



Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on: **14th January 2021 AT 6.00 P. M.**

Meeting to be held via: **Microsoft Teams**

Public access to meeting via: <https://youtu.be/w7GYKrEhXVU>

MEMBERSHIP:

Chair: Councillor M. Statham
Vice Chair: Councillor T. Jukes
Councillor D. Barker
Councillor H. Bashir
Councillor B. Douglas-Maul
Councillor L. Jeavons
Councillor M. Follows
Councillor S. Neville
Councillor L. Rattigan
Councillor C. Statham
Councillor S. Wade

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor T. Wilson.

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 10 th November 2020.	<u>Enclosed</u>
<u>Scrutiny</u>		
6.	Recruitment and retention of social workers To provide an overview of Social Worker staffing in Children's Social Care, and to outline activity undertaken over the last year to improve the recruitment and retention of Social Workers.	<u>Enclosed</u>
7.	Family Safeguarding: the first four months An update on the Family Safeguarding Model.	<u>Enclosed</u>
8.	Annual complaints report To provide an overview and analysis of all compliments and complaints received and to summarise the issues that have arisen.	<u>Enclosed</u>
9.	2019-20 Children's Services Performance and Outcomes An overview of the 2019-20 performance outcomes within children's social care.	<u>Enclosed</u>
10.	Draft Revenue Budget Feedback and Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 To consider the draft capital programme as reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2020, specifically in relation to capital schemes, and for feedback to be taken into account in the finalisation of the budget by Cabinet on 10 February 2021 for recommendation to Council on 25 February 2021.	<u>Enclosed</u>
<u>Overview</u>		
11.	Areas of Focus The Committee's areas of focus for the municipal year 2020/21.	<u>Enclosed</u>
12.	Forward plans To receive the Forward Plan of Key Decisions from Cabinet and the Black Country Executive Joint Committee, to identify any further matters, which Members feel, may benefit from scrutiny.	<u>Enclosed</u>
13.	Date of next meeting 18 th March 2021, 6pm. via Microsoft Teams	

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 AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 10th NOVEMBER 2020 at 6.00 p.m.

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

Held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020; and conducted according to the Councils Standing Orders for Remote Meetings and those set out in the Council's Constitution.

Present:

Councillor M. Statham (Chair)
Councillor T. Jukes
Councillor D. Barker
Councillor B. Douglas-Maul
Councillor L. Rattigan
Councillor M. Follows
Councillor I. Robertson
Councillor S. Wade

Officers

Colleen Male – Director
Andrea Potts – Director
Tanya Collier – Lead Accountant
Isabel Vanderheeren - Transformation Lead

Welcome

At this point in the meeting, the Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and explaining the rules of procedure and legal context in which the meeting was being held. He also directed members of the public viewing the meeting to the papers which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information system (CMIS) webpage.

Members confirmed that they could both see and hear the proceedings.

66/20

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor H. Bashir for the duration of the meeting.

67/20

Substitutions

Councillor I. Robertson substituted on behalf of Councillor H. Bashir for the duration of the meeting.

68/20 Declarations of Interest and party whip

There were no declarations of interest for the duration of the meeting

69/20 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to be considered in private session.

70/20 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th September 2020 were considered by the Committee.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2020 be approved.

71/20 Corporate Financial Performance – Quarter 2 (Period 5- August 2020) Financial Monitoring Position 2020/21

The Finance Lead highlighted the salient points within the report (see annexed).

The Committee were advised that the current net revenue forecast position, after the net use of reserves and prior to any mitigating action, would be an overspend of £0.125m. After mitigating actions of (£0.125m) the forecast position was net nil.

A Member asked for clarification on the reasons for ‘increased demand for taxi’s for children’ (table 1). The Director stated that it was partly due to Covid-19 related costs and also due to an increase in children coming into care. Officers were confident that this would reduce in the future and the response to safe transportation to school would mitigate this. The Portfolio Holder stated that the service made a decision to ensure that additional costs were covered to ensure that children could be taken to school safely.

In relation to a Member query in relation to risks detailed within the report the Director stated that this was due to pressures in relation to Covid, this cost was being tracked but was still included in the risk section of the table. In addition due to an increase in number of children coming into care and the inability to progress care plans for some children, due to court pressures.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

72/20

Draft Revenue Budget 2020/21 – 2023/24

The Portfolio Holder spoke to the report (see annexed) and invited questions from the Committee.

The Lead Accountant informed the Committee that the policy proposals included a benefit relating to home to school transport that did not fall under the remit of this committee.

A Member queried how children coming into care costs was forecast. The Director described the financial modelling based on transformation plans, which ensured that children stayed in families wherever possible. Modelling had taken place based on numbers over the previous 4 years, and potential achievements through new models of working. The transformation agenda was around doing what was right for children and families and this should be cost effective to the Council.

Following challenge from Members, the Committee were provided with reassurance that the financial modelling used within the transformation plans for Children's Services would provide financial savings by achieving improved outcomes for young people and their families. For example, through new models of working, young people could be prevented from coming into care and foster care placement disruption could be avoided.

Resolved:

1. The Committee considered the draft revenue budget proposals relating to the remit of the Committee in order to formally report to the Cabinet on the policy proposals.
2. The Committee noted that consultation would be undertaken on all new 2021/22 policy proposals and that feedback would be presented to the Cabinet on 9 December 2020.
3. The Committee noted that further savings proposals would be presented to the Cabinet on 9 December 2020 in order for a balanced budget to be delivered by February 2021, and that these would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for consultation.

73/20

Right for Children transformation programme

The Transformation Lead highlighted the salient points within the report and spoke to the presentation (annexed).

The Committee were informed that the report provided an update on progress against the Walsall Right 4 Children (WR4C) Transformation Programme and plans for further development over the next 3 years to achieve the benefits as set out within the Councils Proud Programme.

A Member asked if there was a plan to fund adult specialist workers when the model reached year 4, in order for it to become sustainable. The Director stated that a Family Safeguarding Partnership Board work stream was focused on sustainability. Across the Partnership, the outcomes and impact would be monitored to demonstrate the benefits across the partnership. The impact across other authorities demonstrated that this model improved outcomes.

Officers were asked if the movement for individuals between children's services and adult services would be smoother in the future. The Director explained that as part of the transformation plan focused on children with disabilities, including the transition into adult services.

It was acknowledged that the Council website needed to be improved to ensure individuals were able to access information; work was underway to understand how this could best be improved.

An update on Mocking Bird was provided, and this was a key part of support provided to foster carers and nationally was recognised as good practice.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the service was outcome driven, and agreed that the website needed development, and this would be picked up as part of the proud programme.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

74/20

Youth Justice Working Group Final Report

The report was received by the Committee (annexed). The Portfolio Holder thanked the group for their work, and it was agreed that an update would be provided within 6 months.

Resolved (by roll call)

That the final report of the Youth Justice Working Group be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

75/20

Covid-19 Briefing note

The Chair stated that this was a briefing note provided for assurance, and any comments or queries would be dealt with outside of the meeting.

76/20

Areas of Focus

The draft areas of focus 2020/21 was considered.

Resolved

That the draft areas of focus 2020/21 was agreed.

77/19

Forward Plans

The forward plans were noted.

Termination of Meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.15 p.m.

Title of the Report: Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers

Ward(s): All wards

Portfolios: Councillor Wilson, Children's Services

1. Aim

The aim of this report is to provide an overview of Social Worker staffing in Children's Social Care, and to outline activity undertaken over the last year to improve the recruitment and retention of Social Workers.

2. Reason for Scrutiny

This report is to provide an update for Members of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable them to fulfil their key responsibilities and duties in holding the council and its partners to account for its work in preventing and protecting children and young people from harm in Walsall. A stable and fully staffed Social Worker workforce (encompassing Social Workers, Senior Practitioners and Team Managers) is essential to this work.

3. Recommendations

To note the work undertaken across 2020 to develop a stable, skilled Social Worker workforce and establish the structures and conditions for longer-term sustainability in this workforce.

To continue to build on this progress through further targeted recruitment and a focus on the retention of Social Work practitioners through the measures set out here.

4. Report detail – Know

4.1 Activity and Impact This Year

There have been staffing challenges for Children's Social Care over a number of years, and creating the conditions to develop a stable, permanent Social Worker workforce was identified as a key priority this year. This provides the foundation for restorative, relational Social Work practice, and analytic, timely, purposeful assessments and interventions, as these are based on consistent relationships between Social Workers and children, young people and families. Workforce stability and progression is needed for practice improvement and embedding new models of practice, as Social Work practitioners are able to develop their skills and familiarity with these approaches. Also, this stability means consistent relationships in teams, and between Social Workers and their Team Managers, which in turn contributes to how supported Social Workers feel.

The plan established this year as part of the workforce and recruitment and retention strategy in Children's Social Care was to adopt a targeted approach to recruitment, and to develop a stronger focus on retention.

The recruitment of experienced Social Workers is a challenge both locally and nationally. This has been reflected in our data and activity this year. A total of 14 experienced Social Work practitioners have been recruited through both an ongoing open Talent Link advertisement and five rounds of recruitment. Knowing this was likely to be the challenge, the focus has been on growing and developing our own workforce whilst undertaking these rounds of recruitment to bring in experienced staff where this has been possible. Although there have been challenges in recruiting experienced Social Workers, focused activity has allowed for the recruitment of 35 newly qualified (first year ASYE) Social Workers. This was supported by a proposal put forward in April 2020 to over-recruit to 9 Social Worker posts, supported by recruiting 2 additional Senior Practitioner posts to support these less experienced workers. These Social Workers have all joined and are now established within the workforce and are currently completing the first year ASYE programme with the Academy for Social Work.

Alongside recruitment, the focus this year has been, and will continue to be on the retention and development of Social Workers: with the intention being to keep these practitioners and also to enable them to develop into skilled, competent practitioners who reflect the values, ethos and methods adopted in Children's Social Care in Walsall. In addition to the large numbers of new staff, another key reason to focus on retention is to reflect how retention challenges can arise with Social Workers who have been with a Local Authority for 2-3 years. This is because this is a point where they have gained some experience and are looking for development and progression opportunities. Analysis undertaken this year indicated that in July, there were 18 Social Workers at this point within frontline Social Care teams, and a further 39 Social Workers coming up to this stage in their careers.

The focus on retention has been achieved through two connected areas of activity this year. First, there has been ongoing work to have individual development conversations and offer opportunities to staff. Second, work has started and will continue in order to establish structures for long-term sustainability for staff development, wellbeing and career progression.

In the first respect, a number of staff have progressed within Children's Social Care this year. 19 Social Work practitioners have advanced within Children's Social Care, and a further 6 practitioners have had the opportunity to move across service areas to gain a variety of practice experience. This has meant that those staff individually feel supported and able to develop, and also creates a wider culture of staff knowing that there are progression and development opportunities available. This has also meant a reduction to the costs of agency staff at a senior level, as available posts have been filled internally up through the staffing structure.

In the second area, in establishing the right longer-term structures, the first key part of this work was to understand how staff feel and what they want. To do this consultations were undertaken with staff. Briefings were undertaken as a follow on from the Children's Services Health Check questionnaire sent to staff in January, with a series of sessions held to share the results and hear from staff. Separate briefings were also held with Team Managers, as well as focus groups with staff who have remained with WMBC for

an extended period to understand what has made them stay, and with the newly qualified ASYE Social Worker cohort.

The result of these sessions, amongst other key identified areas for development, has led to the following key areas of activity in establishing long-term workforce structures:

- 1) Developing a clear Social Worker career structure, including establishing a Senior Social Worker role.
- 2) Refining the offer for experienced practice supervisor roles in Children's Social Care, including developing the Senior Practitioner role, and establishing a development programme for practice supervisors and a Team Manager programme.
- 3) Developing a 'Staff Wellbeing Strategy' as part of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy, to consider the needs and challenges of frontline Social Work within the wider corporate offer.
- 4) Developing the Health Check methodology as well as other feedback and consultation mechanisms so that Senior Leaders are visible and connected to the workforce. This will create a continued cycle of listening to staff and acting on what they tell us.
- 5) Reviewing the use of Market Supplement payments where these are in place, and replacing these with a Retention Payments scheme that offers a greater incentive to Social Work practitioners who remain with WMBC for longer periods.
- 6) Developing a revised core training programme and practice development offer to support Social Worker's learning and progression.
- 7) Reviewing the offer provided by the 'Academy for Social Work' so this service is embedded in practice, and as effective as possible in supporting and developing staff.
- 8) Continuing to develop and refine the newly qualified ASYE programme, which has been identified as a national example of good practice by Skills for Care.
- 9) Reviewing and continuing to develop student progression routes so there is a steady flow of new staff who have already had practice experience in Walsall Children's Social Care.
- 10) Embedding clear models of practice and support structures so that Social Work practitioners feel they have the tools and resources to effectively do their jobs. This work is underway with the establishment of the Family Safeguarding model, which sets Walsall out both regionally and nationally.

The impact of this work has yet to be fully realised, and will continue to be reviewed and refined to make sure it is positively impacting on how Social Work practitioners feel about working for Walsall, and on recruitment and retention. What can be reported is that the current direction of travel is positive, with a reduction in the vacancy rate for Social Work practitioners, which it is anticipated provides cautious grounds for optimism and further advances next year. Recent analysis for the Children's Social Work Census, shows the following key developments:

- The percentage of staff turnover has reduced in 2020 to 15.8%. This means staff turnover has nearly halved since 2018, and places WMBC below regional and statistical comparators.

- The vacancy rate has reflected this, and reduced by 12.7% in the last year to 13.3% in 2020.
- The percentage of the workforce who are agency staff has also fallen by 12.2% from 2018 to 2020, and currently stands at 15.1%, which is lower than regional and statistical comparators.
- The absence rate for 2020 is at an average of 2.1 days per staff member, down from 3.7 days in 2019, and 3.3 days in 2018.

These positive trends provide the foundation for further work to build on this progress and to continue to improve on workforce stability. The planned over-recruitment of newly qualified ASYE Social Workers in 2020 was quickly reabsorbed into the staffing establishment mainly due to internal progression opportunities as set out above. This year has demonstrated the effectiveness of targeted recruitment and the approach of growing our own Social Worker workforce. Another year of undertaking such recruitment alongside focused work on retention should enable even greater stability as more Social Workers are recruited and develop, and the majority of these staff then remain with WMBC and progress. The intention is to therefore continue to embed the approach taken this year, and to really drive the focus on the retention and wellbeing of Social Work practitioners to create an effective, sustainable approach to workforce stability. Further, there will be additional targeted work on Social Worker Practice Education and students as this offers both progression to experienced staff as Practice Educators, and is an effective way of identifying and recruiting newly qualified Social Workers. With this work coordinated alongside other progression routes such as the Social work Apprenticeship, the intention is to have a clear 'pipeline' of potential recruits each year.

The impact of this work and levels of need will be monitored through the bi-monthly Workforce Steering Group that has been re-established, through updated reporting to the Directorate Management Team, and demonstrated through continued positive trends in the data, and in feedback from staff. In undertaking this work, the emphasis will remain on supporting Social Work practitioners, providing them with opportunities to develop and progress, giving them the right tools and resources to do their jobs, offering reasonable workloads, a competitive pay and retention package, listening to them, and recognising the importance of their wellbeing and achievements.

5. Reducing inequalities

Work is being undertaken in consultation with staff to ensure that recruitment processes reflect the diversity of the Children's Social Care workforce and communities that it serves, and that all staff feel able to develop and progress in WMBC. This will include analysis of staff data and consultation exercises to align with the work set out in this report.

6. Links to Council Corporate Plan Priorities

The Walsall Right for Children Transformation Programme contributes to a number of our Council Corporate Plan priorities:

a) People

A stable Social Worker workforce provides the foundation for services for children, young people and their families to ensure they have increased independence, improved health, and can positively contribute to their communities.

b) Internal Focus

A stable Social Worker workforce provides the foundation for maximising the effectiveness of services in Children's Social Care.

c) Children

A stable Social Worker workforce is an essential condition to be able to provide effective services for children so that they can have the best start and are safe from harm, are happy, healthy and learning well.

7. Decide

To note the contents of this report and to support recommendations

8. Respond

A further updating report on planned activity to support Social Worker recruitment and retention is being prepared for the Directorate Management Team in January 2021, and feedback and recommendations from this report will be incorporated into this work.

9. Review

The Workforce Steering Group will meet bi-monthly, and will review activity to support Social Worker recruitment and retention.

Background papers

- Ofsted Children's Services Inspection Report (2017): [2752938 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](https://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/2752938)
- Department for Education Longitudinal Study of Local Authority Child and Family Social Workers (2020)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906778/Longitudinal_study_of_local_authority_child_and_family_social_workers_Wave_2.pdf

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14th January 2021

7

Title of the Report: Family Safeguarding: the first four months

Ward(s): All wards

Portfolios: Councillor Wilson, Children's Services

1. Aim

The aim of Family Safeguarding is to keep families together wherever possible. It is a Department for Education funded partnership model, developed in Hertfordshire, which supports families with children of 12 years and under where parents have issues of substance abuse, mental ill-health or domestic violence, and the child(ren) are subject to Child in Need or Child Protection Plans.

2. Reason for Scrutiny

This report is to provide an update for Members of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable them to fulfil their key responsibilities and duties in holding the council and its partners to account for its work in preventing and protecting children and young people from harm in Walsall. This grant-funded model needs to develop evidence to support sustainability.

3. Recommendations

I. To note implementation of the Family Safeguarding Model

The Walsall Right for Children (WR4C) Transformation Programme, launched in September 2018, drives forward our Children's Services vision to ensure that the right children are in the right place with the right support for as long as it's needed to ensure that they are safe from harm, are happy and learning well. Family Safeguarding is an important part of delivering this transformation.

The Family Safeguarding Model was launched in Walsall on the 1 September 2020 and brings a whole-system change approach in Children's Social Care to tackle the impact of the 'trio of vulnerabilities' (domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental ill-health) on children's lives. Adults' and children's specialists work in a unified team to share information, to provide support, and to prevent families reaching crisis stage. This provides better outcomes for children by keeping families together, addressing root causes, and preventing children from entering the care system. There is a wealth of evidence available externally which supports this.

The council and its partners have been given an initial investment by the Department for Education of £2.4M over three years to fund the adult specialist workers in the model, with a requirement to make this model sustainable by year 4.

This model also seeks to achieve wider benefits across the system, with a reduction in crisis, attendance at accident and emergency, and repeat police call-outs.

- II. To have oversight of work undertaken to embed the Family Safeguarding Model across the partnership and work to make this model sustainable

This programme of work is overseen by the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Board. All provider and commissioning partners (Health, Police, Local Authority, Black Country Women's Aid and Change Grow Live) have taken part in a range of work streams (outlined below) to shape and develop Family Safeguarding. This has been reinforced by the signing of a partnership pledge to cement their commitment to implementing Family Safeguarding and working together to make this a sustainable model.

Underpinning the sustainability will be a clear use of data to evidence improvements in outcomes for families and reduction in costs across the system, such as reduced police call-outs and reduced numbers of looked after children. The approach to collecting this data and the specific measures have been agreed across the partnership. However, having only gone live on 1 September 2020, we are yet to see any measurable changes in many of the domains. We anticipate that, if we return in six months, we would have a clear overview of early impacts.

- III. To consider how Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee can support in making the model sustainable through support and challenge

National research shows that the break-even point for Family Safeguarding is reached after approximately two years. The initial investment in Walsall was largely from the Department for Education and was required to fund sixteen adult specialist posts, two project posts and six business support posts.

Some local authority areas that have previously implemented the model have achieved sustainability through sharing ongoing costs with partners. In others, the costs have been entirely borne by the local authority from the savings released. In Walsall, we are strongly committed to a partnership approach to sustainability.

4. Report detail – Know

4.1 Overall

We had a successful go-live on 1 September 2020, following a pause due to COVID-19. Currently, we have 13 of the 16 adult workers in post. The workforce had been trained in both the Family Safeguarding Model and in Motivational Interviewing. At the point of go-live, we simultaneously launched an electronic workbook which underpins the Family Safeguarding Model.

On 19 October 2020, there was a formal launch of the model which was attended by 250 people and was widely commended for including helpful information in an engaging manner. Councillor Wilson gave an introduction as part of the launch.

As at 1 December 2020, we had 52 families and 79 children open under the Family Safeguarding Model.

We continue to work with Hertfordshire, who developed the model and who are supporting us in our implementation, and we are increasingly linking in with other local

authorities who use Family Safeguarding, extending our influence and improving our national profile.

Staff implementing Family Safeguarding remain positive and team managers are engaged with fortnightly informal meetings about Family Safeguarding.

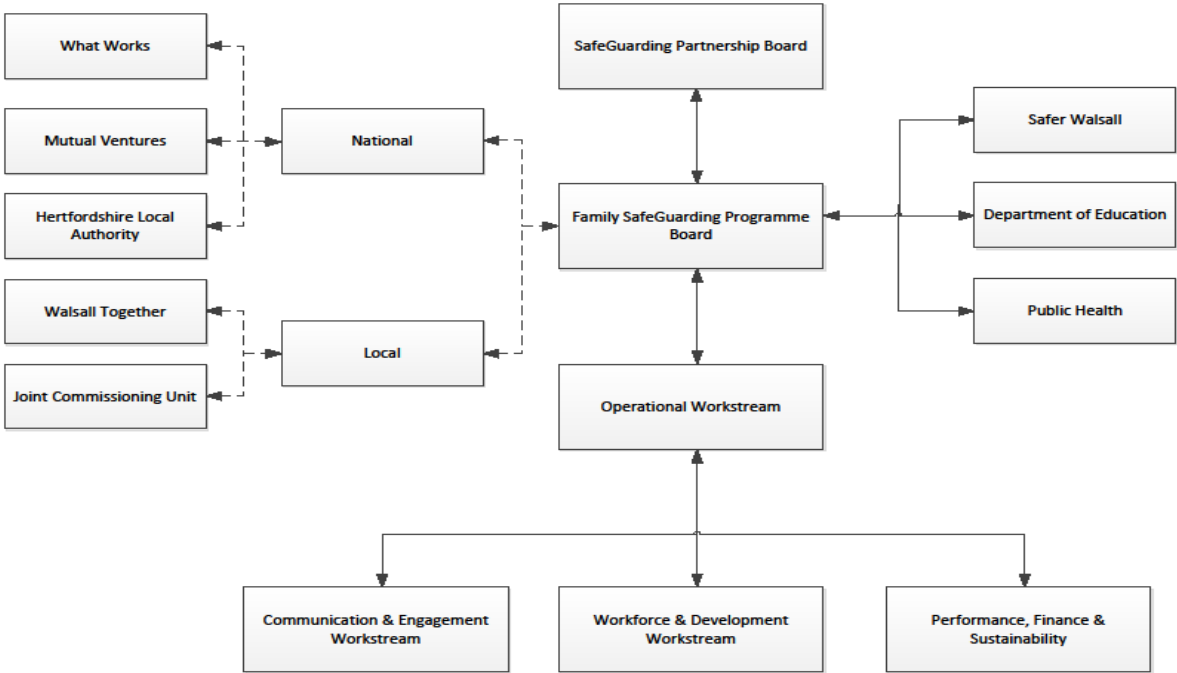
4.2 Board and workstream arrangements

Local governance of the programme is through Walsall’s Safeguarding Partnership Board. This is underpinned by a detailed governance document. There are also clear links with the Safer Walsall Partnership, especially on the issues relating to domestic abuse.

The Family Safeguarding Programme Board meets monthly for strategic debates about issues such as interdependencies and equalities with a range of engaged senior partners, as well as assuring the programme activities’ risks and issues.

Throughout the governance structure, there is active engagement from a range of partners, including those who directly employ the adult workers (such as Black Country Women’s Aid) and those who have wider influence and importance (such as the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health). Front-line and operational partners are also actively engaged in the practical application of Family Safeguarding, including schools and Health Visitors.

Underpinning the Family Safeguarding Programme Board are four work streams which undertake the bulk of the programme activity (Operations, Communication, Workforce, and Performance). The programme structure is outlined below.



4.3 Operational development

The Operational workstream meets monthly and includes core partners who are part of the Family Safeguarding teams, as well as colleagues from Education, Early Help and School Nursing.

Work has commenced on setting up virtual therapeutic groups for parents in the context of COVID-19. We anticipate informal discussions with families starting in December and more formal programmes commencing in January.

Policies and procedures have been reviewed by an external expert and went live on 30 November 2020. Guidance for both the workbook and practice has been refined and distributed. These documents will remain live and will be updated regularly and formally reviewed quarterly.

Additionally, there are clear links to the Walsall Right for Children Transformation Programme. Our 3-year transformation plan is focused on three strategic priorities to enable us to realise our vision and secure the associated benefits. These are:

a) Reducing our demand

- Stopping failure demand: when we are not the right organisation to provide help we currently end up being the default position. This leads to delay and not the right help for families with complex needs. Our transformation plan aims to redirect this demand through self-help and outlining clear roles and responsibilities of the partnership offer of support.
- Preventing escalation of demand (demand avoidance): helping the right families through a graduated response of evidence-based programmes, from targeted help to placement support.
- Avoidance of high cost help and support: strategic commissioning that provides the right, most cost-effective placements for our looked after children and the right packages of support for our children with SEND.

b) Developing a highly skilled/stable workforce

- Developing our profile as an employer
- Making the job do-able and enabling our workforce to do the right thing
- Supporting our staff with an effective workforce and wellbeing strategy
- Developing a clear career pathway and succession planning
- Having a clear recruitment and retention strategy

c) Co-ordinating and influencing the establishment of a mature WR4C partnership platform to drive the delivery of the WR4C vision

- Reducing our demand and preventing children, young people and families from needing costly statutory interventions will require a strong and mature partnership approach
- Connecting up transformation across Walsall in the interest children and families will be key including integrating services around our children and families where this makes sense for them: strategies, processes, adopting the same thresholds, removing duplication between partners and co-producing with families and the community

- This work will need to link with:
 - Walsall Together
 - Safeguarding Partnership
 - Walsall for All
 - Safer Communities
 - Resilient community
 - Youth Justice Board
 - Regional Violence Prevention
 - Troubled Families

4.4 Performance and sustainability

National governance of this programme is through a quarterly return to the Department of Education. This includes an overview of achievements, outline of risks and issues, milestones achieved and planned for the next quarter, and financial and performance data.

The What Works Centre have also been commissioned to monitor our progress over the next five years using a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures, with a strong emphasis on child outcomes and fewer partnership measures relating to parents.

National scrutiny of Family Safeguarding started in October 2020. We submitted a quarterly report to the Department for Education and, in parallel, Hertfordshire also submitted a report which evaluated our progress. The Department for Education and Hertfordshire gave us face-to-face feedback on 27 October 2020. This was extremely positive and there were no significant challenges. The summary from Hertfordshire about Walsall is below:

“Walsall’s excellent start with their implementation has been maintained. They remain highly organised, with the agenda driven from the highest level. The DCS, AD and Independent Safeguarding Partnership Chair demonstrate committed leadership and have retained a positive engagement with the Partnership and workforce.”

Locally, we have developed a detailed outcomes framework with underpinning Key Performance Indicators agreed with each partner and including equalities measures woven through. We have produced a simple dashboard for local authority data as it relates to Family Safeguarding and have a draft of a similar dashboard for February for partners. The detailed data gathering has commenced in January 2021.

We have designed a very simple, short quarterly survey of staff to understand both their experience and practices with regard to Family Safeguarding. We have an outline of approaches to elicit family and child opinions.

4.5 Expected outcomes

There have been two national evaluations of Family Safeguarding following wave one and wave two. The most recent report was published in October 2020. Below are a selection of the outcomes, with either the most robust evidence or applicability to the situation in Walsall. Overall, the most significant outcome is that more families stay together safely. Some more specific expected outcomes listed below:

a) Outcomes for children and families

Families consistently stated that family safeguarding was more participatory, supportive and empowering than their previous experiences of social services. They have welcomed Motivational Interviews (albeit often after some initial reservation) and the multi-agency nature of the support. Almost without exception, the parents and carers told the evaluators that their quality of life had improved as a result of Family Safeguarding.

b) Outcomes for staff

Family Safeguarding has been shown to strengthen information sharing and decision making, developing the skills and knowledge of practitioners, and minimising pressure for social workers through reduced caseloads.

c) Outcomes relating to local authority

The percentage reductions in new looked after children per 10,000 population pre- and post-implementation of Family Safeguarding range from 9% in Peterborough to 30% Hertfordshire.

d) Outcomes for the wider system

The qualitative consultations undertaken with local authority stakeholders revealed a shared view that Family Safeguarding is likely to have been responsible for a large proportion of the reductions in call-outs to police reported through this evaluation. The consultations with parents and carers undertaken by the evaluators also provided numerous examples of where police call-outs are unlikely to have reduced to the same extent were it not for the multi-disciplinary, restorative approach applied through Family Safeguarding.

4.6 Workforce development

Despite COVID-19, our staff have had significant amounts of high quality training and development to underpin the changes in practice and culture. This is being increasingly supplemented with a range of practice development approaches, such as training the trainer and masterclasses.

We have 13 of the 16 adult workers in post. A breakdown is in the table below:

Type of worker	Number in post	Employing organisation
Domestic Abuse Victim	4	Black Country Women’s Aid

Domestic Abuse perpetrator	2	National Probation Service
Mental Health	4	Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Substance Abuse	3	Change Grow Live (Beacon)

On 27 November 2020, we recruited a Clinical Psychologist, who is due to start in January 2021. We are currently advertising for the two remaining Probation Support Officers and have an interview scheduled with a clear development plan for current and future probation workers. Once these posts are filled, we will have our full complement of adult specialist staff.

We have developed a simple map of the skills and interventions offered by each of the adult specialisms, which was shared across the service to offer further transparency. We have recruited a Practice Development Manager with specific responsibility for partnership working. She will be linking in with a wide range of partners, including Health Visitors, schools and the police, to enhance collaboration across all partners who are involved with safeguarding children, and not just those who are part of the model itself.

4.7 Communications

We have a detailed communication plan, devised collaboratively with partnership support, which includes a comprehensive stakeholder approach.

The regular internal communication with staff continues, including written weekly updates in a general end of week update, and check-in with managers, as well as briefings to colleagues in Early Help and Education.

Around 223 partners attended one of several weekly general briefing sessions in August and September 2020. There have also been regular articles and contributions in a range of internal and partnership newsletters and wider briefings.

Around 250 people attended the successful two-hour virtual launch event. Subsequently, we have moved to bespoke partnership communication with presentations to 90 Head Teachers and 120 GPs.

4.8 Financial information

The last-minute pause of Family Safeguarding due to COVID-19 led to cost pressures, as people had already been recruited. This was escalated through Gold Command and contingencies identified. In parallel, we requested £86k from the Department for Education. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we have not recouped this money, although it is possible they may reverse the decision if this remains a cost pressure going forward.

There has been detailed modelling work to predict the efficiencies and cost-avoidance of the Family Safeguarding Model. We have commissioned some bespoke modelling of cost and benefits from Hertfordshire, which should give us some indications of possible savings

5. Reducing inequalities

Overall, the implementation of Family Safeguarding is likely to have a positive impact on equality. In order to demonstrate this, there will be a specific strand of the performance and outcome framework which will explore retrospective and prospective data to establish any differences in outcomes for families with a range of protected characteristics, including gender, disability, race and religion.

Evaluation in other areas suggest that fathers engage more positively with Family Safeguarding. The approach to domestic violence within Family Safeguarding includes active support for both victims and perpetrators. Since the service users are largely of one gender, male victims and female perpetrators may have a different experience of services. The use of interpreters will be monitored to ensure those for whom English is a second language will be actively included.

Family Safeguarding has a clear link to the impacts in the Marmot reports, as it will enable children to have a more positive start in life and maximise their capabilities.

6. Family Safeguarding links to Council Corporate Plan Priorities

The Walsall Right for Children Transformation Programme contributes to a number of our Council Corporate Plan priorities:

a) People

Throughout the programme, we have and will continue to work with children, young people and their families to ensure they have increased independence, improved health, and can positively contribute to their communities.

b) Internal Focus

The programme is focused on a whole-system change, to ensure that within Children's Services we are as efficient and effective as we can be.

c) Children

The primary objective of the programme is to ensure that the right support is in place so that children can have the best start and are safe from harm, are happy, healthy and learning well.

7. Decide

To note the contents of this report and to support recommendations

8. Respond

Any feedback and recommendations from scrutiny will be taken to the Family Safeguarding Partnership Board.

The next milestones are the quarterly report to DfE in January 2021 and the reduction in the tapered funding from the DfE in September 2021.

9. Review

There is a clear governance structure for the programme which includes regular data monitoring and scrutiny, both within the local authority and across the partnerships (see the governance structure above).

Background papers

- Second wave national evaluation of Family Safeguarding:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932367/Hertfordshire_Family_Safeguarding.pdf
- Outcome framework
- Family Safeguarding Programme Governance
- Department for Education return October 2020

Author

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Family Safeguarding Programme Manager

☎ 65xxxx

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Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Family Safeguarding Model



Family Safeguarding, Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee January 2021



Purpose and overview

- Update the committee on progress
- Give oversight of the approach
- Develop sustainability of model

Family Safeguarding- Background

- Funded by the Department of Education (DFE), a partnership approach developed in Hertfordshire.
- Walsall went live on the 1st September 2020, paused since April 2020.
- Externally evaluated by “What Works” centre.
- The crucial principle being the best ways to keep children safe are by supporting families/parents wherever possible.
- Offered to families/parents with substance abuse, mental health and or domestic abuse, where children are under 13.
- Eligible families identified following a Child and Family assessment.

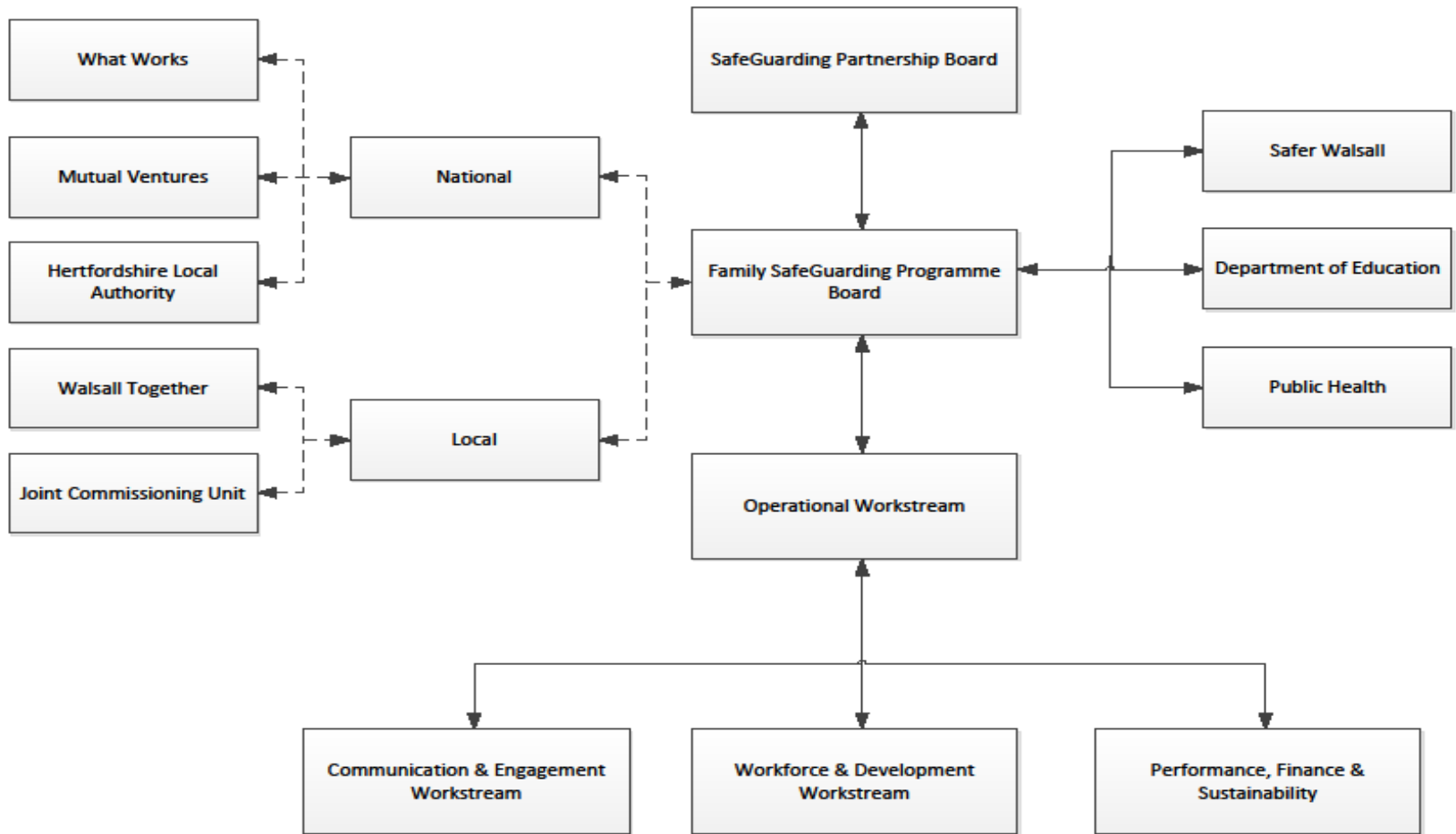
Components Family Safeguarding

- A co-located partnership approach to working
- Safeguarding teams work on a locality basis
- Adult workers from partner organisations are an active part of the team and are co-located with social workers
- There is a shared recording system for practitioners which includes entries from the adult specialist workers
- Every month there is a group supervision with all co-located workers involved in the case, led by the team manager.
- There is a family assessment/programme , carried out by the social worker with input from the range of adult specialists this includes 8 modules, and direct work with the children.
- Motivational interviewing is a core skill and is strengths based and restorative approach and uses the cycle of change model

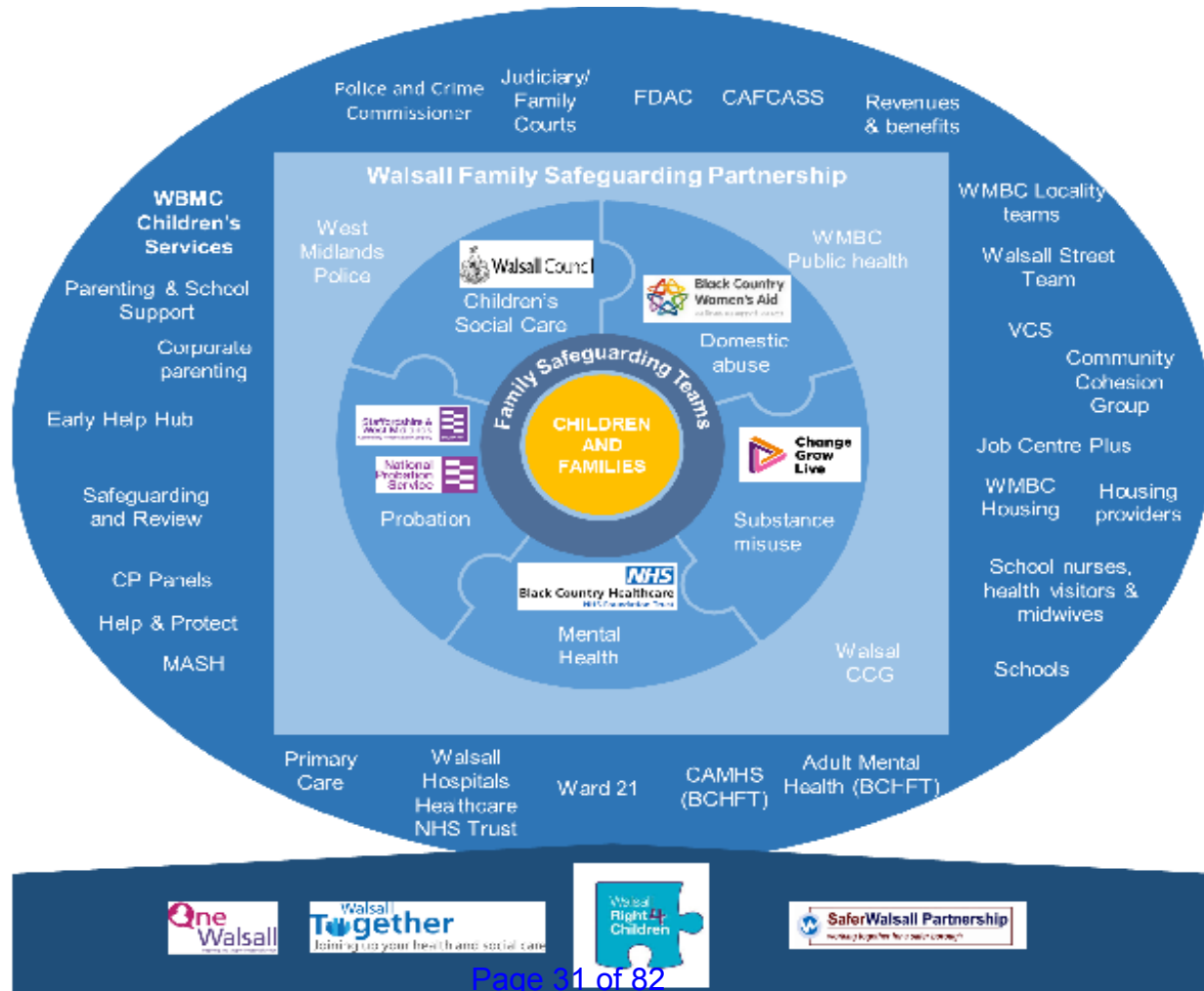
Governance Overview

- **National accountability** :There is accountability to the DFE via quarterly returns, which include an overview of progress, risks and issues, objectives for the next quarter, programme finances and performance data see previous documents here
- **Local accountability** : Since the family safeguarding model is about partnerships at its heart, the accountability and lines of escalation are through the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership. As part of this accountability there are informal updates, reports by exception and quarterly dashboards to the Leadership Group as required and relevant sub-committees. Since the programme is hosted in Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, the organisation's rules on financial conduct and employment practice and risk register are also followed or used.

Governance structure



Strategic context



Main progress

- Went live 1st September
- Launch 20th October (250 attended)
- Engaged with wide range of partners (including 120 head teachers, 90 GPs , regional Judiciary)
- High quality training for all staff
- Employed 14 of 16 adult specialist workers
- Developed a clear outcome framework with key performance indicators , also includes equality
- Moving to a critical thinking evidence based approach to evaluation, to establish the magic ingredients for walsall
- An approach to working well with health visitors school nurses and education

Page 32 of 82

DfE evaluation of children's Social Care innovation-Overall headlines

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-innovation-programme-round-2-evaluation>

- The centrality of building consistent, trusting relationships, and providing time for this.
- The focus on bolstering and leveraging strengths and resources to identify solutions and working together to support progress towards positive outcomes.
- The provision of multi-faceted support to address multiple needs and issues in a holistic, coherent, and joined-up way .

Systemic Conditions

- improving practitioner time capacity and service capacity to enable sufficient time for work (including direct work) on each case
- using shared, evidence-informed practice methodologies and tools, and providing training and skilled supervision to support this
- providing integrated multi-disciplinary specialist support enabled by group case discussion (including, most notably, input from specialists in mental health)
- improving multi-agency collaboration
- engaging in thoroughgoing consultation on and/or co-production of services.

National findings from second wave evaluation of family safeguarding

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/932367/Hertfordshire_Family_Safeguarding.pdf

- Reduces rate of looked after children and numbers on child in need plan
- Reduces police call out and mental health crisis help requests
- Break even occurs relatively rapidly, though smaller authorities reach this point later
- Adult workers are important, not just because of their direct work but also input to group supervision and RAG rating
- Interventions with perpetrator, emerging evidence that this is especially important/different to other models

Page 35 of 82

Sustainability

- Setting up dashboards and data collection internally and with partners
- Using and circulating national research evidence
- Collecting and sharing positive stories about staff experience
- Collecting and sharing stories about impact on families
- Improving local and strategic relationships with key partners

14 January 2021

Children and Young People - Annual Complaints Report

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Councillor Wilson – Children Services
Councillor Towe – Education and Skills

Executive Summary:

This annual report (**Appendix One**), covers the period of 1 April 2019 through to 31 March 2020 and reports on complaints made by, or on behalf of children and young people who receive services from Children's Social Care in Walsall. It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual report and make it available to the public, staff and elected members. The arrangements for the statutory procedure and management of complaints from children and young people (or their representatives) are set out in *The Children's Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006*.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview and analysis of all compliments and complaints received and to summarise the issues that have arisen. This provides a mechanism for the directorate to monitor the quality and effectiveness of services and of its complaints procedure.

Reason for scrutiny:

It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual report and make it available to the public, staff and elected members.

Members are asked to review the findings in the report and to challenge, scrutinise and hold the Directorate to account for the outcomes and implications.

Recommendations:

That:

1. The Annual Complaints Report is noted and used to monitor, challenge and scrutinise performance.

Background papers:

N/A

Resource and legal considerations:

The arrangements for the statutory procedure and management of complaints from children and young people (or their representatives) are set out in *The Children's Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006*. This requires the

publication of an annual report to be made available to the relevant committee of the council.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities: Enabling children and their representatives to make a Complaint, and the learning from complaints which contributes to service delivery and Improvement, impacts on the Council Corporate Plan priority -: 'Children have the best possible start, are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.'

Citizen impact:

An effective complaints procedure provides a mechanism through which the Council can listen and learn from our service users and improve the service we deliver to them. This report provides an overview of performance against the procedure and also proposes improvements to that procedure going forward.

Environmental impact:

None directly

Performance management:

Complaints provide an important mechanism through which we can learn about the performance of services and, when aligned with other forms of intelligence, can be used to inform and drive improvements.

Reducing Inequalities:


The complaint procedure ensures that there is fair and equitable access to the procedure for all our service users.

Consultation:

The report was shared with the Executive Director and Assistant Directors in Children's Services.

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Walsall Council

Complaints and Representations Annual Report

Children and Young People

April 2019 - March 2020

CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Staffing**
- 3. Reporting and Monitoring Systems**
- 4. Complaints Procedures**
- 5. Headlines and Key Points from Annual Data**
- 6. Numbers of complaints**
- 7. Timeliness of responses**
- 8. Source of complaints**
- 9. Issues**
- 10. Outcomes**
- 11. Compliments**
- 12. Learning**

1. Introduction

This report contains information for the attention of the public, members of the Council and officers about the numbers and types of representations relating to Children's Services made to the Council during the financial year 2019/20.

It is a statutory requirement to produce an Annual Report (regulation 13(3)) and make it available to the public, staff and elected members.

The process of dealing with complaints regarding Children's Social Care through statutory procedures is set out in legislation;

- **Children's Complaints – Statutory and Corporate as set out in legislation**
The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006
and accompanying guidance '[Getting the best from Complaints](#)'.

This annual report covers the period of 1 April 2019 through to 31 March 2020 and reports on complaints made by, or on behalf of children and young people who receive support and services from Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Service in Walsall.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which requires a response. Anyone who is in receipt of a service or think they should be in receipt of a service may complain, or a representative may make a complaint on their behalf.

The Complaints Manager has the key responsibility for managing the statutory process for complaints from children and young people (or their representatives). The purpose of this report is to provide an overview and analysis of all complaints and compliments received during the period and to summarise the issues that have arisen, providing a mechanism by which the quality and effectiveness of services, the complaints procedure and responses can be scrutinised.

2. Staffing

The Assurance Team administers non-statutory and statutory social care representations and complaints received by the Council relating to both Adults and Children's services.

Officers are responsible for ensuring children's complaints are logged, processed and responded to at Stage 1 of the process, and where a complaint progresses to Stage 2 or 3, the team is responsible for recruiting independent investigators and panel members and for facilitating any investigations and panels which take place.

In addition, the Assurance team is responsible for dealing and responding to any enquiries by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for complaints across all council services that reach this stage, including Children's Services complaints. The Council's LGSCO link officer role sits within the Assurance

Team and leads on dealing with all LGO contact – initial enquiries, assessments, investigations and ensuring that the council responds accordingly to the findings of any LGSCO investigations.

The team is also the first point of contact for complaints in relation to other services and directorates within the council, and will usually forward these on to the relevant area to provide a response.

In addition, the team is responsible for processing and responding to Freedom of Information Requests (FOI's), Environmental Information Requests (EIR's) and Subject Access Requests (SARs), as well as reporting performance against the Corporate Plan priorities to the Council's senior management team.

Also, the team delivers training sessions on the complaints process and in 2019/20, delivered training to senior managers, residential homes staff and foster carers.

In 2019/20, the Assurance team consisted of a manager, 3 Lead Assurance Officers and 5.6 Assurance Officers.

3. Reporting and monitoring systems

All statistical information within this report has been taken from the bespoke data base system 'Respond.' This data base provides a reporting and monitoring system to ensure accurate recording/logging of complaints in accordance with the statutory guidance.

During 2019/2020, an investment was made to update the Respond system from version 3 to version 7. The new version became active mid-year at the beginning of August 2019. It offers improvements and enhanced facilities to support better complaint handling and greater scope for reporting management information. This means that the data which informs this report was extracted from the 2 versions of Respond.

Management information from the system was shared with service managers during 2019/2020 via reports to service and directorate management meetings, and a weekly complaints report is produced which enables managers to focus on responding to all active complaints in a timely manner. The report provides a rag rating against each open complaint to indicate when the response needs to be completed by.

Information on learning from complaints was also shared in 2019/20 with the directorate Performance Improvement Forum.

4. Complaints procedure

4.1 Overview – Stages 1-3

There are three stages to the formal statutory complaints procedure:

- **Stage one - local resolution.** Intended to be swift, focussed resolution taking no more than 20 working days. The intention is that the majority of complaints can be dealt with at this stage. (Note, the corporate complaints procedure follows this procedure at first stage, but does not have a formal Stage 2/ 3)
- **Stage two - independent complaint investigation.** Where a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their stage 1 complaint, they can request a stage 2 complaint investigation. Carried out by an investigating officer (IO) with an independent person (IP). The IO produces a comprehensive report into the individual complaint resulting in a complaint being upheld, partially upheld, inconclusive or not upheld. It is the expectation of the statutory guidance that the stage two investigations will be completed in a maximum of 65 working days.
- **Stage three - independently chaired review panel.** Where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a stage two complaint, they can request a stage three review panel. This panel is made up of a chair and two members. It is the panel's responsibility to review the investigation but not to re-investigate the complaint.

4.2 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

At the conclusion of the three stage of the statutory process – (or following a senior manager review of a corporate complaint) - the complainant has the right to escalate their concerns to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

The LGSCO investigate complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by the Local Authority. This may include looking at complaints both in relation to the provision of social services and in relation to the operation of the complaints process. They can also investigate complaints about how the Local Authority has carried out these processes. The Local Authority must have an opportunity to investigate / respond to a complaint before the LGO will become involved. If the LGO is satisfied with the remedial action offered by the Council, the complaint will be regarded as 'locally settled' and the investigation is discontinued.

5. Headlines and Key Points from Annual Data

	18/19	19/20
Total no. social care complaints received	128	133
Total no. statutory complaints responded to	33	35
Total no. corporate complaints responded to	86	85
No. Stage 2 complaints	2	1

No. Stage 3 Complaints	1	2
Overall timeliness of '10 working day complaints'	50%	47%
Overall timeliness of corporate complaints	62%	53%
Main sources of complaints	Parents; Young person;	Parents; Young person;
Main issues of stat complaints	Communication/ sharing of information; quality of service	Communication/ sharing of information; staff conduct/attitude
Main outcomes	54% of issues raised in complaints were upheld or partially upheld	54% of issues raised in complaints were upheld or partially upheld
No. of compliments	53	35
LGO Complaints upheld	0	5

Key Points:

- The total number of social care complaints received has risen slightly by 4% compared with 2018/19. The number actually responded to under complaints procedures was however static at 120
- The focus on handling more complaints via corporate procedures continued the trend of recent years. In 2019/20, 70% of all complaints were responded to as corporate complaints, compared with 23% in 2017/18.
- No new Stage 2 complaint investigations were carried out in 2019/20, however 2 complaints proceeded to the formal Stage 3 panel stage of the statutory complaints procedure.
- 21 children's complaints were received by the LGSCO compared with 13 in 2018/19, and of those investigated, 5 were upheld (0 in 18/19).
- 3% fewer statutory '10 working day' complaints were responded to in timescale, and 9% fewer corporate complaints.
- Poor communication / information sharing and staff conduct were the two main issue raised by complainants.
- The percentage of complaint issues upheld or partially upheld i.e. where the response finds partly or wholly in favour of the complainant remained the same as in the previous year.

6. Number of complaints received and responded to by stages

6.1 Stage One – local resolution

The Assurance Team received **133** new complaints during the year, however of these **13** were outside the scope of the statutory complaints process. These were either withdrawn by the complainant, where, for example, the issue was resolvable by the service area without handling as a formal complaint or where the complainant did not have the necessary parental responsibility to make a valid complaint. Others were investigated under other procedures, usually via safeguarding or legal procedures.

In addition, **85** of the complaints responded to were **corporate** complaints, dealt with under the council's corporate complaints procedures, which follow the same process at Stage 1 albeit with a longer deadline to respond of 20 working days.

In total, **35** statutory complaints received during the year were investigated and responded to at Stage One of the statutory process.

The total number of complaints responded to under both procedures was static compared with 2018/19.

Statutory Complaints Responded to in 2019/20 by Service Area 35 (33 in 18/19)						
SEND	Protection & Assessment (inc. MASH)	Provider Services (Fostering & Adoption)	Corporate Parenting (inc. LAC/ TLC/ Residential)	Safe-guarding & Family Support (inc. CWDT)	Early Help	Review & Child Protection
1 (1)	2 (4)	2 (2)	12 (11)	17 (13)	0 (1)	1 (1)

Corporate Complaints Responded to in 2019/20 by Service Area 85 (86 in 18/19)						
SEND	Protection & Assessment (inc. MASH/ IRS)	Provider Services (Fostering & Adoption)	Corporate Parenting (inc. LAC/TLC/ Residential)	Safe-guarding & Family Support (inc. CWDT)	Early Help	Review & Child Protection
5 (17)	13 (9)	7 (4)	5 (11)	41 (37)	2 (4)	1 (4)
CS Directorate	Access & Achievement (inc. School Improvement)	Commissioning (inc. School Transport)				
3 (0)	3 (0)	5 (2)				

6.2 Escalated Complaints

Two Stage 3 panel complaints took place in 2019/20. Both complaints had progressed through the Council’s complaints processes in previous years. The relevant panel hearings related to:

- The decision of a complex care and short breaks panel
- The level of support provided to a vulnerable family

Both complaints proceeded to the LGSCO following the panel hearing, and were investigated but not upheld.

6.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

In 2019/20, 21 initial complaints were received in relation to Walsall Council Children’s Services by the LGSCO. The equivalent figure for 2018/19 was 13.

Of those investigated, 5 Children’s services complaints were upheld. The complaints investigated included:

- Communication and sharing of information
- Handling of complaints
- Providing education and meeting special educational needs
- Arrangements for a school admissions appeal panel

The remedies advised by the LGSCO in these cases included:

- Apologies
- Financial compensation
- Complaints training for officers

7. Timeliness of Complaint Responses

Statutory Timescales	No. complaints responded to in timescale 19/20	% of complaints responded to within timescale 19/20 (18/19)
10 working day complaints	16 of 34	47% (50%)
Extended 20 working day complaints	1 of 1	100% (50%)
Corporate complaints (20 working days)	30 of 57	53% (62%)

Performance for both statutory and corporate complaints being responded to within timescales has dipped in comparison to 2018/19 but there remains an improving trend on previous years.

Wherever possible, the Assurance Team inform and apologise to customers of any delay and advise when to expect the final response.

The more advanced version of the Respond complaints system which became operational mid 2019/2020 is anticipated to have a positive contribution to both complaint processing, handling and response times in future years.

8. Source of Complaints

Source of Complaints responded to	18/19	19/20
Child/Young Person	14	13
Child with Advocate Support	3	2
Parents	66	79
Grandparents	12	11
Other Relatives	8	4
Foster Carer/Adoptive Parent	11	6
Professional/ Staff Member/Other	5	5
Total	119	120

9. Issues

Of the 120 complaints responded to, 146 separate issues were raised. The table below list the most frequently occurring issues:

Most frequently occurring Issues	2018/19 (statutory only)	2019/20 (stat & corporate)
Poor communication/clarity of information/failure to keep informed	18.5%	19%
Staff conduct/ attitude	9%	16%
Quality of service	18%	14%
Delay in receiving service	4%	9%
Inaccuracies in reports/ assessments	9.5%	8.5%
Lack of support	10.5%	7.5%
Disagreement with decision	9.5%	7%
Inappropriateness of service	3.5%	4%
Contact issues	6.5%	4%
Non-adherence to procedure	2%	3%
Others	1%	3%
Abuse from other service users	3.5%	1.5%
Abuse from carer	-	1.5%
Financial Loss	-	1.5%

Issues with child protection process	4.5%	0.5%
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10. Outcomes

% comparison with 2018/19

Issue outcome	18/19	19/20
Not upheld	32%	31%
Partially upheld	31%	30%
Upheld	23%	24%
Inconclusive/other procedures/not known	14%	15%

Note: the percentage of complaint issues that were upheld or partially upheld has remained at 54%

11. Compliments

There were 35 compliments received during 2019/20, compared to 53 in the period 18/19. The following service areas received compliments:

Service Area	No. compliments 19/20 (18/19)
Early Help	2 (6)
Protection & Assessment (MASH/ IRS)	4 (3)
Looked After Children & Care Leavers & Residential	15 (22)
Safeguarding Family Support, inc. CWDT	8 (9)
Safeguarding Review/ Child Protection	2 (6)
Provider Services /Adoption & Fostering	2 (4)
Access & Achievement	2 (2)
Total	35 (53)

Examples of compliments received are as follows:

1. *“Thank you for sending me a certificate to say I can say with A&B until I’m grown up and ready to leave; I love living with them and there’s nowhere else I’d rather be”*
2. *“As a complete family now, we would like to thank you for all the support you all gave my son and daughter in law. From start to finish G. was an angel in disguise, so supportive and positive, and helped my son immensely, as he hasn’t been put in the position before, looking after a baby but thank you for all the support you all put in. Everything went so brilliantly. C is now with her real family and is settling lovely getting in her own routine - mum and dad happy, along with her extended family. So again thank you. I hope this message sends a positive message to others who are going through similar.”*
3. *“D is a good communicator who is always polite in her responses (be it via email, telephone or in person). She goes out of her way to discuss case prior to meetings or LAC reviews and always seeks clarification where it is needed. She also updates in between meetings when there is significant information. She is pleasant and supporting in all interactions with S whilst also being open and honest regarding the outcome of his assessments. She has built sound professional interactions & relationship with S. I must also mention that her Social Workers Reports for LAC Reviews are comprehensive, accurate, well detailed and are of exceptional standard. S has commented that Abi is so kind and caring towards him and listens to him. He added that she has a particularly lovely, calming influence and is very encouraging towards him”*
4. *“Can I just send a note of commendation for the work F has done in regards to the case with G? She has been very child and family centred in her approach and has communicated with me excellently thus far. We need to nurture this type of working ethos.”*

12. Learning

- As part of the complaint response process, all responding officers are requested to identify learning for the service. Effective learning can prevent further similar complaints, identify gaps in service, assist with reflection on practise and provide strong evidence for inspection
- The learning form enables capture of where the learning is raised with staff e.g. one to one’s, management meetings, together with any proposed service action/ changes.
- Learning can also be captured from a complaint response where the responding officer sets this out within the response.
- Work is planned to be rolled out in 2020/21 to strengthen links between learning from complaints and the service Quality Assurance Framework, so that all of our learning, including learning from complaints, case file audits etc. is communicated to staff through QA bulletins.
- Examples of learning captured in relation to upheld or partially upheld statutory complaint issues are set out in the table below:

Complaint	Learning	Actions
Lack of communication during CP process including sharing of meeting minutes and letters with prospective carers	Need for information to be shared in a timely and appropriate way with relevant persons	Officer training and guidance
Previous SW didn't explain clearly about the adoption papers when asking parent to sign them; the new SW has not explained what happening e.g. contact being cancelled	Requirement for social workers to communicate well and explain process.	A new social worker appointed to the case
Case was closed before a court order was in place to support children remaining in the care of their father	All points of action in CIN plans to be addressed before case closure.	Mediation and apology.
Care leaver not being listened to and lack of communication re future accommodation	Communication needed ensuring YP is aware of change of workers; care plan to be discussed; phone calls to be returned; YP view to be listened to.	Apology and staff guidance

Contact Details:

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**Children's Social Care
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Agenda
Item No.**

January 2021

9.

Children's Data – an interactive session

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr T Wilson – Children's Services

Executive Summary:

This is a covering report for a presentation which outlines key indicators in children's social care, reporting on the 2019-20 out-turns as reported to the Department for Education (DfE) in the Children in Need (CiN) Census which reports key data about children in need and child protection activity and outcomes and the Children Looked After (CLA903) Return which reports key data about children in care and care leavers.

In addition to Walsall outcomes and changes in performance when compared to previous years, benchmarking data is also included which compared Walsall's performance to that of overall national performance, regional West Midlands performance and performance against our statistical neighbours.

Reason for scrutiny:

The report is intended to provide the scrutiny committee with an overview of the 2019-20 performance outcomes within children's social care.

Recommendations:

That the committee notes the 2019-20 out-turn performance of Walsall's Children's Services against performance in previous years and benchmarking against national regional and statistical neighbour comparators.

Background papers:

There are no background papers related to this report.

Resource and legal considerations:

There are no resource and legal considerations relating to this report.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

This report links to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

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

Right children looked after, for the right length of time in the right placement

Citizen impact:

This report has no direct impact on the citizens of Walsall, however, it does highlight performance and indicators which outline demand for services, how well those services were provide and outcomes for children.

Environmental impact:

There is no environmental impact to this scrutiny exercise.

Performance management:

This report and presentation is a key report for the council how children's social care is performing by providing an overview of the 2019-20 children in need, child protection and children in care performance, benchmarked against Walsall's comparators.

Reducing inequalities:

This report does not have any direct impact on reducing inequalities.


No Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.

Consultation:

There has been no previous consultation in relation to this report.

Contact Officer:

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Social Care out-turn performance and benchmarking

Presentation for Children's Services Scrutiny – 14th January 2021



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Page 52 of 62

Purpose of this report

This report outlines key indicators in children's social care, reporting on the 2019-20 out-turns as reported to the Department for Education (DfE) in the Children in Need (CiN) Census which reports key data about children in need and child protection activity and outcomes and the Children Looked After (CLA903) Return which reports key data about children in care and care leavers.

In addition to Walsall outcomes and changes in performance when compared to previous years, benchmarking data is also included which compared Walsall's performance to that of overall national performance, regional West Midlands performance and performance against our statistical neighbours.

Walsall's statistical neighbours for children's services are: Bolton, Derby, Doncaster, Dudley, Peterborough, Rochdale, Rotherham, Stoke-on-Trent, Tameside, Telford and Wrekin.

Outcome data for children in care and care leavers has not yet been published. This report will be updated with that information when it is.

A final slide has been included to outline current 2020-21 data where there has been significant change and also any impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on performance.

Children Living in Walsall

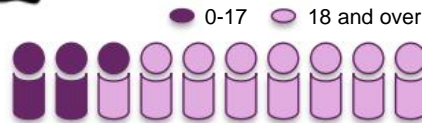
Population of 285,478

68,970 (24.2%) of whom are children aged 0-17

The number of children and young people aged 0-17 is projected to rise to 71,091 by 2025

24.2% of the population are children and young people

2019 mid-year population estimates



31.2% of Children are from BME backgrounds

2011 Census

BME White



28% of children are aged 0-4, 29% are aged 5-9, 28% are aged 10-14 and 15% are aged 15-17

2019 mid-year population estimates

0-4 5-9 10-14 15-17



Deprivation levels are high

In the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI), Walsall is the **19th most deprived Local Authority** in the country with 48 (29%) of neighbourhoods in the top 10% of most deprived neighbourhoods nationally which is the 15th highest.

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

In poverty – before hc In poverty – after hc not in poverty



39% of children live in poverty after housing costs

Children and young people have more health challenges than their peers

4.2% of babies are born with a low birth weight

compared with 3.5% for stat neighbours, 3.3% in the West Midlands and 2.9% nationally

9.4 per 1000 children die before their first birthday

compared with 5.2 for stat neighbours, 5.7 in the West Midlands and 3.9 nationally

3.0% of young girls get pregnant at 15,16 or 17

compared with 2.3% for stat neighbours, 1.9% in the West Midlands and 1.7% nationally

11.0 per 10,000 would be admitted to hospital as an inpatient for mental health issues

compared with 7.4 for stat neighbours, 9.0 in the West Midlands and 8.8 nationally

1.5 per 10,000 admitted to hospital for alcohol related issues

compared with 2.9 for stat neighbours, 2.6 in the West Midlands and 3.2 nationally

What is our data telling us?

Key messages

- **In August 2019 the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership rolled out the Right Help, Right Time guidance across the partnership. The guidance is designed to ensure that all partners are aware of the thresholds of need for each level of support that children and families may need to access from universal to statutory social care services. The application of the Right Help Right Time Guidance means that children are now in the right part of the system, whether that be within universal services, Early Help or Children's Social Care. The roll out and implementation of this guidance has had an impact on the indicators that are derived from the statutory returns that are submitted to the DfE.**
- **The number of children open to social care statutory services has reduced.** There were 2,109 children in need (including children in care and children on a child protection plan) - a rate of 306 per 10,000 children aged 0-17. The number of children in need fell by 30% between 2018-19 and 2019-20 and continues to fall.
- **Requests for support from Children's Social Care have reduced.** There were 4,367 referrals to children's social care for 3,738 children, a rate of 633 per 10,000 children. The rate of referrals has decreased in 2019-20 and is lower than the rate among statistical neighbours but remains higher than the rate regionally and nationally
- **Timeliness of assessments is improving.** 74.7% of assessments were completed within 45 days. This was a reduction on performance in the previous year and is below the performance of comparators although there has been significant improvement in performance throughout 2020.
- **Child protection investigations are reducing and where a child protection conference does need to take place, they are timely.** Section 47 enquiries have decreased significantly in 2019-20 and the rate is lower than statistical neighbours but remains slightly higher than regional and national comparators. Walsall's performance in undertaking timely initial child protection conferences is improving and better than comparators.
- **The number of children who are subject of a child protection plan is reducing.** There were 240 children subject of a plan on 31st March 2020 – a 39% reduction compared to the previous year.
- **Domestic Violence and Emotional Abuse are the most common reasons for children being referred into social care** in Walsall and becoming subject of a child protection plan. There are fewer requests for assessments for parental mental ill-health, substance misuse and alcohol misuse than comparators.
- **The number of children in care is increasing** and has continued to increase throughout 2020 due to children not being able to leave care during the Covid-19 crisis.
- **More children are placed in foster care than comparators and fewer are placed at distance from home.**

Children open to services

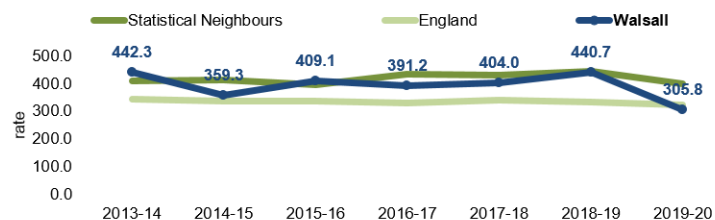


There were 2,109 children in need (including children in care and children on a child protection plan) - a rate of 306 per 10,000 children aged 0-17. The number of children in need fell by 30% between 2018-19 and 2019-20 and continues to reduce.

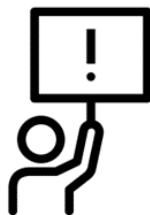
- The number of children in need has fallen from 3,004 on 31st March 2019 to 2,109 on 31st March 2020 – a fall of 30%. The rate of children in need has fallen by a slightly higher 31% due to increases in population from 441 to 306.
- In 2019 the rate of children in need was higher than national (334), regional (352) but slightly lower than statistical neighbours (440).
- The decrease in the number of children open to services is due to falls in the number of children open at children in need and child protection level which is linked to work that has been undertaken on implementation of the Safeguarding Partnership's Right Help, Right Time guidance. The work, which started in autumn 2019 has focused on ensuring that children are receiving help at the right level of intervention and in the right part of the system, whether that be via Early Help, a child in need plan or a child protection plan or by being taken into care.
- The number of children in care has increased between 31st March 2019 and 31st March 2020 and has continued to increase throughout 2020. The increase this year is influenced by a reduction in the number of children leaving care due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

	2013-14 rate	2014-15 rate	2015-16 rate	2016-17 rate	2017-18 rate	2018-19 rate	2019-20 rate	% change from '18-19 to '19-
Walsall	442.3	359.3	409.1	391.2	404.0	440.7	305.8	Down -31%
Statistical Neighbours	409.3	414.1	395.2	435.8	432.4	444.4	401.1	Down -10%
England	343.7	336.6	337.3	330.1	341.0	334.2	323.7	Down -3%
West Midlands	378.2	368.6	358.9	352.2	360.2	352.3	338.1	Down -4%

Rate of children in need at 31 March per 10,000 children



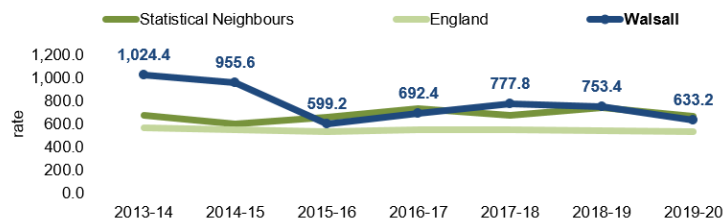
Children in need- referrals and demand



There were 4,367 referrals to children’s social care for 3,738 children, a rate of 633 per 10,000 children. The rate of referrals has decreased in 2019-20 and is lower than the rate among statistical neighbours but remains higher than the rate regionally and nationally.

	2013-14 rate	2014-15 rate	2015-16 rate	2016-17 rate	2017-18 rate	2018-19 rate	2019-20 rate	% change from '18-19 to '19-
Walsall	1,024.4	955.6	599.2	692.4	777.8	753.4	633.2	Down -16%
Statistical Neighbours	676.0	600.1	663.0	731.4	676.5	743.8	667.1	Down -10%
England	571.7	548.3	532.2	548.2	552.5	544.5	534.8	Down -2%
West Midlands	612.6	613.3	559.0	654.0	649.3	593.1	528.6	Down -11%

Rate of referrals per 10,000 children



- The number of referrals received between 01st April 2019 and 31st March 2020 fell to 4,367 (633 per 10,000 population), from 5,135 (753 per 10,000 population) in the same period in the previous year – a decrease of 15%.
- In 2018-19 the rate of referrals was higher than national, regional and statistical neighbours. Demand has decreased across the board, however, the rate in 2019-20 remains 18% higher than the national and 20% higher than the regional rates but is now lower than statistical neighbours.
- Walsall had a slightly higher percentage of repeat referrals than comparators at with 26% of referrals being received within 12 months of a previous referral compared with 23% nationally, 23% regionally and 25% among statistical neighbours.

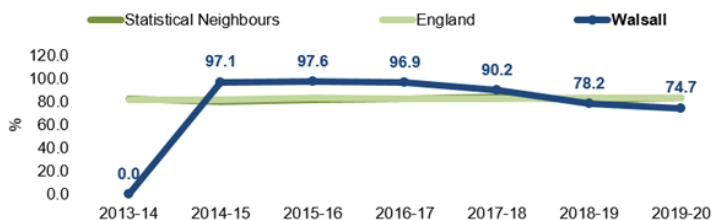
Children in need- assessments



74.7% of assessments were completed within 45 days. This was a reduction on performance in the previous year and is below the performance of comparators although there has been significant improvement in performance throughout 2020.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% change from '18-19 to '19-	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Walsall	-	97.1	97.6	96.9	90.2	78.2	74.7	Down	-4%
Statistical Neighbours	83.0	80.1	81.6	83.0	83.9	81.7	83.5	Up	2%
England	82.2	81.5	83.4	82.9	82.7	83.1	83.9	Up	1%
West Midlands	79.2	74.9	82.1	84.3	84.6	84.5	82.7	Down	-2%

% Assessment timeliness: within 45 working days



- Although referrals remain higher than regional and national comparators, the percentage of referrals that result in an assessment where the child is found not to be in need is higher than comparators at 46% in 2019-20, compared with 30% nationally, 29% regionally and 27% among statistical neighbours.
- 75% of assessments in Walsall were completed within 45 days – this is below performance among national (84%), regional (83%) and statistical neighbour (84%) comparators. This is a reduction on previous years performance of 78%, which in turn was a significant decrease on historically good performance since 2014, where the percentage of assessments completed within 45 days was consistently over 90% and was as a result of resource pressures at the front door throughout 2018-19 and the early part of 2019-20.
- The top five factors of need identified at assessment in Walsall are: parental domestic violence (35.1%), other factors (33.7%), emotional abuse (25.7%), parental mental health issues (19.5%) and neglect (14.9%). The percentage assessments featuring domestic abuse and emotional abuse are similar to comparators and the percentage featuring neglect is slightly lower. However, the percentage of assessments featuring parental mental health is significantly lower than comparators, as are the percentage of assessments featuring parental drug abuse and alcohol misuse.

Child Protection - investigations



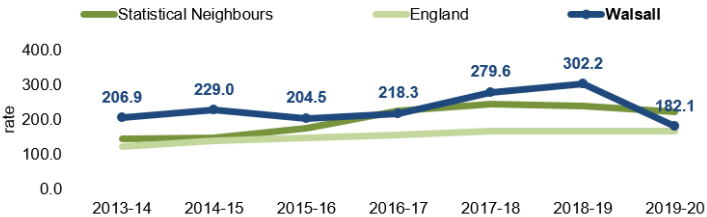
Section 47 enquiries have decreased significantly in 2019-20 and the rate is lower than statistical neighbours but slightly higher than national and regional comparators

Walsall’s performance in undertaking timely initial child protection conferences is improving and better than comparators.

	2013-14 rate	2014-15 rate	2015-16 rate	2016-17 rate	2017-18 rate	2018-19 rate	2019-20 rate	% change from '18-19 to '19-
Walsall	206.9	229.0	204.5	218.3	279.6	302.2	182.1	Down -40%
Statistical Neighbours	145.6	149.2	175.1	225.8	245.4	240.3	223.2	Down -7%
England	124.0	138.5	147.7	157.6	166.9	168.3	167.2	Down -1%
West Midlands	125.6	158.5	165.8	182.1	191.8	187.0	169.5	Down -9%

- Where there are child protection concerns a section 47 enquiry will be carried out to determine whether an initial child protection conference is required. In 2019-20 there were 1,256 (a rate of 182 per 10,000 population) section 47 enquiries completed – a 40% decrease on the previous year. In previous years the rate of section 47 enquiries was higher than comparators. In 2019-20, the rate of enquiries in Walsall remained slightly higher than regional and national comparators but was lower than statistical neighbours.
- There is a similar pattern in the number and rate of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) carried out in 2019-20 where there has been a 26% reduction in the number of ICPCs compared to the previous year. The conversion rate of section 47 enquiries to ICPCs is 44% and in line with comparators – England (43%), regional (44%) and statistical neighbours (45%). This is an improvement on a conversion rate of 36% in the previous year which was below that of comparators.
- 90% of ICPCs are completed within 15 days of the strategy discussion – performance in this area has been consistently good in Walsall over the past four years and is significantly better than performance across comparators.

Section 47s in the year as a rate per 10,000 of children aged under 18 years

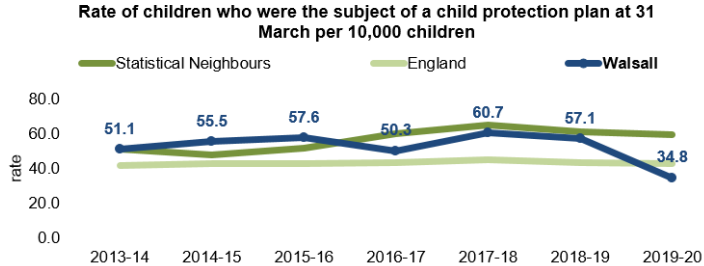


Child Protection – numbers on a plan



There were 240 children on a child protection plan at 31st March 2020, a rate of 35 per 10,000 children aged 0-17 – a reduction of 39%

	2013-14 rate	2014-15 rate	2015-16 rate	2016-17 rate	2017-18 rate	2018-19 rate	2019-20 rate	% change from '18-19 to '19-	
Walsall	51.1	55.5	57.6	50.3	60.7	57.1	34.8	Down	-39%
Statistical Neighbours	51.4	47.7	51.9	60.3	65.2	61.2	59.5	Down	-3%
England	42.0	42.9	43.1	43.3	45.3	43.7	42.8	Down	-2%
West Midlands	44.5	45.9	43.2	45.3	49.9	47.3	45.5	Down	-4%



- 441 children started to become subject of a plan (a rate of 64 per 10,000 population). This is higher than the national and regional comparators but lower than the statistical neighbours. 107 or 24% of the children who became subject of a plan during the year had previously been the subject of a child protection plan which is slightly higher than comparators.
- The number and rate of children on a child protection plan on 31st March reduced by 39% between 2019 and 2020. The rate of children who are subject of a plan has been lower than statistical neighbours since 2017 but has been consistently higher than the England and regional averages – however, in 2020 the rate was lower than all comparators. A rate of 34.8 per 10,000 population places Walsall 46th out of 150 local authorities for whom data is available.
- The reduction in the number of children subject of child protection plans is due to improvements in threshold application, changes in practice as a result of the implementation of Family Safeguarding and efforts to support families at an earlier stage of need to prevent escalation.

Child Protection – reasons for support



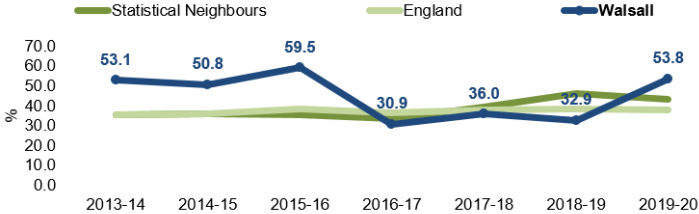
In 2019-20 the main reason children were subject of child protection plan was for emotional abuse, followed by neglect. This is different to previous years and comparators where neglect was the main category of abuse.

	2013-14 %	2014-15 %	2015-16 %	2016-17 %	2017-18 %	2018-19 %	2019-20 %	% change from '18-19 to '19-
Walsall	53.1	50.8	59.5	30.9	36.0	32.9	53.8	Up 63%
Statistical Neighbours	35.7	36.2	35.8	33.5	39.6	46.1	43.3	Down -6%
England	35.6	36.3	38.3	36.7	37.8	38.3	37.8	Down -1%
West Midlands	40.2	44.2	44.7	36.8	42.4	43.9	44.2	Up 1%

- 54% of the children who were subject of a child protection plan at the 31st March 2020 had a category of abuse of emotional abuse and 41% had a category of abuse of neglect. This is a change to the previous year when neglect was the most frequent category of abuse at 56%. Comparators have not seen the same switch and where 50% (England), 47% (West Midlands) and 47% (Statistical Neighbours) has a category of abuse of neglect and 38% (England), 44% (West Midlands) and 43% (Statistical Neighbours) are subject of a plan for emotional abuse.

- 95% of children subject of plan had received their reviews on time throughout the year compared with 98% in the previous year. Performance has been consistently good in Walsall and is better than comparators where 92% nationally, 91% regionally and 91% among comparators received their reviews on time.

CPP at 31 March category of abuse: % Emotional Abuse (latest)



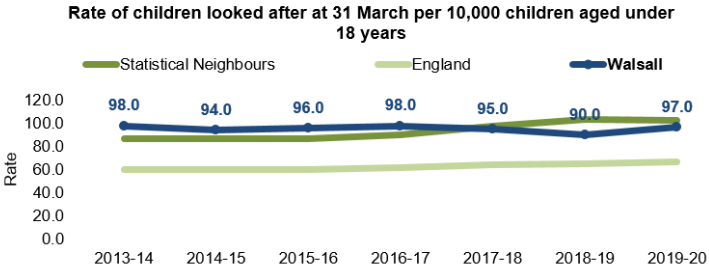
Children in care



There were 671 children in care at 31st March 2020, a rate of 97 per 10,000 children aged 0-17. This is higher than national and regional comparators but lower than statistical neighbours.

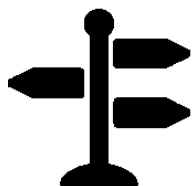
Walsall has a higher proportion of its children in care placed in foster placements than comparators and a lower proportion are placed at distance from their home.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% change from '18-19 to '19-20	
Walsall	98.0	94.0	96.0	98.0	95.0	90.0	97.0	Up	8%
Statistical Neighbours	86.4	87.0	86.8	90.3	97.9	103.2	102.6	Down	-1%
England	60.0	60.0	60.0	62.0	64.0	65.0	67.0	Up	3%
West Midlands	73.0	74.0	73.0	75.0	78.0	82.0	82.0	Same	0%



- 671 children were in care in Walsall as at 31st March 2020, a rate of 97 per 10,000 population. This is a higher rate than England (67) and the West Midlands (82) but a lower rate than statistical neighbours (103). The number of children in care increased in 2019-20.
- 12 (2%) of the children in care as at 31st March 2020 were unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC). This is lower than the national rate of 6%, the regional rate of 4% and the statistical neighbour average of 3%.
- Between 2018-19 and 2019-20, the percentage of children in care on an interim care order doubled from 13% to 26%, whereas the percentage of children on a full care order fell from 73% to 61%. 7% of children in care were on a section 20 compared with 17% nationally, 12% regionally and 11% among statistical neighbours.
- Walsall has a higher percentage of children placed in Foster Care than comparators – 78% compared to 72% nationally, 74% regionally and 72% among statistical neighbours. Just 7% of children in care in Walsall were in secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation compared with 13% nationally and 12% regionally and among statistical neighbours.
- 11% of children in care as at 31st March in Walsall were placed outside of the LA boundary and more than 20 miles from home. This is positive and better performance than comparators where 16% were placed outside of the LA boundary and more than 20 miles from home in England, 14% regionally and 18% among statistical neighbours.

Children in care – Leaving care

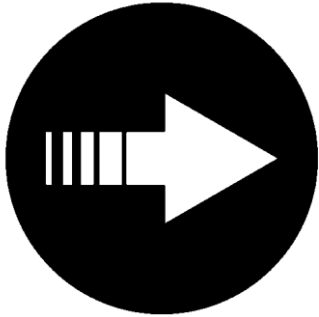


184 children left care with 41 leaving with a special guardianship order and 16 leaving due to adoption.

- 184 children left care during 2019-20. 41, 22% of children left care as part of a Special Guardianship Order compared with 12% nationally, 9% regionally and 24% among statistical neighbours.
- 16, 17% of children left care through adoption compared with 23% nationally, 27% regionally and 24% among statistical neighbours. This is half the number of children who left care as part of an adoption in 2018-19, however, the number of adoptions are likely to increase in 2020-21 or early 2021-22. At the end of November, nine children have been adopted and there are a further 24 placed for adoption who are awaiting final orders.

- Confirmed performance and comparator data for 2019-20 for care leavers (aged 19-21) is not yet available – however, our indicative out-turn for 2019-20 shows that:
- 90% of care leavers (aged 19-21) were in touch with the local authority. This was a reduction of 7% points compared with 2018-19 but remains in line with comparators.
- 57% of care leavers were in education, employment or training (EET) in 2019-20 – this was an decrease of 6% points compared with 2018-19 but remained higher than comparators 2018-19 out-turn.
- 95% of care leavers were in accommodation that was considered suitable in 2019-20 – an increase of 5% points compared with 2018-19 and higher than 2018-19 comparator results.

2020-21 Performance so far.....



- Throughout 2020 we have continued to see a decrease in the number of children who are open to services, however the number of children in care has continued to increase – this is linked to a reduction in the number of children that have been able to leave care due to pandemic, either because of court unavailability or because care leavers have chosen to remain in care.
- The number of referrals to social care have also continued to decrease. At the start of the lockdown in March 2020 and through April, we saw an initial dip in the number of referrals to social care, however, referral numbers quickly returned to more usual levels and we did not see an increase when schools returned in September. This provides assurance that the reductions in referrals seen this year are part of the ongoing work that has continued in implementing the Right Help, Right Time guidance rather than as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- There has been significant improvement in the percentage of assessments that have been completed within 45 days throughout 2020 and at the end of November performance had improved to 90%.
- The number of children who are subject of a child protection plan has continued to decrease throughout 2020. This continues to be due to improvements in threshold application and changes in practice and work, including external review, is being undertaken to continue to provide senior managers with assurance.
- There is a possibility the percentage of children placed at distance will increase in 2020-2021 as the reduction in the number of children leaving care during the pandemic has put pressure on placement sufficiency making it more difficult to find placements closer to home.
- There has been some impact of the Covid-19 pandemic for our Care Leavers with an increase in the proportion that are in touch (97% at the end of November), but a reduction in the percentage that were in Education, Employment and Training due to reduced opportunities, however, towards the end of the year there had been some improvement and at the end of November 54% were in EET.
- There was also some reduction in the proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation in the summer months as a result of the pandemic, however by the end of November 93% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation.

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14 JANUARY 2021

Draft Revenue Budget Feedback and Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr T Wilson – Children's

Executive Summary:

The second budget report to Cabinet on 9 December 2020 includes feedback from this Committee on the draft budget plan as reported to Cabinet on 28 October 2020, along with a draft Capital Programme for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24.

The draft capital programme for 2021/22 totals £65.99m. It sets out new capital investment funded from the council's own resources of £28.17m (funded by capital receipts and borrowing) and externally funded schemes of £37.82m (funded by capital grants) and represents a balanced programme for 2021/22. In addition, the report sets out a further two years of indicative proposals to 2023/24.

Capital programme resources are limited. The financing for capital investment is heavily reliant on grants and funding received from the Government. The remaining flexibility is currently through capital receipts and borrowing. Capital receipts projections however are limited, and fully dependent on when council assets are sold.

This report provides an extract of the draft capital programme that relates to the services within the remit of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, split into 2 areas –

1. Council funded schemes – those schemes funded from the councils own resources (borrowing and capital receipts) – see **Appendix 1**. These include a refresh of the draft programme reported to Council in February 2020, along with additional schemes deemed as being high priority based on three categories (health & safety, council priority and unavoidable infrastructure). For 2022/23 onwards, the full impact of these projects will be reviewed, and funding revisited as part of the rolling annual budget process. There may be a number of schemes that will require match funding in year to secure external resources, which will be reviewed in year and funds drawn down as projects are confirmed.

2. Externally funded schemes – those schemes funded from grant or other external contributions. There are no schemes relating to the remit of this committee.

Any additional receipts received in year (excluding those earmarked for specific schemes) will be considered to fund those projects on the reserve list. There are no schemes relating to the remit of this committee.

Walsall Proud Programme work streams will identify one off revenue and capital investment required to ensure the required savings are delivered. Regular Proud programme updates will be provided to Cabinet and Scrutiny, and the S151 Officer will report throughout the budget process on the robustness of budget estimates to ensure that a legally balanced 2021/22 budget is set in February 2021.

Feedback from this Committee on the content of this report will be reported back to Cabinet on 10 February 2021 prior to the recommendation of the final revenue and capital budget plan to Council on 25 February 2021.

Reason for scrutiny:

For Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the draft Capital Programme as reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2020, specifically in relation to capital schemes that fall with services under the remit of this Committee, and for feedback to be taken into account in the finalisation of the budget by Cabinet on 10 February 2021 for recommendation to Council on 25 February 2021.

Recommendations:

That:

1. The Committee are recommended to consider the draft capital budget proposals attached that relate to the remit of this committee.
2. The Committee are asked to note that consultation continues on all revenue policy proposals previously reported, and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 10 February 2021, along with further revenue options to close the gap to ensure we set a balanced budget for 2021/22.

Resource and legal considerations:

Cabinet, on 9 December 2020, were presented with the draft capital programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24. The full Cabinet report can be accessed at the following link:

[Draft Revenue Budget Feedback and Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24](#)

Background papers:

Draft Revenue Budget Feedback and Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 as approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2020 (attached).

Contact Officers:

Sally Rowe – Executive Director Children’s Services

✉ Sally.Rowe@walsall.gov.uk

Vicky Buckley – Interim Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord, ☎ 07983 604698, ✉

Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 – Council Funded Schemes

Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Prior Year Approvals				
Children's Locality Model (<i>Children's</i>)	The Children's Services Right 4 Children Transformation Programme is looking to connect services and professionals by integrating staff into the communities using a locality model of working to help develop a stronger approach in helping young children, young people and their families in partnership with the voluntary and community sector. The intention is to move Social workers within Children's Social Care into locality areas across the borough with Early Help Services already based in 4 well established localities. Wherever possible, the aim is to use current operational buildings in order to keep costs to a minimum.	TBC	0	0
Total Draft Capital Programme – Council Funded Schemes within remit of Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee		TBC	0	0

Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2020/21

Committee date	15th September	10th November	14th January	18th March
<i>Report to ED</i>		<i>22nd October</i>	<i>31st December</i>	<i>25th February</i>
<i>Report to Democratic Services</i>		<i>30th October</i>	<i>5th January</i>	<i>9th March</i>
Recruitment and retention of social workers				
Exploitation (partnership update)				
Regional Adoption Agency				
Family Safeguarding Model				
FDAC				
Evaluation of summer activity programme		Briefing paper-circulated outside of mtg.		
Right for Children transformation programme				
Performance item			Q1 and Q2	
Finance - Draft revenue and capital budget 2021/22				
Update on children's routine assessments		Briefing paper		
Youth Justice Working Group		Final report		

*The Daisy Project – June/July



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

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

4 January 2020

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 helen.owen@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.

Cabinet responsibilities are as follows

- Leader of the Council – Councillor Bird
- Deputy Leader, Regeneration – Councillor Andrew
- Deputy Leader, Resilient Communities – Councillor Perry
- Adult social care – Councillor Martin
- Children’s– Councillor Wilson
- Clean and green – Councillor Butler
- Education and skills – Councillor Towe
- Health and wellbeing – Councillor Craddock
- Personnel and business support – Councillor Chattha

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 (helen.owen@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:

is, or the

- (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which 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 £250,000.

(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.

Dates of meetings

2020 28 October
9 December

2021 10 February
17 March
21 April

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

FEBRUARY TO MAY2021(4.1.21)

1 7	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
8/20 (3.2.20)	Black Country Transport Team Collaboration Agreement: To approve the agreement to facilitate the delivery of a strategic transportation function across the four Black Country local authorities	Cabinet (Nonkey decision)	Matt Crowton 01922 654358 matt.crowton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	10 February2021
27/19 (8.7.19)	A34 Walsall to Birmingham SPRINT (Bus Rapid Transit) scheme – Phase 1: To approve the sprint scheme	Cabinet (Key decision)	Matt Crowton 01922 654358 matt.crowton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	10 February2021
68/19 (2.12.19)	West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Scheme: To approve a plan to improve bus travel in the A34 Walsall to Birmingham corridor through delivery of a new SPRINT service.	Cabinet (Key decision)	Matt Crowton 01922 654358 matt.crowton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	10 February2021
43/18 (8.10.18)	Lighting Invest to Save: To consider proposals for a major investment in the highway lighting infrastructure by	Cabinet (Key	Paul Leighton 07831 120871 paul.leighton@walsall.gov.uk	Public, Walsall Public Lighting Ltd., industry	Councillor Andrew	10 February2021

	replacing all existing lighting with energy efficient LED lighting	decision)	gov.uk	companies, internal		
1/21 (4.1.21)	Domestic Abuse Refuge Contract: to approve a six month extension to the contract which provides a refuge service for victims of domestic abuse.	Cabinet (Key decision)	Neil Hollyhead Neil.hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	10 February 2021
2/21 (4.1.21)	Willenhall Masterplan: To approve matters relating to Strategic Land Acquisitions. <i>Private Session: Contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person.</i>	Cabinet (Key Decision)	Willenhall Economic & Development Programme; and Walsall Regeneration & Development Pipeline: procurement of a strategic advisor. Joel Maybury Joel.maybury@walsall.gov.uk	Internal External Legal Representative.	Councillor Andrew	10 February 2021
58/20 (2.11.20)	Citizens advice Walsall: To approve variation of grant agreement	Cabinet (Key decision)	Elise Hopkins elise.hopkins@walsall.gov.uk Michelle Dudson michelle.dudson@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew/ Councillor Perry	10 February 2021
35/20 (7.9.20)	Preparing for Adulthood policy: To approve a new policy to deliver timely and robust plans for young people preparing for adulthood	Cabinet (Key decision)	Jeanette Knapper jeanette.knapper@walsall.gov.uk	Internal, SEND Improvement Board, Health operational partners &CCG	Councillor Martin	10 February 2021

3/21 (4.1.21)	Supplier Relief Payments to contracted and non-contracted Adult Social Care providers: To agree additional budget to support delivery of service to ensure continuity of care and support	Cabinet (Key decision)	Tracy Simcox Tracy.simcox@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Martin	10 February 2021
48/20 (5.10.20)	Access and Inclusion: Response to report and recommendations of Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet (Non key decision)	Sharon Kelly 01922 652895 sharon.kelly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Towe	10 February 2021
62/20 (2.11.20)	Appointment of Major works technical advisor: To provide services such as architects, quantity surveyors, engineers, etc. for a period of 2 + 1 + 1 years for corporate landlord	Cabinet (Key decision)	Derwyn Owen 01922 650747 derwyn.owen@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Chattha	10 February 2021
45/20 (7.9.20)	Corporate Financial Performance and Covid-19 update – To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2020 and impact on Covid-19	Cabinet (Non key decision)	Vicky Buckley 01922 652326 vicky.buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Bird	10 February 2021
4/21 (4.1.21)	Corporate Plan Refresh: To consider a refresh of the Council's Corporate Plan for 2021/22 and forward to Council for approval.	Cabinet Council	Christine Williams Christine.Williams2@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Bird	Cabinet - 10 February 2021 Council - 25 February 2021
46/20 (7.9.20)	Corporate Budget Plan 2020/21 – 2023/24, and Treasury Management	Cabinet	Vicky Buckley 01922 652326	Council tax payers, Business rate	Councillor Bird	Cabinet - 10 February 2021

	and investment Strategy 2021/2022: To approve the final budget and Council tax for approval by Council	(Key decision)	vicky.buckley@walsall.gov.uk	payers, voluntary and community organisations		Council - 25 February 2021
47/20 (7.9.20)	Corporate Plan delivery – Quarter 3 monitoring: To report performance monitoring information relating to the priorities and outcomes included in the Corporate Plan	Cabinet (Non key decision)	Helen Dudson helen.dudson@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Bird	10 February 2021
3/20 (6.1.20)	Strategic development at Moxley Road, Darlaston <i>Private session: Report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person</i>	Cabinet (Key decision)	Joel Maybury Joel.Maybury@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	10 February 2021
51/20 (5.10.20)	High Needs Funding Formula: To approve changes to the formula to be used for the allocation of High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant funding for the 2021/22 academic year	Cabinet (Key decision)	Andy Crabtree Mohammed Irfan 01922 652330	Schools Forum	Councillor Towe	10 February 2021
5/21 (4.1.21)	Regional Supported Accommodation: To agree to be part of a 4 year regional framework contract for supported accommodation for the West Midlands region, covering 14 local authorities and Trusts if appropriate.	Cabinet	David DeMay David.demay@walsall.gov.uk Andrea Cooke Andrea.cooke@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Wilson	10 February 2021
6/21	Black Country Tenancy Strategy: To	Cabinet	Neil Hollyhead	Internal	Councillor	17 March 2021

(4.1.21)	approve the strategy to enable a uniform approach across the Black Country for Fixed Term Tenancies and Affordable Rents by registered providers of social housing	(Key decision)	Neil.hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk		Andrew	
7/21 (4.1.21)	Community Sponsorship: To approve a process to enable the community to house and support refugees	Cabinet (Key decision)	Neil Hollyhead Neil.hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk	Internal	Councillor Andrew	17 March 2021

BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE
FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Published up to May 2021 (for publication 04/01/2021)

Date first entered into the plan	Project Name	Key Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside of the Council)	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Date Item to be considered
05/10/2020	Accessing Growth – Springfield Interchange Change Request	Approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with Wolverhampton City Council, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Accessing Growth Springfield Interchange project with delivery to continue in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Richard Lawrence Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk	Wolverhampton City Council	17/02/2021
07/09/2020	School of Architecture and Built Environment – Change Request	Approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with the University of Wolverhampton, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the School of Architecture and Built Environment project with delivery to continue in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Richard Lawrence Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk	Wolverhampton City Council	17/02/2021
06/07/2020	Fab Kit PTP Ltd – Change Request	Approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with Performance Through People (PTP) Ltd, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Fab Kit PTP Ltd project with delivery to continue in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Simon Neilson simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk	Walsall Council	17/02/2021
05/10/2020	Dudley Canal Trust (Trips) Limited – Change Request PRIVATE SESSION - Not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12(A)	Approval for Sandwell Council to proceed to amending the funding repayment schedule with the Dudley Canal Trust (Trips) Limited, funded from within the Growing Places Fund (GPF), with delivery to continue in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Alison Knight alison.knight@sandwell.gov.uk	Sandwell Council	17/02/2021

BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE
FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Published up to May 2021 (for publication 04/01/2021)

Date first entered into the plan	Project Name	Key Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside of the Council)	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Date Item to be considered
	of the Local Government Act1972 (as amended)				
07/12/2020	Sandwell Housing Gap Funding - Phase 1 – Change Request	Approval for the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with Sandwell Council to deliver the Land and Property Investment Fund (LPIF) funded elements of the Sandwell Housing Gap Funding - Phase 1 project with delivery to commence in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Alison Knight alison.knight@sandwell.gov.uk	Sandwell Council	17/02/2021
04/01/2021	Review of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance and Black Country LEP Assurance Framework	Approval of the revised Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance process. Approval of the Black Country LEP Assurance Framework, following the implementation requirements of the new arrangements, and the programme of continuous improvement to further enhance the BC LEP governance and transparency above and beyond published government standards, included as Attachment 1 to this report.	Dr Helen Paterson chiefExecutive@walsall.gov.uk Simon Neilson simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk	Dudley MBC Sandwell MBC Walsall MBC Wolverhampton CC	17/02/2020

BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE
FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Published up to May 2021 (for publication 04/01/2021)

Date first entered into the plan	Project Name	Key Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside of the Council)	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Date Item to be considered
04/01/2021	Growth Hub - EU Transition Business Readiness Funding	Approval for the Accountable Body (Walsall Council) to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Black Country Consortium Ltd for the additional award of EU Transition Business Readiness Growth Hub Grant Funding with delivery to commence in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Simon Neilson simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk	Walsall Council	17/02/2021
04/01/2021	Hub to Home Transport Innovation Centre and Test Track Project: Very Light Rail and Autonomous Technologies – National Innovation Centre	Approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to enter into a Grant Agreement with Dudley Council to deliver the Local Growth Deal Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Hub to Home Transport Innovation Centre and Test Track Project: Very Light Rail and Autonomous Technologies – National Innovation Centre project with delivery to commence in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Helen Martin helen.martin@dudley.gov.uk	Dudley Council	31/03/2021
04/07/2021	Getting Building Fund –Capital and Revenue Funding Approval	Approval for the Accountable Body (Walsall Council) to use the revenue funding and capital contingency funding for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walsall Council to carry out its role as Accountable Body to the Getting Building Fund programme; •the Black Country Consortium for the Management and Administration functions of the Getting Building Fund, and; •Walsall Council to cover the costs of the external legal and technical fees in support of managing the programme. 	Papers TBC – Simon Neilson simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk	Walsall Council	31/03/2021

BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE
FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Published up to May 2021 (for publication 04/01/2021)

Date first entered into the plan	Project Name	Key Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside of the Council)	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Date Item to be considered
07/01/2021	Land & Property Investment Fund – Programme Extension	<p>Approval for the Black Country Land and Property Investment Fund programme (LPIF), be re-profiled to allow expenditure and outputs to be claimed up to March 2025.</p> <p>Approval for the programme management costs, within this fund be reprofiled for an additional year to March 2026, to ensure that the expenditure and outputs are audited in line with the Black Country Assurance Framework.</p>	Papers TBC – Simon Neilson simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk	Walsall Council	31/03/2021
05/10/2020	Dudley Advanced Construction Centre – Change Request	Approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with Dudley College, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Dudley Advanced Construction Centre project with delivery to continue in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Helen Martin helen.martin@dudley.gov.uk	Dudley Council	31/03/2021
05/10/2020	Advanced Science Engineering and Technology – Change Request	Approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with Halesowen College, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Advanced Science Engineering and Technology project with delivery to continue in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Helen Martin helen.martin@dudley.gov.uk	Dudley Council	31/03/2021
07/09/2020	Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills – Change Request	Approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amending the Grant Agreement with the University of Wolverhampton, to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills project with delivery to continue in the 2020/21 financial year.	Papers TBC – Richard Lawrence Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk	Wolverhampton City Council	31/03/2021