

## **Children’s, Families and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**24 June 2025, 6:00pm**

**In Conference Room 2 at the Council House, Walsall**

### **Committee Members present:**

Councillor N. Latham (Chair)  
Councillor E. Morgan  
Councillor S. Ditta  
Councillor T. Jukes  
Councillor L. Rattigan

### **Portfolio Holders**

Councillor A. Hicken - Children’s Services  
Councillor M. Statham – Education

### **Officers present (Walsall Council):**

C. Male Executive Director (Children’s Services)  
R. Homer Director (Children’s Social Work)  
I. Vanderheeren Director (Early Help)  
R. Thomas Head of Access  
N. Gough Democratic Services Officer

#### **1 Apologies**

Councillors C. Statham, C. Towe, and K. Murphy submitted apologies for the duration of the meeting.

#### **2 Substitutions**

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

#### **3 Declarations of interest and party whip**

No declarations of interest or party whip were received.

#### **4 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the public.

#### **5 Areas of focus – 2025/26**

The Executive Director spoke to the presentation (annexed), the Committee were provided with details of the leadership team, service structure and services, budget overview, and areas covered by the Committee. Further detail was provided on the opportunities and challenges for children and young people along with demographic data, and information about schools and education in Walsall.

Members were informed of the improvement journey undertaken by Walsall Children's Services, the shared strategic priorities and the Walsall Right 4 Children programme. It was noted that to achieve better outcomes for children and families, effective partnerships were essential.

There then ensued a period of questioning, and discussion. A Member commended the Darlaston hub, and the services it offered to Fathers.

The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Education presented his priorities for the year as:

- Implementation of Government and national policy.
- SEND and alternative provision local area inspection.
- School attendance and children not in school.
- Pupil place planning.
- Joining up the skills agenda and employment pathways through the development and implementation of the Education, Skills and Employment Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Children's Services set out his priorities for the year as:

- A partnership approach to neglect.
- Prevention and early intervention.
- Continue to develop the youth collaborative.
- Valuing the workforce and maintaining a stable workforce.

Clarification was sought on neglect and associated services, and it was agreed that an update would be provided. Members considered the areas for inclusion on the work programme.

**Resolved:**

- 1. That the following items be added to the areas of focus for the municipal year 2025-2026.**
  - **Ofsted report and action plan**
  - **Youth Justice Strategic Plan**
  - **Child Sexual Abuse in the Family environment**
  - **Neglect**
  - **SEND – summary of White paper and implications for Walsall (invite health partners and Parent Carers Group)**
  - **CAMHS**
  - **Update on Walsall 2040 Strategy**
  - **Walsall Alliance**
- 2. That the Membership of the Committee be e-mailed to request priority areas for inclusion on the areas of focus.**

**6 Forward Plans**

The forward plans were considered by the Committee.

**Resolved**

**That the forward plans were noted.**

**7 Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 23 September 2025.

There being no further business this meeting was terminated at 7.05pm.

Signed:

Date: