploitation report be noted.
2. That further consideration be given to online safeguarding training becoming mandatory in schools.

60/22 Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2020 – 2021

The Independent Safeguarding Chair introduced the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) annual report provided an overview of multiagency safeguarding partnership activity during the year 2021-2022. Members were informed that the partnership had demonstrated its ability to provide effective leadership through a time of significant challenge following the impact of the pandemic. Some of the new ways of working required in the previous year had been retained by the partnership to better support children, young people, and their families/carers.

In December 2020, an effectiveness review of the partnership was commissioned and three priorities for progression were identified – these were neglect, self-neglect and all age exploitation.

The importance of the early help service was acknowledged and its role in preventing future issues, and the pressure on the demand on the service. Finite resources were a challenge.

Members questioned if all partners were contributing as much as possible. The Independent Chair highlighted health visitor shortages (nationally) and stated that the partnership would continue to support partners who were struggling to meet demand.

The Committee were informed that there was an opportunity for Walsall to be a leading local authority and for partners to come together and tackle serious youth violence.

Recommendation

That the Safeguarding Annual Report 2020 -2021 was noted.

Recommendation Tracker

61/22

The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the committee work programme had been circulated.

Resolved

That the recommendation tracker be noted.

Areas of Focus 2022/23

62/22

Resolved

That the areas of focus for the municipal year 2022/23 be noted

Date of next meeting

To be confirmed at annual council.

There being no further business this meeting was terminated at 8.02.

Signed:

Date:

27 June 2023

Areas of focus for 2022/23

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Councillor S. Elson – Children’s Services

Report

The purpose of this item is to provide relevant background information for Members so that the Committee’s areas of focus can be agreed for 2023/24.

It is important for Members to consider the wide range of potential issues within their remit and which of these they could consider during the year.

When agreeing items, it is important that consideration is given to the level of value the Committee could add taking into account the tools and performance measures available to support them in their work.

Remit

Following Annual Council, the remit of the Committee has been agreed as follows:

All aspects and general services related to serving children and young people (excluding education and learning). The scrutinising of performance in relation to the following Council Plan priority:

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

Presentations from Leader and Portfolio Holders on their priorities

The Scrutiny-Cabinet Protocol encourages dialogue and communication between Scrutiny Committees and the Cabinet at all times; but especially with selecting items to scrutinise during the ensuing year. To assist with this priorities for the service will be set out by the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services.

Presentation on services within the remit of the Committee

A presentation will be provided at the meeting providing more detail about the Committee’s services that fall within the committee’s remit.

Items considered in the 2022 - 2023 municipal year

The following items were considered by the committee in the last municipal year:

- Budget setting process
- Locality hubs and working
- Early Help Strategy
- Social Worker recruitment and retention
- Private fostering
- Youth Justice priorities
- Child exploitation
- Family hubs update and progress
- Early Help update
- Child and Young People Alliance
- Young Carers
- Child neglect strategy

Budget scrutiny

Monitoring the financial performance of the Council is a valuable and important task that Scrutiny Committees are ideally placed to perform. It assists Members in identifying areas of operation that are underperforming that may require scrutiny.

It is suggested that all Scrutiny Committees consider the quarter 2 updates at a formal meeting. It is also suggested that the financial outturn for the previous year, quarter 1 and quarter 3 updates be circulated to Members outside of a formal meeting for information. Subject to the caveat that Members can request the reports to come to a Committee meeting if they wish, and that any significant budget pressures or changes will be raised with the Chair, to discuss the issue being formally reported to a Committee meeting.

Council performance

The Council Plan, as agreed by the Council, sets the strategic direction for the authority by reference to five priorities. Each priority has a number of measures allocated to it. Scrutiny committees may wish to consider monitoring progress against the measures that sit within their remit. It is the role of the Scrutiny Overview Committee to take an overarching view of performance against all measures included in the Council Plan.

Pre-scrutiny

A copy of the Forward Plans of key decisions from Walsall Council's Cabinet and the Black Country Joint Executive Committee are attached at Appendix 2 to this report. Updates of these will be provided to Committees at subsequent

meetings. Members should consider the forthcoming decisions and consider if there are any issues that they may wish to review and seek to influence prior to the Cabinet making a decision on these matters.

Working Groups

A working group is an effective method for Members of Scrutiny Committees to consider an issue in depth over a number of months and to produce a final report and recommendations to the Committee. In due course the report and recommendations can be considered by the Cabinet and/or Council. The challenge for Members is selecting the right topic at the right time and to provide the working group with an achievable brief.

In terms of resourcing working groups Democratic Services are expected to continue to have reduced capacity during the municipal year.

Prioritisation

The remit of the Committee is very broad and the range of issues that could be considered during the year is vast. The challenge that Members face is in prioritising those issues that are the most important whilst still leaving sufficient capacity to address other issues that may arise during the year. To assist Members to manage the broad topics available, it is important that alternative methods of being informed and updated, away from Committee meetings, are used effectively. For example, Members could request briefing notes on particular topics thereby helping to create additional capacity for more substantial items at Committee meetings.

In terms of scheduling items, it is important that an agenda includes a manageable amount of business to enable the Committee to focus on topics in depth rather than to carry out superficial treatment that may require the Committee to revisit the topic at a later date.

Recommendations:

That Members consider the range of issues within this report and formulate and agree a work programme for the year.

Contact Officer:

Nikki Gough

Democratic Services Officer

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Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee June 2023



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR **PAST** OUR **PRESENT** AND FOR OUR **FUTURE**

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Our vision in summary



Children's Services Senior Leadership

Sally Rowe
Executive Director
Children's Services

Colleen Male
Director
Children's Social Work

Isabel Vanderheeren
Director
Early Help & Partnerships

Sharon Kelly
Director
Access & Inclusion

- **Help protection and support**
 - ✓ MASH
 - ✓ Exploitation
 - ✓ Duty and Assessment
 - ✓ Turning point
- **Children with disability team**
- **Locality Family Safeguarding**
- **Corporate Parenting, Leaving Care Services**

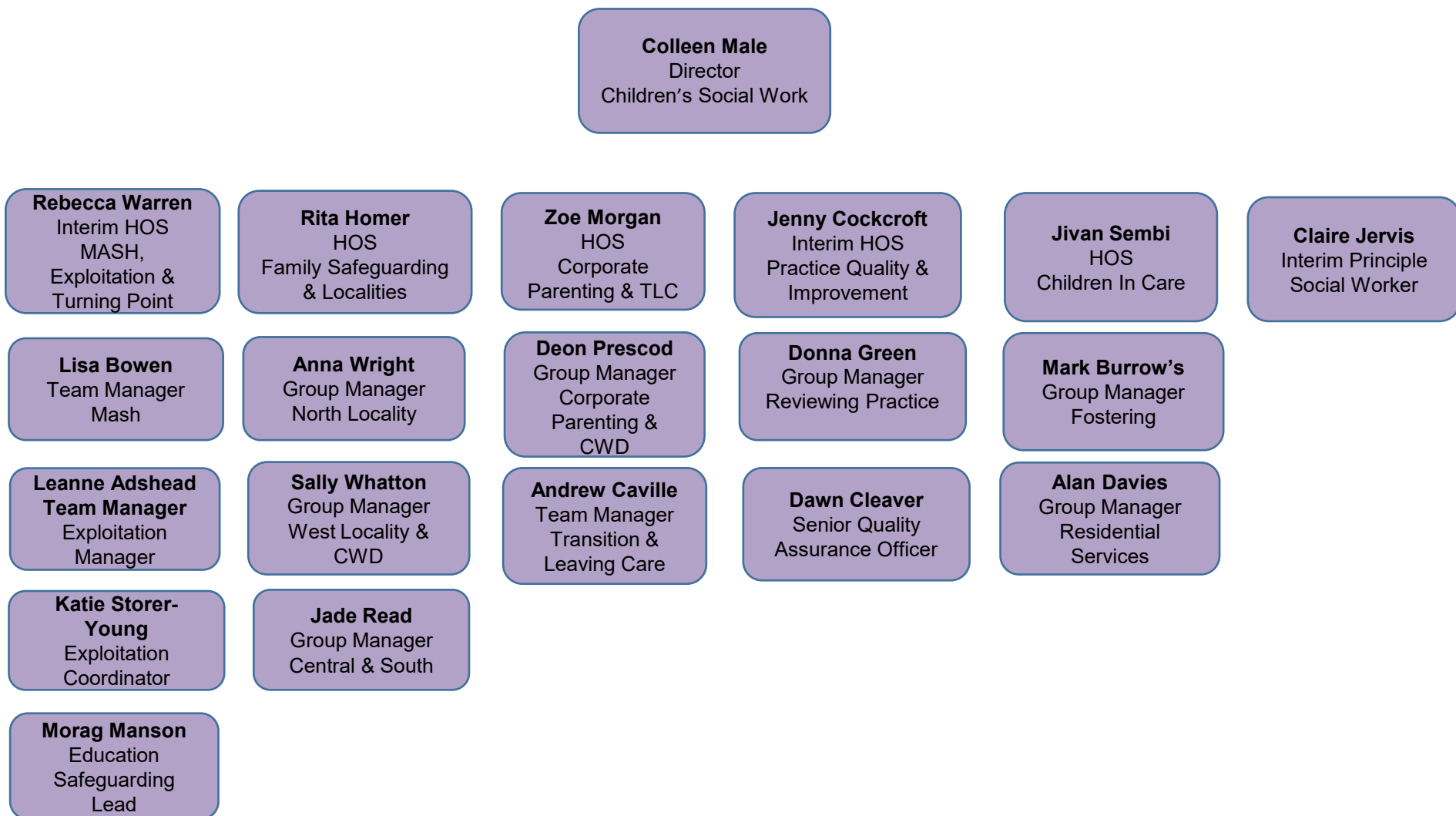
- **Safeguarding partnership**
- **Youth Justice Services**
- **Family Support Localities team**
- **Early help Partnership**
- **Holiday Activities and food programme**
- **Family Hubs**
- **Commissioning**

- **SEND and Inclusion Services**
- **Access Services**
- **Early Year**
- **Virtual school**
- **Vulnerable learners hub**
- **Home to School transport**

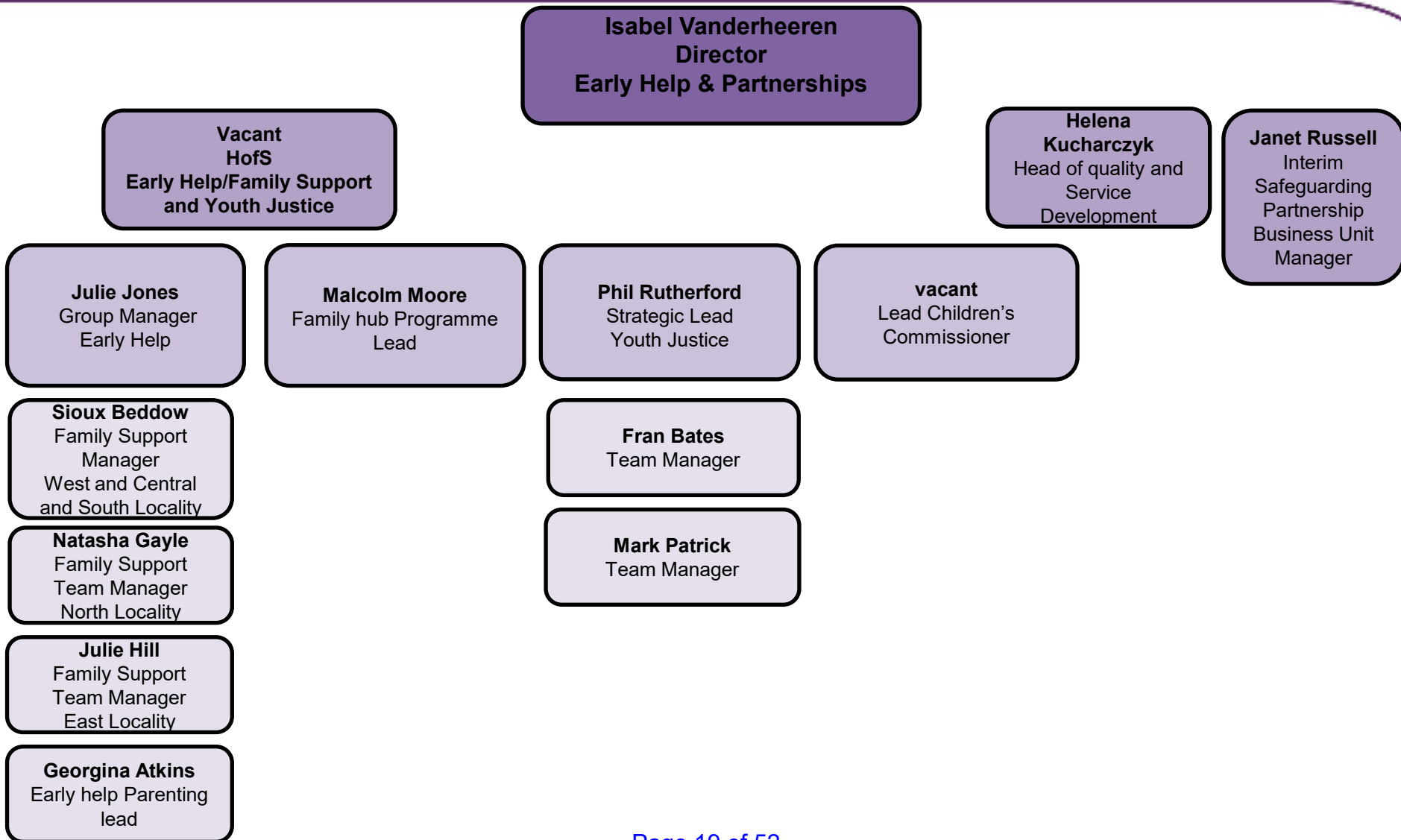
Quality Improvement and Service Development

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Children's Social Care Structure Chart 2023



Children's Early Help and Partnerships Structure



Areas covered by Children's Services Scrutiny

- ❖ Children and Young People Alliance
- ❖ Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- ❖ Missing and Exploitation
- ❖ Duty and Assessment
- ❖ Family Safeguarding & Localities
- ❖ Corporate Parenting, Transition & Leaving Care, Fostering
- ❖ Children with Disabilities
- ❖ Turning Point
- ❖ Placement Team
- ❖ Residential Services
- ❖ Safeguarding & Review
- ❖ Early Help and Locality Working
- ❖ Youth Justice
- ❖ Children's Commissioning
- ❖ Family hubs

Children Living in Walsall

Updated May 2023

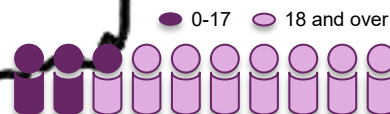
Population of 284,130

68,274 (24.0%) of whom are children aged 0-17

2021 census

The number of children and young people aged 0-17 is projected to rise to 71,822 by 2030

24.0% of the population are children and young people 2021 census



Children and young people have more health challenges than their peers

3.7% of babies are born with a low birth weight

compared with 3.0% the West Midlands and 2.8% nationally (2021 data)

5.6 per 1,000 children die before their first birthday

compared with 5.6 in the West Midlands and 3.9 nationally (2019-2021 data)

1.8% of young girls get pregnant at 15,16 or 17

compared with 1.5% in the West Midlands and 1.3% nationally (2021 data)

95 per 100,000 are admitted to hospital as an inpatient for mental health issues

compared with 91 in the West Midlands and 100 nationally (2021-22 data)

14.5 per 100,000 admitted to hospital for alcohol related issues

compared with 24.9 in the West Midlands and 29.3 nationally (2018-19 – 2020-21 data)

Deprivation levels are high

In the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI), Walsall is the **19th most deprived Local Authority** in the country with 29% of neighbourhoods in the top 10% of most deprived neighbourhoods nationally which is the 15 highest.

Two of Walsall's three parliamentary constituencies are in the **top 50** constituencies with the highest levels of child poverty

40.3% of Children are from BME backgrounds 2021 Census



0-4 5-9 10-15 16-17



27% of children are aged 0-4, 29% are aged 5-9, 34% are aged 10-15 and 11% are aged 16-17 2021 Census



38% of children live in poverty after housing costs Campaign to end child poverty – July 2022

Introduction



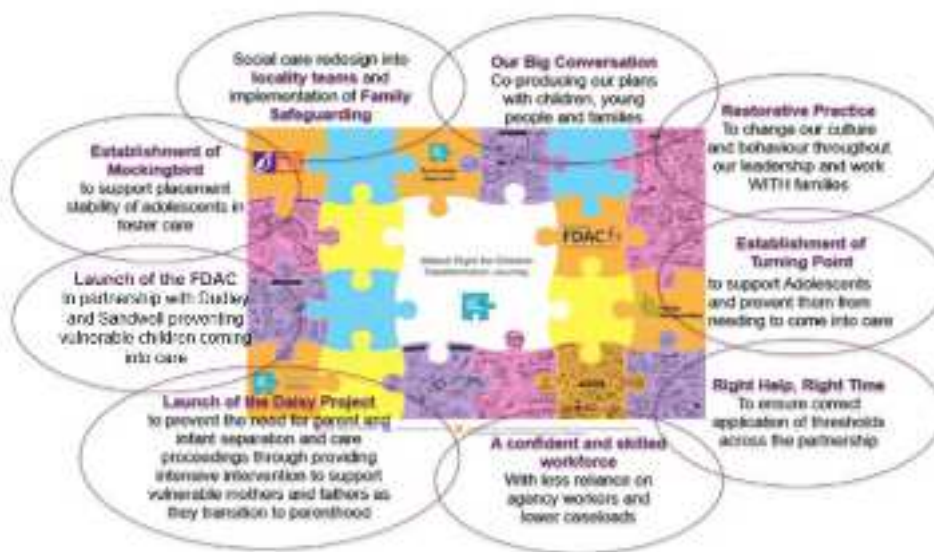
Walsall Right 4 Children (WR4C) is our whole service transformation programme which aims to get services and support right for all children across Walsall. Launched in September 2018, the programme is driven by the following principles:

- **Getting the basics right** for children
- **Strong leadership** informed by 'what works' to set our strategic direction
- Understand the lives and challenges of real families and implement evidence based changes that work for Walsall children and families to deliver **whole system transformation**
- **Prioritise the stability of children** in all aspects of their life – design out unnecessary 'handovers'.
- Develop a **culture of being proud** of what we achieve with relentless drive to improve quality, impact and outcomes

We have used evidence strategically to secure buy in from partners from the start, to make good decisions on resource allocation and to develop a menu of sustainable interventions.

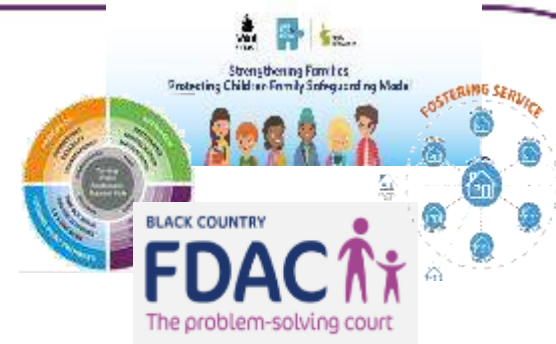


We have enabled a change in culture and developed strength based orientation using two primary methods, restorative practice and motivational interviewing adding a range of skills and practices across Children's Services and with partners



OUR transformation corner stones: Locality model

We have developed 4 integrated locality hubs



We have implemented a range of **evidence based practice models** driven by a forensic understanding of needs and the voice of children and young people

These have been carefully selected to align with our **unified practice model** ensure that we **respond effectively to need and improve outcomes**

We understood need within each locality through analysis, presenting information as **“If Walsall was 100 children”** to ensure it was consistently understood by professionals

Through our Outcomes Framework we consistently use data and robust quality assurance practices to understand quality as well as quantity and the **impact** of our transformation on **outcomes for children and families**.

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“Impressive, effective and creative multi-agency intervention in the locality safeguarding teams is providing sustained change by improving children’s experiences and reducing risks. Co-location of professionals is providing intensive wraparound support for children, which has helped parents make and sustain changes to improve children’s circumstances” Ofsted 2021

OUR transformation corner stones: investing in our workforce

To get it right for children we have developed a confident and skilled workforce that:

- has time to reflect on information and key findings from research
- can draw on their own experience and that of their teams and partners
- build relationships with children and young people so their views drive forward change



We have enabled culture change and developed strength working by implementing restorative practice and motivational interviewing across Children’s Services and with partners

‘I enjoy working for Walsall council, I feel the working environment is safe and I feel supported and a valued employee. The role I have is fairly new and I feel that I have a lot of potential and will be supported to reach this. The colleagues I work with all have the same goal which is to make a difference to children and families lives. I am looking forward to the changes in the way of working in localities and the Family Safeguarding model and can already see a difference in the way we are working and the change in attitudes within the service.’

Staff are **coming to and staying with Walsall** to be part of our transformation journey, with the results of our **stable, skilled and confident workforce** starting to be evidenced in outcomes for children, young people and families.

Social work vacancies have more than halved
13% in 2020 compared with 28% in 2018

Turnover has almost halved
16% in 2020 compared with 30% in 2018



Use of agency has almost halved
15% in 2020 compared with 27% in 2018

Caseloads have reduced by 29%
14.2 in 2021 compared with 19.9 in 2018



Strategic Partnership Development – Children and Young people Alliance

Following the review a partnership based strategic alliance has been established to explore more effective strategic collaboration and decision making across the partnership in relation to children, young people and family business.

Common Moral Purpose

To create and maintain a strategic alliance which will regularly consider how the lived experience of children and young people in Walsall can be improved.

Membership

NHS Walsall, Black Country Integrated Care Board – CYP and Maternity; Primary care and Place development , Walsall Council – resilient Communities, Walsall Council Children's Services; Public Health, Police, Walsall Together (ICB), Education, WHG, Safeguarding Board, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust; Wolverhampton University.

Priorities

First 1001 days - recognising that investing in system wide change which supports children to have the best start in life will lay the foundations to:

- Improve the mental and physical health of the next generation
- Reduce risky and anti-social behaviour and the cost they bring
- Build skilled workforce to support a thriving community and Create a compassionate society

Exclusions – the Alliance defined exclusions as the act of leaving someone out or the act of being left out and have an ambition of influencing a system change that focus' on increased sense of 'belonging'. In selecting this priority the Alliance recognised that:

- It's not OK to fail Children - Exclusions is a system failing a child
- this area has a collective responsibility
- we need to find system solutions

Strategic Partnership Development – Other key partnership Boards directly driving forward better outcomes for children



Walsall Safeguarding Partnership

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership provide effective and informed leadership to the local safeguarding system, delivers on our shared responsibility for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk in the borough, promotes positive working relationships with each other and children, adults and families and identifies and acts on learning.

Youth Justice Partnership

Board is responsible for ensuring that (where required) the Youth Justice Plan and related plans are prepared and delivered. It will provide the overall strategic direction for Youth Justice Services, and monitor objectives linked to key performance indicators, within the national framework established by the Youth Justice Board and other locally agreed priorities.



Walsall Family Safeguarding Partnership

The Family Safeguarding Partnership Board is responsible for strategically driving forward the development, implementation and sustainability of Family Safeguarding as part of locality working in Walsall.

Early help Steering Group

This partnership is responsible for the development and implementation of the Early Help strategy, an ambitious strategy designed to transform the ways of working and provision of early support to families in Walsall, and in doing so, improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children & young people, reducing the need for acute or specialist services. Key to achieving this ambition is a multiagency commitment to provide effective, proportionate and high quality Early Help and supporting families to have their needs met in their local communities.

Links to influence 'Children' as a priority across other partnership Boards



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Looking ahead - Our Strategic Priorities for 2023/24:

- **Reduce our demand through**
 - Right Help Right Time – meeting need at the earliest opportunity.
 - Preventing an escalation in need – providing the right help to families through a graduated response of evidence based programmes (from targeted early help to placement support)
 - High costs avoidance – strategic commissioning to provide right placement for our Children in Care
- **Develop a highly skilled/stable workforce**
 - Develop our profile as an employer
 - Make the job do-able
 - Workforce and wellbeing strategy
- **Developing a mature strategic partnership platform**
 - Development of a partnership offer that meet need in each locality
 - Integrated models of delivery including Family Hub and family safeguarding model
 - System change through our Children and Young People Strategic Alliance
- **Respond to recommendations from inspections and National agenda's**
 - Continue our improvement in help and protection – implementation of Ofsted Action Plans
 - Respond to any change in policy following the National Care Review
 - Youth Justice Prevention – responding to feedback received from Thematic Youth Justice Inspection and the Serious Violence Duty and Needs Assessment
 - Implementation of Family Hub (linked to the best Start in Life)

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Questions

Key Walsall Contacts

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Quality and Service
Development

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Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Appendix One Glossary



Children's Services Overview

MASH; Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

- A multi-agency team that agrees responses to contacts made into the “front door” in respect of vulnerable children and their families
- Decisions are informed by Right Help Right Time guidance (RHRT)

Exploitation Team; team working with primarily older children who go missing and may be at risk of being criminally exploited (e.g. county lines/gangs) or sexually exploited.

- Provide support to Children's Services Practitioners in their responses to missing and exploitation
- Developing effective partnership responses, especially with police
- Daily Exploitation Triage
- Looking at better ways of supporting vulnerable young people when they move into adulthood “transitions”

Service overview

Turning Point; a team working with adolescents

- Supporting with a range of issues, such as breakdown of relationship with parents and other vulnerabilities for example trauma/mental health
- Primary aim is to prevent relationship breakdown and C&YP coming into the care of the Local Authority

Children with disabilities; a team who support families where a child has a disability which requires support mental and /or behavioural and physical e.g. respite and specialist placements

- Specialist support to children and young people and their families with a disability or complex health need
- Work across a spectrum of services to ensure that children and families access the Right Help at the Right Time
- Working closely with adult social care colleagues and other to produce an all age disability pathway

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Service overview

Locality Family Safeguarding Service; supporting those families where a concern has been raised, assessing, signposting or developing and implementing a detailed plan (Child in need or child protection)

- **Locality working-** colocation and embedding practice rooted in an local community resources, driving integration with other services and supporting threshold application .
- **Family Safeguarding Model:** Work alongside Adult practitioners with parents who have needs around mental health, substance abuse and domestic abuse
- **Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC);** Family Drug and Alcohol Courts offer an alternative approach to ordinary care proceedings using multi disciplinary teams where parents misuse substances and alcohol

Service overview

- **Pre Proceedings and Court Proceedings**

- Intensive work with families pre court proceedings to give family access to legal advice and support as a last chance before court proceedings are instigated.
- Strengthen use of PLO and Permanence Trackers to drive planning for children Implement FDAC / interface with FS model, to prevent delay.
- **Multi-Agency Working;** Build and develop influential and respectful partnerships between practitioners and partner agencies to promote best outcomes for children and their families.
- **Promote Cultural Change;** Through implementation of Restorative Practice and Motivational Interviewing, promoting culture of working 'with' families to support change and to keep children and families together where it is safe to do so.

Service overview

Safeguarding and Review Service:

Child Protection Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers ;

- To chair Child Protection Conferences and Statutory Reviews
- Offer independent scrutiny and quality assurance , challenge and support to ensure the progression of Child Protection Plans and Care Plans
- Ensure the child and parental views are heard in formal processes
- Audit and understand practice, by providing insights into trends and patterns with the families they are coming into contact with.
- If professionals around a family have significantly differing perspectives, mediating to develop consensus and escalating if this is not possible
- Especially focussed at the moment on embedding a restorative, relational culture across partnerships

Service Overview

Corporate Parenting Teams: providing services for children in care up to the age of 18 including unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

- Developing relationships with the children in care, their carers and families as well as partners to secure permanence and placement stability.
- Ensuring children in care receive the support and services they need so they grow up in stable, warm, healthy environments so they reach their potential.

Transition and Leaving Care Team: providing services to care leavers 18 to 25

- Developing relationships with housing, employment, education and training and partners in adult services to maximise support for young adults.
- Developed targeted bespoke offer for young people at risk of homelessness and housing support to support transition to living independently

Therapeutic Family Time Service: supervised family time for children in care.

- Ensuring a flexible and safe approach especially as we emerge from COVID

Daisy Team: Therapeutic intervention team working with parents.

- Working intensively with expectant parents where there has been a child removed previously, supporting with issues of domestic abuse, substance abuse and mental health

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Service overview

Placement Team: responsible for home finding for children in care

- Really complex task as low levels of availability and some quite specialist needs.

Fostering Service; recruitment of mainstream foster carers,

- Assessing connected carers,(typically family members)
- Training, development and supervision of all foster carers,
- We have 3 Mockingbird Hubs and are on track to increase to 5
- Established Support and Stability Team to offer therapeutic and practical support to children and foster carer to prevent children moving homes.

Children's Home: 3 Children's

- 6 children placed at Redruth and Hilton Rd
- Bluebell's short breaks Home is fully operational with Covid safe measures in place
- Plans agreed to increase provision by 2 new homes given difficulties with placements nationally

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Service overview

Early Help : work with partners to support children and young people aged 0-19 and their families as problems emerge, preventing the need for statutory or specialist service intervention

- Locality Working: whole family support for a range of needs, including domestic abuse, behavioural concerns, emotional wellbeing, substance misuse, parental conflict.
- Delivers training and awareness to parents and carers
- Responsible for supporting young carers and reducing the need for their caring responsibility, where possible
- Provides targeted youth work to children and young people at risk of school exclusion or vulnerable to exploitation

Parenting team: team of practitioners who coordinate and deliver evidence based self help tools, on line learning modules, including support your CYP emotional wellbeing, routines and boundaries, RPC, parenting a teenager, being a parent, parenting plus.

- Group work delivery and 121 bespoke support in the home. Offer includes, Being a dad, Being a parent (shortened mellow group), Grandparents programme, Mellow programme,
- Reducing Parental Conflict lead and wider training and awareness
- Bespoke 'working with fathers' practitioner
- Bespoke SEND' parenting practitioner

Partnership officers: Responsible for coordinating partner's responsibilities around early help/intervention and influencing the partnership within their locality, encouraging working together, delivering the 'Time 2 Talk' Locality meetings, a platform to connect local partners, share information and consider the early help local offer against the needs of the local families Parenting Team – responsible for delivering a wide range of evidence based parenting programmes to families either on a one to one basis or within a group work setting, the team offer programmes for every parent/carers who live within the borough, known as the universal offer, a specific offer based on the needs of families being support by the Early Help partnership, known as the targeted offer and a bespoke offer for parents/carers open again to the Early Help partnership and Children's Social Care, known as the intensive/targeted offer

Service overview

Holiday Activity and Food programme: Department for Education grant funded programme which delivers holiday activities during Easter, Summer and Christmas to vulnerable children and young people, developed a wide range of offers from 62 community providers, secured young carers & Early Help CYP inclusive

Family hubs: Government funded programme which will provide us an opportunity to **broaden** our locality offer to families to develop our **integrated universal/preventative offer** and provide seamless support for every family to ensure they receive the support they need, when they need it. To ensure all families have access to the information and tools they need to care for and interact positively with their babies and children, and to look after their own wellbeing so all children can grow up to be happy, healthy, safe and learning well.

Youth Justice; a multi agency team responsible for supervising young people aged 10-17 involved in offending and harmful behaviour.

- Monitors and oversees court orders and provides services for young people subject to police disposals.
- Provides services for the Youth and Crown Court, at the Police custody blocks and within the wider secure estate.
- Ensures victims have appropriate services offered to them
- Funded by the LA, Youth Justice Board, West Midlands Police, including the PCC, and Probation .

Service overview

Children's Commissioning Service : responsible for understanding the needs of children, young people and families and planning, commissioning and reviewing services to meet identified need

- Engages with local and regional markets to procure Early Help, Social Care and SEN Education services
- Monitors and oversees contracts to ensure compliance and outcome delivery
- Maintains a joint commissioning relationship with health for complex and disabled children requiring a range of community-based support
- Supports the planning and development of future provision

Safeguarding Business Unit – Team that supports the activities across the Safeguarding partnership (children and adults)

Practice Development

Professional leadership:

- Focussing on five practice priorities and key development areas
- Creating a settled, permanent workforce , including recruitment and retention, staff wellbeing.
- Developing a career progression pathway, and learning and professional development opportunities for all staff
- Implementing clear, consistent practice frameworks, tools and resources, and policies and procedures
- Reinforcing a learning culture with robust, effective systems for understanding the quality of practice, and to reflect and learn around areas for improvement and good practice

Practice Development

Practice Development Hub; a team of staff with implementation of Practice Development Priorities (as set out in previous slide)

- Experienced practitioners offering bespoke support for staff and partners
- Development and implementation of research, resources and tools across pathway and system
- Designing and delivering training and workshops
- Hosting career pathway programmes:
 - Newly qualified programme (ASYE)
 - Practice Supervisor programme
 - Team Manager programme
- Workforce support and intelligence

Black Country Executive Joint Committee Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Published up to October 2023

| Date Created | Key Decision | Contact Officer | Main consultee | Date of meeting |
|--------------|--|--|--|-----------------|
| | Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance | | | |
| 05/12/2022 | Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement Note the revised Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement, attached as Appendix A and previously approved via the Cabinet process of Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC, Walsall MBC and City of Wolverhampton Council. | Philippa Venables Philippa.Venables@walsall.gov.uk Kelly Valente Kelly.Valente@walsall.gov.uk | Walsall Council | 21/06/2023 |
| 06/03/2023 | Constitution and Timetable of meetings Approve the timetable of meetings for 2023/24. Note the BCJC Forward Plan publication dates 2023/24. Note the amendments to the BCJC Constitution and Terms of Reference. Note the amendments to the BCJC Working Protocols | Deborah Hindson ChiefExecutive@walsall.gov.uk | Dudley Council Sandwell Council Walsall Council City of Wolverhampton Council | 21/06/2023 |

| Date Created | Key Decision | Contact Officer | Main consultee | Date of meeting |
|--------------|---|---|------------------|-----------------|
| | Land and Property Investment Fund (LPIF) | | | |
| 09/05/2023 | Land and Property Investment Fund (LPIF) Programme changes Approval for the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the funding profile with Globe Asset Management Limited, to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund funded elements of the Globe House, Walsall with delivery to start in the 2023/24 financial year. | Philippa Venables Philippa.Venables@walsall.gov.uk | Walsall Council | 21/06/2023 |
| 09/05/2023 | Approval for the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the funding profile with GreenSquareAccord Limited, to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund funded elements of the Swan Lane, West Bromwich with delivery to start in the 2023/24 financial year. | Tony McGovern Tony.McGovern@sandwell.gov.uk | Sandwell Council | 21/06/2023 |

| Date Created | Key Decision | Contact Officer | Main consultee | Date of meeting |
|--------------|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 09/05/2023 | Approval for the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the funding profile as stated within the grant agreement with Wolverhampton City Council, to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund funded elements of the Wolverhampton Stowheath Redevelopment for Housing with delivery to start in the 2023/24 financial year. | Richard Lawrence Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk | City of Wolverhampton Council | 21/06/2023 |
| 09/05/2023 | Approval for the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the funding profile as stated within the grant agreement with KMN Investments Ltd, to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund funded elements of the Spring Road Wolverhampton project with delivery to continue in the 2023/24 financial year. | Richard Lawrence Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk | City of Wolverhampton Council | 21/06/2023 |

| Date Created | Key Decision | Contact Officer | Main consultee | Date of meeting |
|--------------|--|---|------------------|-----------------|
| 09/05/2023 | Approval for the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the grant profile as stated within grant agreement with Sandwell Council, to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund funded elements of the Sandwell Housing Gap Funding project with delivery to continue in the 2023/24 financial year. | Tony McGovern Tony.McGovern@sandwell.gov.uk | Sandwell Council | 21/06/2023 |



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

**Council House,
Lichfield Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TW**
www.walsall.gov.uk

9 May 2023

FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan sets out decisions that are termed as “key decisions” at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken by the Executive (Cabinet). Also included on the plan are other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet (“non-key decisions”). Preparation of the forward plan helps the Council to programme its work. The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice and an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The plan is updated each month with the period of the plan being rolled forward by one month and republished. Copies of the plan can be obtained from Democratic Services, Walsall MBC, Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk and can also be accessed from the Council’s website at www.walsall.gov.uk. The Cabinet is allowed to make urgent decisions which do not appear in the forward plan, however, a notice will be included on the agenda for the relevant Cabinet meeting which explains the reasons why.

Please note that the decision dates are indicative and are subject to change. Please contact the above addressee if you wish to check the date for a particular item.

The Cabinet agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public 7 days prior to the meeting of the Cabinet on the Council’s website. Background papers are listed on each report submitted to the Cabinet and members of the public are entitled to see these documents unless they are confidential. The report also contains the name and telephone number of a contact officer. These details can also be found in the forward plan.

Meetings of the Cabinet are open to the public. Occasionally there are items included on the agenda which are confidential and for those items the public will be asked to leave the meeting. The forward plan will show where this is intended and the reason why the reports are confidential. Enquiries regarding these reasons should be directed to Democratic Services (craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk).

“Key decisions” are those decisions which have a significant effect within the community or which involve considerable expenditure or savings. With regard to key decisions the Council’s Constitution states:

- (1) A key decision is:
 - (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or
 - (ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.
- (2) The threshold for “significant” expenditure/savings is £500,000.
- (3) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
JUNE 2023 TO SEPTEMBER 2023 (09.05.2023)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|--|---------------------------------|---|-------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan | Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council) | Decision maker | Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer | Main consultees | Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall) | Date item to be considered |
| 155/22 (7.11.22) | Council Plan: Review of Achievements 2021/22: To note the Review of Achievements for 2021/22, highlighting successes and progress towards achieving our Council priorities. | Cabinet Non-key decision | Karen Griffiths Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk | Internal Services | Leader of the Council | June 2023 |
| 17/23 (3.4.23) | Pre-Audit Outturn 2022/23: To receive the pre-audit revenue and capital financial outturn position for 2022/23 and approve recommended carry-forwards, and financial and treasury indicators for 2022/23. | Cabinet Key decision | Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk | Internal Services | Leader of the Council | June 2023 |
| 18/23 (3.4.23) | Treasury Management Annual Report 2022/23: To note and forward to Council, for consideration and noting (and in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017), the annual report for treasury management activities 2022/23 including prudential and local indicators. | Council Non-key decision | Treasury Management Code of Practice. Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk | Internal Services | Leader of the Council | June 2023 |

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|--------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 20/23 (3.4.23) | Temporary Workers (Agency) Provision: To appoint the Council's temporary agency provider. <i>This will be a private session report containing exempt information.</i> | Cabinet Key Decision | Michelle Leith Michelle.Leith@walsall.gov.uk | Internal Services | Portfolio Holder for Internal Services | June 2023 |
| 6/23 (9.1.23) | Borough Playing Pitch Strategy: To adopt and publish the Walsall Playing pitches strategy and the Black Country strategic framework | Cabinet Key Decision | Liz Stuffins Liz.Stuffins@walsall.gov.uk | Internal Services | Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing | June 2023 |
| 129/22 (5.9.22) | Update on Resilient Communities Safer Streets Programme: To report back on Safer Streets activity and recommend any adjustments/additions to the programme. | Cabinet Non-key Decision | Paul Gordon Paul.Gordon@walsall.gov.uk | Internal Services | Portfolio Holder for Resilient Communities | June 2023 |
| 14/23 (6.2.23) | Growth Funding for Schools: To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and secondary school places, through the adoption of a policy for the application of revenue funding for school growth. | Cabinet Key Decision | Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk | Internal services, Schools Forum | Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills | June 2023 |
| 19/23 (3.4.23) | Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24, approach to Budget Setting for 2024/25, and changes to the council's Tax Strategy: To report the financial position based on 3 months to June 2023, and to set out | Cabinet Non-key decision | Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk | Internal Services | Leader of the Council | July 2023 |

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|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | our approach and timeline for the 2024/25 budget process and amendments to the Tax Strategy. | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|