



Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on: **Tuesday 27 September 2022 at 6.00 p.m.**

Meeting at: Conference 2, Walsall Council House.

Public access to meeting via: <http://www.WalsallCouncilWebcasts.com>

MEMBERSHIP:

Chair:	Councillor. Hicken
Vice Chair:	Councillor. Jukes
	Councillor. Garcha
	Councillor. Harrison
	Councillor. Horton
	Councillor. Kaur
	Councillor. Mazhar
	Councillor. Nasreen
	Councillor. Rattigan
	Councillor C. Statham
	Councillor. Waters

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor T. Wilson.

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Democratic Services, Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TW
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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 26 July 2022	<u>Enclosed</u>
<u>Scrutiny</u>		
6.	Early Help Strategy To provide an overview of Walsall's Early Help partnership.	<u>Enclosed</u>
7.	Youth Justice Annual Plan and Strategic Priorities An overview of the Youth Justice Annual Plan and Strategic Priorities.	<u>Enclosed</u>
<u>Overview</u>		
8.	Recommendation Tracker To review progress with recommendations from previous meetings.	<u>Enclosed</u>
9.	Areas of Focus 2022/23 To agree the Committees Work Programme and review the Forward Plans for Walsall Council and the Black Country Executive Committee.	<u>Enclosed</u>
10.	Date of next meeting To note that the date of the next meeting will be 3 November 2022.	

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</p>

	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.
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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, CONFERENCE ROOM 2, WALSALL COUNCIL HOUSE

Tuesday 26th July 2022 at 6.00 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Councillor A. Hicken (Chair)
Councillor C. Statham
Councillor F. Mazhar
Councillor A. Garcha
Councillor L. Harrison
Councillor C. Horton
Councillor S. Nasreen
Councillor V. Waters
Councillor K. Sears

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor T. Wilson – Children's Services

Officers Present

Colleen Male	-	Director, Children's Social Work
Sally Rowe	-	Executive Director, Children's Services
Isabel Vanderheeren	-	Director, Early Help and Commissioning & Early Help
Nikki Gough	-	Democratic Services Officer
Reena Farmah	-	Democratic Services Officer

1/22 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor T. Jukes, Councillor L. Rattigan and Councillor Kaur.

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and introductions were made.

2/22 Substitutions

Councillor K. Sears substituted on behalf of Councillor L. Rattigan for the duration of the meeting.

3/22 Declarations of interest and party whip

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

4/25 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to be considered in private session.

5/22 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th April, 2022 were considered by the Committee.

Resolved

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 April 2022 be approved as a true and accurate record.

6/22

Areas of focus 2022/23

The Director, Children's Social Work - Support and Protection, spoke to the presentation and outlined the senior structure for Children's Services including various departments within the services area (see annexed). The Director of Children's Early Help & Partnership provided an overview of Early Help highlighting key areas within early help; intervention services, partnerships, Safeguarding Business Unit and the Youth Justice Service (Annexed).

The Director, Children's Social Work - Support and Protection introduced the key areas within the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee remit and highlighted specific issues that the Committee may wish to consider scrutinising;

- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Missing and Exploitation.
- Duty and Assessment.
- Family Safeguarding & Localities.
- Corporate Parenting, Transition & Leaving Care, Fostering.
- Children with Disabilities.
- Turning Point.
- Placement Team.
- Residential Services.
- Safeguarding & Review.
- Early Help and Locality Working.
- Youth Justice.
- Children's Commissioning.
- Walsall Right 4 Children Transformation.

The Director updated Members on the Walsall Right for Children agenda. There was a good understanding of the needs of children in the locality, this knowledge was used to drive forward work with key partners. The current structures had been developed to improve services following the 2017 Ofsted judgement that Children's Services required improvement. Members were informed that a transformation programme was developed to address the recommendations produced as a result of the Ofsted inspection to ensure children had the best possible start; were safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well. The five key principles that governed the improvement journey were getting the basic rights, listening to children and families and adjusting services. The voice of children, families and their lived experiences were very important and these helped shape services to improve outcomes.

Officers stated that creating a skilled and stable workforce was important to ensure quality services could be delivered alongside the development of a proud culture to improve quality, impact and outcomes.

The Committee were further informed that the Big Conversation programme was launched in 2018 and was ongoing (see annexed). The Authority worked in consultation with children, young people and parents to improve service delivery - this was a valuable part of decision making and transformation.

The Director addressed the Committee and provided details of the four strategic priorities 2022/23 :

- Reduce demand.
- Develop a highly skilled/stable workforce.
- Developing a mature strategic partnership platform.
- Respond to recommendations from inspections and National agenda's.

The Government had conducted a national care review report which had been published, the local authority were awaiting further guidance and recommendations which would be actioned accordingly.

Walsall Council was one of 75 local authorities that would be introducing family hubs to focus on the first 1000 days of a child's life. To provide support, advice and guidance, and promote better health. The programme would be led by the Local Authority alongside Partners from September, 2022.

The Portfolio Holder expressed his passion for Children Services and stated that engagement with young people was fundamental to service delivery which should be child focused. The main areas of focus were recommended for the 2022/23 municipal year were discussed:

- Locality Hubs across Walsall.
- Recruitment and retention (national shortage of social workers).
- Residential homes.
- Early Help Strategy.
- Youth Justice Priorities.
- Budget monitoring.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the Committee.

A Member requested an update following the 2017 Ofsted inspection.

The Executive Director, Children's Services responded that a follow up inspection took place in October 2021, the outcome was good overall, with areas for improvement.

A Member questioned the locations and selection criteria used for the locality hubs. The Director explained that the services were being delivered on a multi-level approach with a physical and virtual presence; buildings, outreach and virtual aspects depending upon the needs of families within the locations. There would be touch points with health colleagues.

A discussion took place regarding the data for teenage pregnancy rates and low birth weights, compared with West Midlands (2019 data). The Director explained that Public Health led on these issues with Children's Services supporting. There was a Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in place to consider prevention in partnership with schools and health colleagues. The Director explained that prevention was significant, and that not all issues were the responsibility of the local authority, however issues were connected and therefore a community partnership approach was required.

A discussion ensued regarding social workers caseloads. The Portfolio Holder clarified that caseloads influenced the number of social workers required and were monitored to ensure that social workers were not overloaded as managing workload was key for delivering quality work. The Executive Director, Children's Services reported that the current average caseload per social worker was 15.2, and from a national perspective this was good. However this number varied depending upon complexities of support required. The aim was to keep casework low; between 15/16 cases. Members were asked to note that there was a national shortage of social workers. Recruitment of newly qualified social workers had been positive and retention was a priority. Some Social workers were attracted to agency work due to higher salaries. It was stressed that staff turnover had improved, there was a workforce and wellbeing strategy in place which focused on retaining social workers, it was noted that there were some complex needs in Walsall.

The Chair requested summary data in relation to children in care, starters and leavers to be shared with the committee via e-mail.

A discussion took place regarding the management of residential homes. The Director explained that Walsall Council were not responsible for independent sector homes and explained that planning applications were managed by the planning department. Residential homes that the Authority had possession of were managed by Walsall Council. The Portfolio Holder commented further, that the homes were part of the planning process and would be managed by the planning department, the homes were regulated by Ofsted and any complaints were directed to them.

The Democratic Services Officer summarised the range of issues within this report (see annexed), and highlighted that the Scrutiny Overview Committee had recommended that the Children's Services Overview Scrutiny Committee to add the following items to their work programme for 2022/23:

- Children's Play strategy
- Children's Health

The following items were suggested to be added as focus areas; Exploitation and Youth Justice (serious violence and young people).

A Member questioned the difference between fostering and private fostering. The Director explained the definition of private fostering and fostering, stating the local authority had statutory responsibilities that allow them to assess and oversee children that were living with people who were not direct family.

A discussion took place regarding Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the Director explained that Children's Services worked very closely with CAMHS, they were a key partner, and a working group had been established to further progress services.

The following areas of focus were agreed by the Committee for the 2022/23 municipal year:

- Budget consultation.
- Children's Services Locality Working

- Residential Homes
- Early Help Strategy - process
- Social Worker recruitment and retention
- Private Fostering.
- Youth Justice – serious violence and young people.
- Exploitation and Safeguarding
- Family hubs update and progress.
- Children's Services Performance and Benchmarking.

Resolved that:

- 1. The areas of focus for 2022/23 were agreed.**
- 2. A work programme for the municipal year be produced containing agreed areas of focus, for agreement by the Committee.**
- 3. The glossary and a summary data in relation to children in care, starters and leavers to be shared with the committee via e-mail**

8/22 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 27 September 2022, at 6:00.p.m.
The Chair thanked all present for attending.

9/22 Termination of Meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.04 p.m.

27th September 2022

6

Early Help Strategy

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Cllr Tim Wilson. Children's

1. Aim

To provide an overview of Walsall's Early Help partnership, the alignment to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Supporting Families programme 2022 and beyond, the 2021- 2024 Early Help Strategy and the Locality Family Hub model, approach and response to children, young people and their families.

Early Help aims to ensure that vulnerable families who need support get it, at the right time, in the right way and that we continue to deliver locally based support for families, led by key Early Help practitioners and local partners, who know their areas and families best and who work with children, families and carers to build on their strengths and tackle their problems as soon as possible and head on.

Early intervention with the right support should prevent the needs of vulnerable families from escalating and reduce the demand for statutory intervention.

2. Recommendations

1. For the direction of travel for the Early Help Partnership to be supported
2. For progress and achievements to be endorsed

3. Report detail – know

3.1 Early Help Partnership

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) is the statutory guidance for multi-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and their families. The guidance defines Early Help as 'providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child/young person's life from the foundations years through to the teenage years.

Early Help is not the responsibility of one single agency it requires a multi-agency approach. The Walsall's Early Help partnership, is one where all organisations and services working with and for children, young people and their families, including schools, police, health, children's social care, early help localities, housing and the

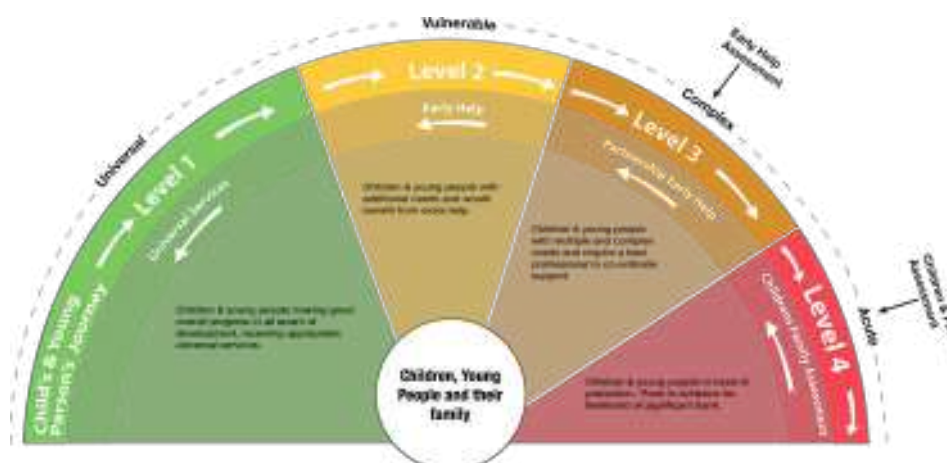
voluntary and community sector work in a collective and coordinated way to not only support families to avoid poor outcomes but to have ambition and to thrive.

Working together in this way, supporting families, providing 'effective whole family support' we know eradicates silo working, prevents children and young people entering the care system and/or escalating into statutory services, increases their chances to have a 'good' life, reduces the likelihood of involvement in crime and helping families into work, helps the whole family to thrive, build resilience and have an ambitious future.

There is an Early Help offer at all levels, partners deliver a range of Early Help interventions from signposting to local universal services, delivering single agency support through to more intensive support targeted at levels of need.

Intervening earlier and providing support is critical in reducing the impact of adversity and reducing the likelihood of problems escalating.

The continuum of need sets out how we can support at various stage of need:



3.2 The Supporting Families Programme 2022 to 2025

The Early Help Partnership is responsible for delivering the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities Supporting Families programme, launched in March 2021 and builds further on the previous Troubled Families programme which commenced in 2015.

The programme is aimed at providing targeted interventions for families with complex interconnected problems and is directly associated to the delivery of the partnership approach at level 3 within the continuum of need above.

The Supporting Families programme has 10 areas of priority need categories:

1. Education
2. Early Years
3. Health
4. Drugs & Alcohol
5. Family Relationships
6. Abuse & Exploitation
7. Crime Prevention and Tackling Crime
8. Domestic Abuse

9. Secure Housing
10. Financial Stability

For a family to be supported as part of this programme there has to be evidence of 3 or more needs within the family, this is assessed by the completion of an Early Help Assessment with a follow on 'team around the family, and agreed family plan of support'.

Supporting families to achieve successful outcome is key, the Department for Levelling Up have refreshed the 'outcome framework' due to be launched in October 2022. The framework clearly sets out how the Early Help partnership should be working with families and the evidence of achievement expected for each family against their presenting needs.

Following the recent changes in government guidance the Early Help partnership is reviewing the process, including the assessment, team around the family plan and support, linked to the Early Help Strategy priority one, culture & practice as set out below. The review and changes will be implemented from November 2022.

3.3 Early Help Partnership Strategy 2021-2024

November 2021 the Early Help Partnership launched the 2021-2024 Strategy , in doing so the partnership reflected on the achievements and impact on our families including:

Achievements	Impact
We met with key partners to strengthen locality partnership working based on the needs of children and young people needing Early Help support, such as emotional health & wellbeing, debt, unemployment and housing concerns.	As a result we have co-located partners including school nurses, DWP employment advisors, homeless & housing partners supporting local families within their local community.
We have developed an evidenced based informed parenting offer, a partnership between the local authority, school nursing and teenage parenting service	As a result we now offer a 'hybrid' model of delivery, including on-line self-help training, top tips, a range of group work courses based on needs and a bespoke 121 support in the family home. Over 700 families have been helped We worked with the Early Intervention Foundation (EiF) around the evaluation of our parenting offer and, the EiF told us <i>'the evaluation has showed statistically significant positive impact on parent's relationships and wellbeing post their attendance at an Early Help Parenting programme'</i>
We secured funding from the DWP to help us to understand the impact of parental conflict and consider how to raise the awareness around the importance of Reducing Parental Conflict and enhanced support to families and partners in understanding this further	As a result we have trained over 200 practitioners and partners from Childrens Social Care, School, Police, School Nurses, Health Visitors, Housing & the Voluntary Sector Worked as a partner with EiF to support the Reducing Parental Conflict evaluation measures which have now

	been introduced and published by the EiF. We are taking this work to the next stage, have pulled together a Black Country Consortium for Reducing Parental Conflict and have secured further funding, with Walsall leading on the programme.
We have co-designed our website with children, young people and families including providing a range of self-help advice, tops tips and on line courses	As a result we have a much improved information for parents/carers, children/young people and partners/professionals.

The partnership also held a review which sought to understand:

- Are we supporting the right children, young people and their families
- Are we providing the right support?
- Is the support effective and timely
- What is the impact of the pandemic

As part of the review the Early Help locality teams held a desk top review of the needs of 668 children/young people and met with children, young people and their families to understand

- What they felt 'a good life' looked and felt like
- What ambitions they had for their future
- What might stop them achieving their ambitions
- What impact had COVID had on their lives?

From the feedback and the desk top review the strategy was developed, it is an ambitious strategy designed to transform the ways of working and provision of early support to families in Walsall, key to achieving this ambition is a multi-agency commitment to provide effective, proportionate and high quality early help and supporting families to have their needs met in their local communities.

The strategy have 4 overarching priorities

Priority One: Culture & Practice - Ensure our Early Help partnership and the way in which we work together is fully understood and that together we achieve better outcomes for families.

Priority Two: Smart use of data – Share local data to understand the needs of our children, young people and their family.

Priority Three: Resilient Communities: Use local resources in the most effective way.

Priority Four: Voice: Children, Young People, Parents & Carers are heard.

Please see attached copy of the strategy

Alongside the strategy is an associated action plan, the governance of which is overseen by the Early Help Steering Group.

3.4 Early Help Family Hub's

Within each of the four localities within Walsall there is a 'Family Hub' where a range of co-located partners including Early Help, Social Workers, DWP seconded officers, Early Help PCSO's, Black Country Women's Aid, School Nurses, working together to understand their local families and the local needs and to ensure continued and collaborative support for families through the continuum of needs set out above.

The Family Hubs continue to be developed, Walsall is one of 75 local authorities to have been awarded a 3 year grant to further establish this model, with a specific focus on five areas of support

1. Parenting
2. Perinatal Mental Health
3. Parent-Infant Relationship
4. Breastfeeding
5. Home Learning

The local authorities Early Help service based within the locality Family Hubs are critical to the whole family delivery and have three main aims

- *Deliver* - a core and pro-actively targeted Early Help offer
- *Influence* – empower and enable partners / leveraging the power of universal services e.g. health visitors, school nurses and enable and empower families to self help
- *Co- ordinate* – harness the power of communities to develop a comprehensive offer around place

The service has a range of practitioners and functions in order to support children, young people, their families and partners as follows:

Family Support: There are four teams based across the localities, the teams offer a range of evidence based support and intervention to families within their localities. With the completion of an Early Help assessment of need with families and key partners along with developing a family support plan to ensure the families do not just avoid poor outcomes but have ambition and thrive.

The team consists of

- Early Years Practitioners - providing bespoke 121 support for families with children 0-5 years of age, supporting parents/carers in helping them understanding development, attachment, play, the importance of routines and boundaries, health eating etc. The practitioners also offer group work for parents/carers in line with national campaigns such as 'look, say, sing, play' and First Words Together
- SEND Practitioners – family support dedicated practitioners for children, young people with special educational needs disabilities (SEND). The practitioners work with families to help them understand a range of disabilities and needs including autism and ADHD, the practitioners support the children, young people and their parents/carers but in place strategies with managing behaviour, overcome fear of attending school and try to get them connected into the area where they live, with activities such as specialist support groups.
- Family Practitioners – working with local families experiencing a range of difficulties, including domestic abuse, emotional health & wellbeing, mental

health financial difficulties, housing, exploitation, risk of school exclusion, neglect etc.

- Partnership Officers – responsible for coordinating partner’s responsibilities around early help/intervention and influencing the partnership within their locality, encouraging working together, delivering the ‘Time 2 Talk’ Locality meetings, a platform to connect local partners, share information and consider the early help local offer against the needs of the local families

Parenting Team – responsible for delivering a wide range of evidence based parenting programmes to families either on a one to one basis or within a group work setting, the team offer programmes for every parent/carer who live within the borough, known as the universal offer, a specific offer based on the needs of families being support by the Early Help partnership, known as the targeted offer and a bespoke offer for parents/carers open again to the Early Help partnership and to Children’s Social Care, known as the intensive/targeted offer as follows:

- Universal Offer: range of on line free courses available to any parent/carer living within the borough i.e. Understanding my pregnancy, labour and birth, Understanding my baby, Understanding my child, Understanding my teenager, Understanding my child with additional needs etc.
- Targeted virtual web based courses with follow up ‘aftercare support’ available i.e. Support your children’s emotional well-being and develop routines and boundaries within the family, Grandparents’ Programme, Reducing Parental Conflict, Parenting a Teenager Programme, Being a Parent, Parenting Plus – Parenting for separated families etc.
- Intensive and targeted: delivery of one to one and group work programmes i.e. Mellow, Being a dad and a range of bespoke one to one support within family homes

Early Help Volunteers Service - 18 local volunteers, representative of the community, have links into the community work with and support families with a range of interventions, including supporting to attend meetings, appointments, help with parenting, support children and young people with homework and act as the ‘community scaffolding’ to integrate and ensure families feel connected.

The volunteers also enable families to ‘get involved’ and co-design services and activities, as well as the volunteering offering work experience opportunities and for some to gain work related skills.

Locality Development Team – responsible for developing a range of Early Help core services based on the needs of local families:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer - which provides children, young people who have additional needs, their parents, carers and other partners information, advice, support including a guide to the local services available in their local areas , as well as applying for and delivering a range of grant funded initiatives including
- Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) – a Department for Education grant delivering holiday activities Easter, Summer and Christmas to vulnerable children and young people
- Community Activity Reducing Exploitation (CARE) – a Department for Education grant to support young people aged 11 plus who have additional needs (diagnosed and undiagnosed) and who are at risk of low level exploitation

3.5 Demand

The demand and complexity of the children, young people and families referred to Early Help continues to increase:

- Approximately 900 children, young people and their families are being supported by Locality Early Help 0-19 service at any one time, of which
- 89% (801) are supported by our own Early Help locality teams
- Early Help assessments have increased by 53% (592) in 2021 compared to 2019 (281)

Early Help localities are starting to see and feel this impact; a recent review of the children and young people referred and supported since April 2021 evidenced that

- the main areas of need for support were associated with challenging behaviour, domestic abuse, emotional health & wellbeing, mental health concerns of the parents/carers, education and housing

The review also identified that

- 62% (558) of children, young people and their families had 3 or more of the presenting needs whilst,
- 25% (140) of these have complex needs of between 5 and 9 presenting needs, this is a 48% increase compared to 2019 where less than 4% of all contacts had 5 plus presenting needs, evidencing the complexity.
- The review evidenced that whilst partners are *slowly* increasing their role of lead professional, they predominately support those 'less complex' families at an Early Help level who have 2 of the presenting needs above.

4. Financial information

The Supporting Families programme is a payment by results with claims being sent by the local authority on a quarterly basis with the DLUHC having a risk based approach to assurance checks, targeting tailored assurance visits.

For a successful claim to be made the local authority has to evidence that all of the outcome framework measures have been met, and sustained for a 6 month period after the family have ceased received the support, no further referrals to key services should have been made and specifically education attendance, attainment has to be evidenced. For each successful claim Supporting Families pay £800.

Walsall have predicted a claim ratio of

- 2022/23 75% (351 families)
- 2023/24 85% (643 families)
- 2024/25 100% (936 families)

This is based on the increasing needs and complexities of families as set out in the demand section above.

The Supporting Families grant £1.4m (which includes payment by results) funds a range of ongoing committed activities across Early Help and Children's Social Care.

5. Reducing Inequalities

Effective and timely Early Help that improves parental relationships, family function and learning behaviours in children can help prevent or reduce a range of issues that result in or exacerbate inequality including exclusion from school, parental conflict, youth offending, and children reaching a crisis requiring interventions by social workers.

6. Decide

The Early Help partnership within its review has set out the key priorities for 2022 to 2024 based on the needs of families and the changes to the Supporting Families framework. Whilst there is no decision for scrutiny to be made around the priorities, scrutiny are asked to support the direction of travel and endorse the achievements made so far.

7. Respond

The Early Help partnership is responding to the needs of local families and to the Governments Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities Supporting Families programme, the Early Help Steering group oversees the delivery of the strategy and has this as an agenda item for update reports to be taken quarterly, with an annual review help November of each year.

Achieving and evidencing the outcomes secured for families and in turn meeting the payment by results target continues to be a significant focus and one that is critical to the Early Help service. Preparing for the significant increase set by the department for the 'target' number of families successfully supported and have continued to sustain the outcomes for a 6 month period after the support has ceased is critical. With the overall target set for Walsall

- 2022/23 at 468 families
- 2023/24 at 757 families
- 2024/25 at 936 families

8. Review

A review report to scrutiny is scheduled for 12 month, detailing the achievements, barriers, the changes to the early help process and payment by results.

Background papers

Early Help Strategy 2021- 2024

Author

Julie Jones

Early Help Group Manager

☎ 655412

✉ Julie.jones@walsall.gov.uk

WALSALL'S EARLY HELP PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY, APPROACH AND RESPONSE TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR FAMILIES

Supporting Families 2021- 2024



The right
children...

In the
right place...

At the
right time...

For the right
amount
of time.





Foreword

Walsall Right 4 Children

We are delighted to present the Early Help Strategy for Walsall, reflective of our belief that the provision of the 'Right Help at the Right Time' to stable, resilient families living in strong communities is the key to children and young people being safe, happy learning well and having an ambitious future.

Firstly we would like to thank the Early Help Partnership who have been actively involved in shaping the way we deliver our Early Help approach; partnership commitment is so critical to ensuring we work together and that our interventions with children, young people and families are timely, co-ordinated and effective.

This strategy recognises that the delivery of an effective Early Help offer is not the responsibility of any single agency but owned by all partners across the borough.

We know that working with and supporting families at the earliest signs of need is the most effective way to achieve positive outcomes and opportunities for their future.

A strong and local multi-agency partnership, that shares information in a timely way and understands data is key to effective 'early identification and intervention' and by working together helps to refocus the Early Help partnership offer and move appropriately away from the need for statutory and specialist services.

We have all been through difficult and unprecedented times during the Covid-19 pandemic and for some families, this has further exacerbated emerging problems, never has it been so vital that we work together to support families and harness the strength that communities have shown during this difficult period. Our collective learning from the experiences of the pandemic can and will help us to shape and strengthen our support to families, improve our practice and secure positive outcomes for children, young people and the families of Walsall.

The Governments programme 'Supporting Families 2021-22 and beyond aims to take the former Troubled Families Programme to a new phase with a refreshed vision and focus on 'building the resilience of families', so they can 'find their own solutions to problems' and importantly ensure families don't just 'avoid poor outcomes' but have ambitions and thrive.

We need the commitment and dedication of the whole borough, every practitioner, service and community to help us deliver this.

We look forward to working with you all and together making sure that families in Walsall receive the help they need, by the most appropriate service, when the family need it , for as long as they need it, and that we all have ambition for our children and young people to be

'Safe, happy and learning well '



Sally Rowe

Sally Rowe
Executive Director Children's Services



Tim Wilson

Councillor Tim Wilson
Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Foreword

As the Chair of the Early Help Partnership Steering Group I fully endorse this strategy and development of the subsequent action plan.

As we move along a continuum of recovery from the Covid19 pandemic many of us are reflecting on the past 18 months, thinking about what this means for our children, young people and their families moving forward and what we have all learnt as a result.

During these unprecedented times we have shown resilience and found ways to keep our services operating and supporting children, young people and their families albeit in different ways to how we usually operate.

We have stepped outside of our comfort zones, worked across boundaries to support beyond the normal remit of our roles and found ways of keeping our connections with our colleagues across different services so that the children and young people are always at the centre of what we do.

We have the opportunity to take this learning and experience and to build on the good practices & partnership working that we were delivering prior to the pandemic and strengthened throughout it.

We can continue our journey of building a collaborative approach across services and partners to ensure 'Early Help is Everyone's Responsibility'.

Together we will work with children, young people and families and provide the right support at the right time and improve outcomes for children and young people, I am proud to be the Chair of such a strong and committed partnership and look forward to being part of this next phase of the Early Help journey.



Sallyann Sutton
Chair Early Help Partnership Steering Group

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1. Our Early Help direction of travel

Our focus has been on understanding the needs of families as a whole and establishing a coherent offer around locality in response to those needs, developing capacity, refining our design and delivery model based on evidence of need, evaluating impact, quality and supporting children, young people and their families.

So what have we done?

Achievement	Impact
We have undertaken a review of 668 children & young people within Early Help locality to understand needs, thresholds and interventions being offered/available	<p>As a result we have strengthened the Early Help offer based on our learning; the timeliness of contacts and assessment has significantly improved.</p> <p>March 2021 - timeliness of contacts 93% within target</p> <p>March 2021 - timeliness of assessments 80% within target, and improving</p>
We have refreshed the Right Help Right Time guidance and introduced the Early Help Pathway, securing a partnership approach to support families with complex needs	<p>As a result we are able to better understand the needs of families and plan support earlier</p>
We have reviewed the Early Help Hub structure and approach	<p>As a result we have merged the Early Help Hub with MASH, operating a 'one front door' to ensure Right Help Right Time and support to families is proportionate and appropriate, with clear and consistent rationale for decision making</p>
We met with 90 schools & early years settings across the borough, school nurses, speech & language colleagues, Public Health, police and children's social care to look at how we could all work better together to help prevent exclusions, how to consider how we could develop clearer, 'connected' pathways	<p>As a result we piloted a partnership School Inclusion & Emotional Health & Wellbeing Team who supported 100 children and young people at risk of exclusion, over a 12 month period, providing individual support and planning meetings to prevent exclusion. The pilot was a success with school exclusions being prevented, attendance improving and children and young people's SEND needs being recognised.</p> <p>We commissioned a provider to deliver Restorative Practice to form part of our collective approach and practice in reducing exclusions</p> <p>Over 200 children's social care practitioners, social workers, police, school nurses and teachers, nursery nurses have been trained, with over 40 schools (predominately primary schools) taking up the offer.</p> <p>We piloted the 'shooting star' an evidenced based practice and outcome tool to gain the voice of children and young people to enable us to understand educational barriers</p>

Achievement	Impact
We piloted dedicated Early Help Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) across 2 of our localities, in order to collectively work with families where there were risks of anti-social behaviour and/or criminal activity	<p>As a result of the successful pilot all 4 localities now have a dedicated PCSO attached and co-located to support local families with local issues.</p>
We met with key partners to strengthen locality partnership working based on the needs of children and young people needing Early Help support, such as emotional health & wellbeing, debt, unemployment and housing concerns	<p>As a result we have co-located partners including school nurses, DWP employment advisors, homeless & housing partners supporting local families within their local community.</p>
We designed and implemented a Keep in Touch (KIT) project, a dedicated 6 week summer support, initially, to families whose schools were their Early Help lead professional and then extended to families the school felt would benefit from the 'extra support' during summer holidays to reduce risks, prevent escalation into statutory and specialist services and to support transition from primary to secondary school	<p>As a result this offer has developed significantly over the past 3 years, with over 900 children, young people and their families receiving dedicated support including home visits, telephone calls/ contacts with families checking things were ok.</p> <p>We have provided direct work around transition, emotional health & wellbeing, domestic abuse, neglect and poverty and a dedicated offer to children & young people at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>We have 'tracked' the CYP we supported, none were permanently excluded following return to school.</p> <p>We went that 'extra mile' Summer 2020 and offered the support further, including the production and delivered of 136 individual activity pack for families during the Covid19 pandemic 'lockdown'.</p>
We have developed an evidenced based informed parenting offer, a partnership between the local authority, school nursing and teenage parenting service	<p>As a result we now offer a 'hybrid' model of delivery, including on-line self-help training, top tips, a range of group work courses based on needs and a bespoke 121 support in the family home. Over 700 families have been helped</p> <p>We worked with the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) around the evaluation of our parenting offer and, the EIF told us 'the evaluation has showed statistically significant positive impact on parent's relationships and wellbeing post their attendance at an Early Help Parenting programme '</p>

Achievement	Impact
We secured funding from the DWP to help us to understand the impact of parental conflict and consider how to raise the awareness around the importance of Reducing Parental Conflict and enhanced support to families and partners in understanding this further	<p>As a result we have trained over 200 practitioners and partners from Childrens Social Care, School, Police, School Nurses, Health Visitors, Housing & the Voluntary Sector</p> <p>Worked as a partner with EiF to support the Reducing Parental Conflict evaluation measures which have now been introduced and published by the EiF.</p> <p>We are taking this work to the next stage, have pulled together a Black Country Consortium for Reducing Parental Conflict and have secured further funding, with Walsall leading on the programme (launch due date September 2021).</p>
We have reviewed and effectively managed risks and needs associated to the Covid - 19 pandemic, adapting delivery, support and have 'gone the extra mile'	<p>As result we have developed virtual meet and greet sessions for partners to keep 'connected', to share knowledge and the ability to support each other throughout this period. We were also able to put the spotlight on local organisations and services delivering help and support to children, young people and families in Walsall during the pandemic, and how to access this borough wide and/or locality based support.</p> <p>We have delivered a range of webinars to partners including Domestic Abuse, Trauma Informed Practice, and Neglect in light of COVID19 and we have developed a range of virtual activities for children, young people and families to take part in.</p> <p>We have introduce locality 'Time to Talk' sessions to continue and develop the community and locality partnership further.</p>
We have developed an Early Help Pre-Birth Pathway identifying and supporting vulnerable parents	As a result we have an agreed and combined pathway to support vulnerable expectant parents.
We have refined our performance data and audit programme to understand demand and impact	As a result we have strengthened understanding of our localities better and will hone this further over the next 3 years to inform and shape our offer
We have co-designed our website with children, young people and families including providing a range of self-help advice, tops tips and on line courses	As a result we have a much improved information for parents/carers, children/young people and partners/ professionals.

What Parents/Carers, Children, Young People & Partners have told us.

Feedback from a sibling group



Dear R

Thank you so much for all the help and support you granted us during this year.

We enjoyed your visits and telling you how our day went and how we were progressing at school.

Thank you so much for everything, your emotional and economic support you have given to us all

Lots of hugs
N, S & E

The drawing the girls did to say thank you



Feedback from a partner

Dear Sharon,

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for great partnership working with my school. You have always informed us of relevant training opportunities and Michelle and I feel working together has been inclusive towards meeting the needs of our children and families. I especially found the 'Time to Talk' meeting to be beneficial, as I am confident this will be a good platform for schools and other external providers to work together having a clear agenda in place.

You have always been approachable and informative, especially when I have contacted you unplanned requesting further information or support. I am sure Michelle would agree that partnership working with yourself has grown from strength to strength!

As schools are coming to a break for the six weeks, you are aware our service for children and families is still open. I know you will be in touch where necessary. I am confident we will continue further working together in the new academic year.

Thank you for all your support and guidance.

Feedback from a parent (participant in the Mellow Bumps for father's pilot session run by the Early Help & Health in Pregnancy Service)

"[The course] made me feel better in myself, I know what to do for my baby, to encourage her to be more alert and responsive to me, to really get to know me, interact with me. The group helped me trust people better and feel more confident with parenting. I learnt to understand my child, what they want and how to manage their needs. I feel more confident, I know more than I realise. I would be interested in other courses. I am to attend mellow parenting in September and I am attending a fathers group. I will be accessing holiday programme and parenting stay and play sessions. I would recommend this to others parents.

2. Our Refreshed Strategy 2021 -2024

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

3. What do we mean by Early Help?

Put simply Early Help means providing support to children, young people and their families as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life from pre-birth through to the teenage years: 'Support from 0-19'.

Walsall's Early Help Partnership recognises that an effective Early Help offer is not the responsibility of one single agency; it requires a partnership approach from all stakeholders working with children, young people, their families and the community.

Early Help is everyone's business & responsibility'

A quote from a parent

*It's a proper support bubble,
it's like someone backing
your corner basically*

A quote from a child

*"I ay naughty no more ...
School don't have to keep
phoning my mum now"*

A quote from a young person

*You helped me a lot, if
it wasn't for you I wouldn't
be where I am now, I love
school and gets loads of
certificates*

4. Why is Early Help important, what do we know?

We know previous reviews and policy developments including *Working Together 2018*, *Munro Review* and the MHCLG's vision of *Supporting Families 2021 and beyond* recognise and highlight the significance of Early Help for children, young people and their families in improving outcomes long-term.

We know a healthy start in life for our youngest members of society within a nurturing and loving family environment maximises their potential for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing, *The Best Start for Life*.

We know mental health concerns for adolescents are increasing, with one in seven young people aged 11-19 experiencing at least one mental health disorder *EiF Adolescent Mental Health Report*

We know there is a significant link between emotional behavioural problems in adolescence and adult outcomes, including mental health, education & employment and physical health *EiF Adolescent mental health evidence brief 2*

We know that the COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent 'lockdowns' have had and will continue to have significant impact on emotional health & wellbeing, with teachers already reporting evidence of increased levels of anxiety and depression, reduced motivation and engagement *EiF survey*

We know working together to support families, providing Early Help and eradicating silo working prevents children and young people in families entering the care system, increases their chances to have a 'good' life, reduces the likelihood of poor outcomes, including involvement in crime, substance misuse and helps families into work.

We know providing the 'right help at the right time' can help families to look forward to their future and feel positive.

We know from feedback from parents/carers, children and young people the positive difference Early Help makes.

We know however there is much more we need to do.

A quote from a young person

***"I would like the Council and
other organisations to make
Walsall a more enjoyable
place to grow up."***

5. What do we know about children, young people and families living in Walsall?

Locality evidence of need & challenges: understanding our children, young people, the or families and local communities

Walsall, like our neighbouring local authorities, is seeing growing challenges. Needs and demands are changing and increasing; demographic growth and the unknown impact of the COVID -19 pandemic are all areas of concern.

The impact of the pandemic is yet to be fully understood. Child poverty, deprivation, neglect, mental health, emotional wellbeing, unemployment, domestic abuse, to name a few, will be exacerbated, especially for those families already struggling, where the impact on family life will be significant.

Our road to resetting services needs to focus on creating sustainable futures by improving family relationships, keeping children and families safe and healthy, reintegrating children & young people back into school, supporting emotional wellbeing, mental health and helping parents back into employment.



Children and Young of Walsall

Population of 285,478
68,970 (24.2%) of whom are children aged 0-17

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

Education

At 18th March 2021 2662 children and young people had an EHCP (29.0 per 1,000 age 0 to 25)

- **746 (28%) of the EHCP's are due to Autistic Spectrum Disorder**
- **418 (16%) have speech, language and commination difficulties;**
- **349 (13%) were for moderate learning difficulties;**
- **320 (12%) were for social, emotional and mental health**

Special Educational Needs

6188 children/young people subject to SEND @October 2020

2/3 year old Nursery Placements reducing

Fixed Term Exclusions

4,542 fixed term exclusions from Sep 2017 to March 2021

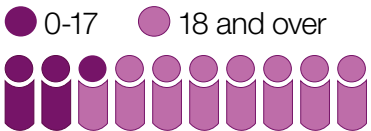
includes multiple exclusions that were given to one student over the course of a year.

Permanent Exclusions

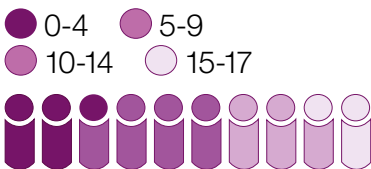
241 permanent exclusions from Sep 2017 to March 2021

Elective Home Education

564 children registered as EHE @ March 20218.1 per 1,000 0-17 population

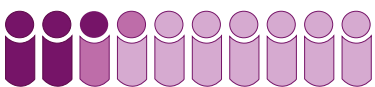


24.2% of the population are children and young people 2019 mid-year population estimates



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

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



39% of children live in poverty after housing costs Campaign to end child poverty – May 2020



31.2% of Children are from BME backgrounds 2011 Census

Children inCare

672 children in care
190 Child Protection Plans @ March 2021

Highest number of children in care had a postcode within the North locality, the highest average level of deprivation

Free School Meals

14,197 children, young people eligible fro free school meals (21% with a post code within the North locality)

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

Benefits

- 1939 households claims income related benefits
- 5995 claims universal credit (48% of all claimants from West locality)
- 1048 claiming tax credit

Neglect

22.4% CYP subject to neglect had substance misuse as a factor.

Of all CYP referred for neglect 44% are aged 0-4, 27% aged 5-9, 20% aged 10 to 14, 8% aged 15 -17

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

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6. Why do we need Early Help, what do we know?

Between April 2019 and March 2021 The Early Help Hub received 9,058 contacts, asking for help and support.

In March 2021 the needs analyses told us:

- Most contacts received relate to children and young people from the North locality
- Most contacts received relate to children and young people from a white ethnic background in most localities with the exception of the South & Central locality where there is a slightly larger proportion of contacts received relating to Asian or Asian British children and young people
- Most contacts received for Early Help are relating to children and young people aged between 10 and 15 years old across all localities. However in the North, South & Central and West localities contacts relating to children and young people aged between 0 and 5 years old are only slightly lower than 10 to 15 year olds
- Reasons for contact

Top 5 presenting needs at contact	Top 5 presenting needs at assessment
1) Domestic abuse/violence	1) Mental Health (parent/carer)
2) Challenging behaviour	2) Emotional Wellbeing (CYP)
3) Mental Health (parent/carer)	3) Mental Health (CYP)
4) Emotional wellbeing (CYP)	4) Challenging behaviour (CYP)
5) Mental health concerns (CYP)	5) Learning disabilities (CYP)

*Children & Young People (CYP)

- Of those pupils on roll in Walsall schools the largest number eligible for free school meals are in the North locality followed by the West locality
- Of those households claiming income-related benefits most households can be found in the West and North localities
- Similarly with universal credit, the largest numbers of households claiming this benefit are in the West and North localities
- Most households claiming tax credit again are located in the West locality however unlike income-related benefits and universal credit, the second highest is the Central & South locality.

Both the Walsall Borough data and the Early Help data shows that Walsall has some challenges ahead and highlights why we need to provide good quality Early Help Support the 'Right Help at the Right Time', and to consider the impact of:

- the rising deprivation
- the increasing mental health needs
- the projected rise of children and young people living in Walsall
- the increasing need for income related support
- the impact to a child and young person experiencing domestic abuse, mental health of a parent/carer and neglect
- the levels of inappropriate contacts made by partners, the understanding of thresholds
- the low levels of partners leading the way for Early Help families with a low % of the Lead Professional role
- the emerging problems as a result of the COVID - 19 pandemic and how all of these factors effects our children, young people and their families
(See Appendix A-Needs Analysis)

7. Our practice model and approach

Our Early Help practice model and approach has been informed by what children, young people, parents, carers and practitioners have told us:

1) Bespoke: One Family, One Plan, One Lead Professional,

Quote: "don't make me tell my story more than once"

So we will, where possible reduce the number of professionals involved with the family and identify a 'lead professional' to act as the main contact and to co-ordinate the family plan of support

2) Relationships:

Quote: "take some time to get to know me "

So we will, ensure we give you time, that we together explore and focus on strengths within a family as well as the needs. We will be respectful, and build trust with our families and work together 'with' families in a restorative way

3) Outcome Focused:

Quote: "talk to me and help me understand how you will help me and my children"

So we will: talk and plan together, have agreed goals with our families, with a priority and focus on building the foundations for long term improvements

4) Resilient:

Quote: "how are you going to make me feel more able to start making changes, and keep making them and being able to cope?"

So we will: ensure the support provided builds mental, social, emotional and physical resilience within the family and work with colleagues from the Black Country Mental Health Trust to improve our support

5) Ambitious:

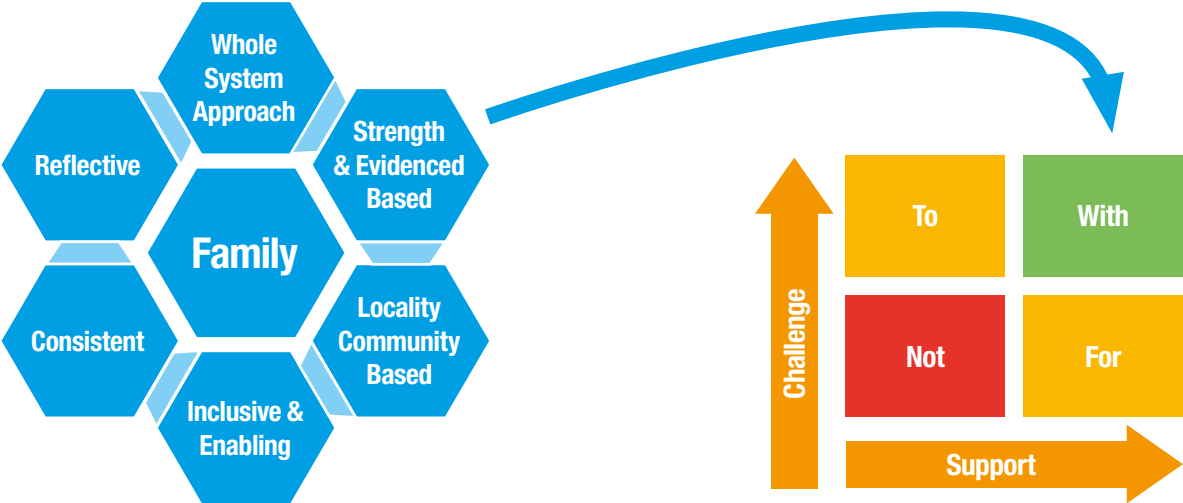
Quote: " thank you, you're the only one that helped me, if it wasn't for you I would not have finished my education"

So we will: ensure the whole family are supported to thrive and are ambitious for their future

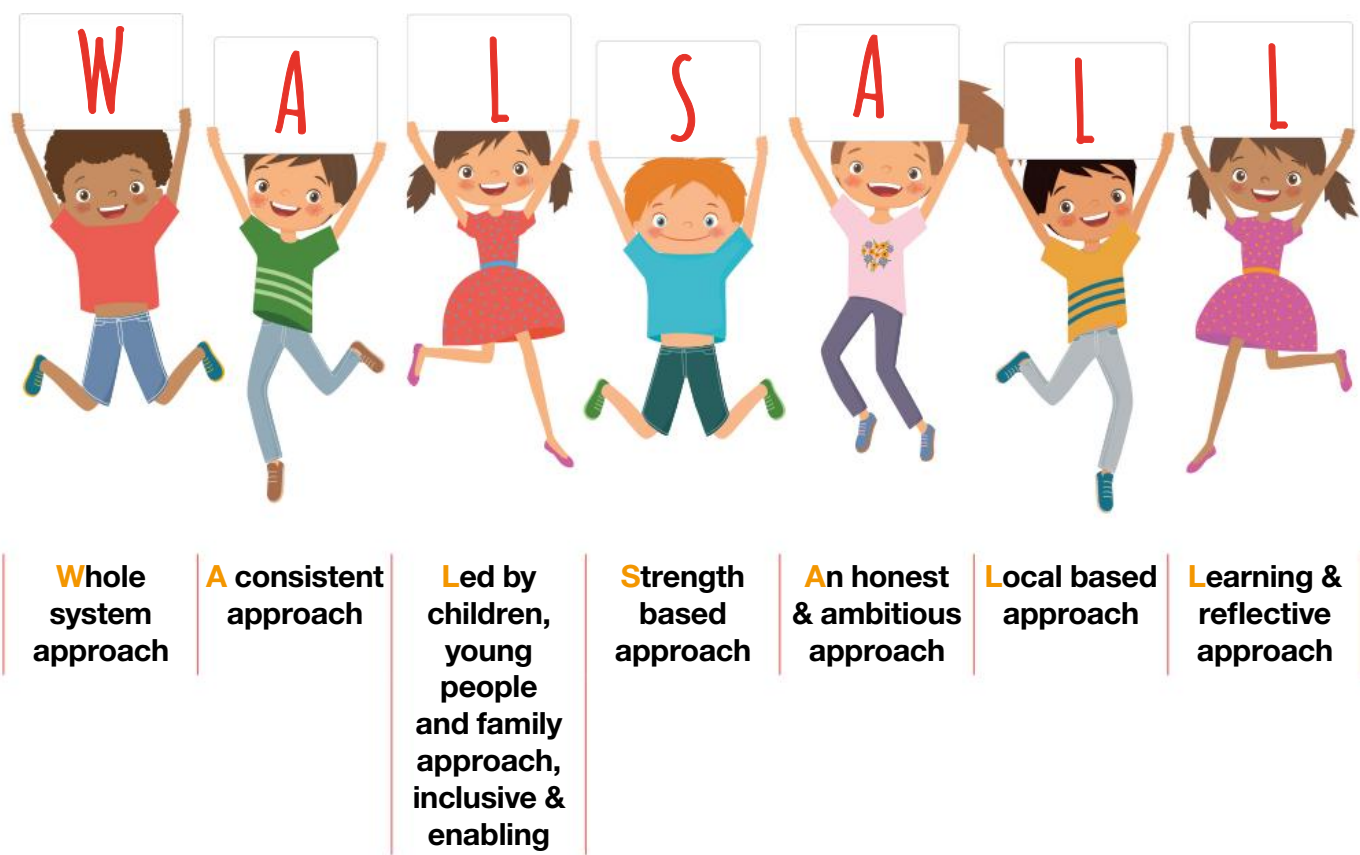
6) Positive:

Quote: "it was a positive meeting today with mom and child. I saw mom at the end of the day who was quite emotional with relief"

So we will: make sure we listen, get children, young people and their families feedback and continually work together to improve services, ensure children, young people and families are central to co-production of future development of the Early Help model

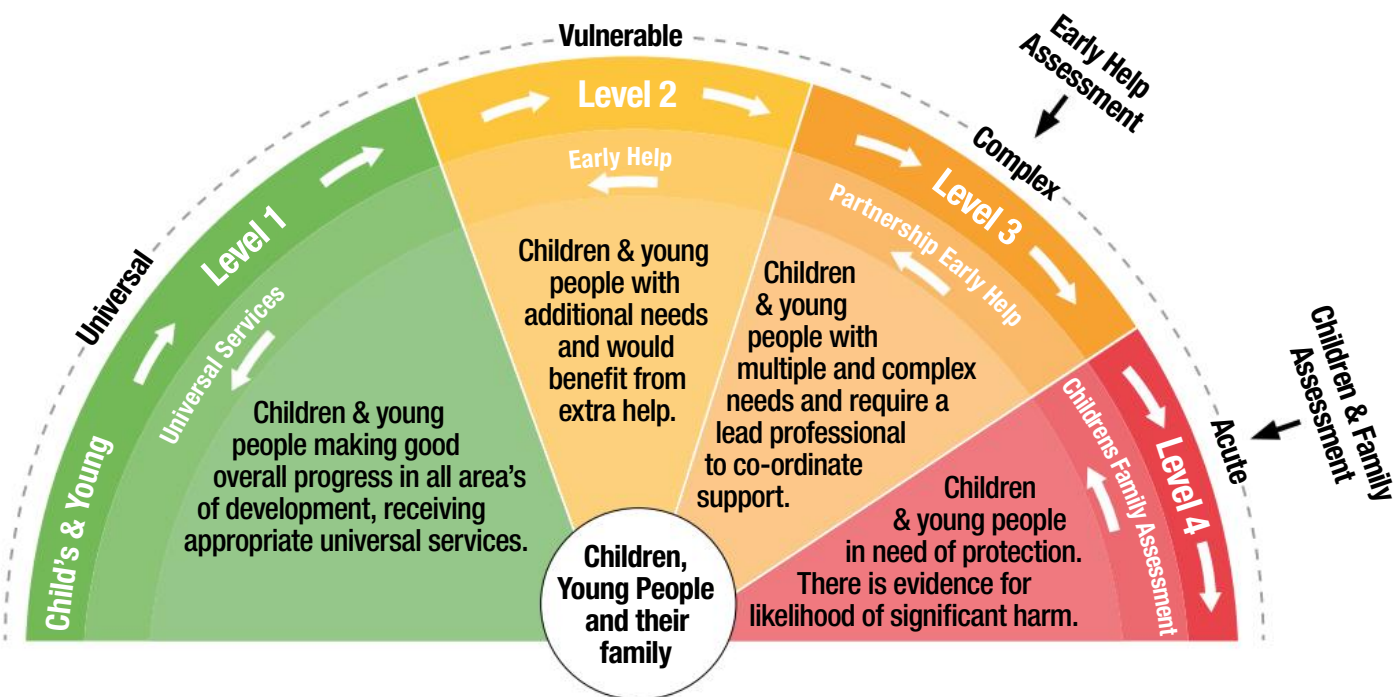


8. Our approach to Early Help?



9. Providing the Right, Help at the Right Time:

The partnership works and provides the right support, works with the family as early as possible when emerging needs are recognised and to prevent escalation into statutory services



The continuum of need:

We identify that a child, young person or family needs additional support

A conversation takes place with the child, young person and their parents/carers to share concerns, discuss strengths and support required

We identify if these additional needs can be met by a single agency (level 2) or if there is a need for a co-ordinated multi-agency response, underpinned by an Early Help Assessment (level 3).

10. Our commitment

Our Commitment is to provide

- 'Effective whole family support, to prevent escalation into statutory services, to ensure our families thrive, build resilience and have ambition and to
- 'Create the space for services to work together proactively, identifying and solving problems rather than reacting to crises'

And to

- Know our children, young people and the communities they live in
- Be informed by our children, young people and their families
- Understand and act on the impact of COVID - 19 pandemic and having a collaborative recovery plan

11.Our Strategic Priorities 2021 - 2024

Our strategy has **4** outcome focused priorities, aligned to our commitment, and based on what we know now and what's on the horizon regarding the **children, young people, families** and the **partnership** in Walsall.

Priority One: Culture & Practice - Ensure our Early Help partnership and the way in which we work together is fully understood and that together we achieve better outcomes for families.

This is a priority because:

- We know that strong local partnerships deliver better outcomes for families
- We know that there are some gaps and an inconsistent understanding and application of the Early Help system and approach
- We know we are not consistently identifying the needs of the children, young people and their families (presenting needs change from contact to assessment)
- We know that we have a strong partnership platform committed to developing partnership capacity, ways of working and impact
- We know that early identification of a child, young person or family needing help, improves life chances

To address this we will:

- 1) Redesign the Early Help Assessment, Plan & Review - to enable improved understand of presenting needs of our children and young people and to have a timely and smart outcome focused support plan in place
- 2) Refresh the Supporting Families Outcome Framework - to enable outcomes and impact to be measured across the partnership
- 3) Extend further the 'Time to Talk: Partnership, Practice & Progress' - to bring together locality based group of key partners, statutory and voluntary, to share knowledge, pathways, and systems to improve the outcomes for families, ensures quality decision making, sharing of good practice, support and guidance across the partnership
- 4) Further strengthen the support to partners to influence and co-ordinate partnership capacity and capability
- 5) Review the Right Help, Right Time and lead professional training - to ensure all key elements of early identification and intervention is understood, and link to other priorities such as neglect and domestic abuse
- 6) Scope out the potential of a bespoke Early Help training programme
- 7) Improve knowledge and self-help opportunities – to provide information, advice and self-learning

Outcomes to achieve	How will we know
Refreshed Early Help Assessment, Plan, Review	Partners assessing needs with families Clear and timely outcome focused plans Positive impact on the lives of children, young people Reduced re-referral rates Children, young people, parents and carers tell us
Consistent understanding of threshold	Reduction in NFA contacts
Partners feel supported and confident in taking the LP role	Increase % in LP from partners Increase of partners accountability and response
Children, young people and their families are supported by the right professional at the right time, at the earliest opportunity that prevents escalation into specialist and statutory services	Reduction in NFA contacts Reduction in children's social care contacts and step up from level 3 Increase LP role from the wider Early Help partnership Self-help tools effectively used
The whole family approach is consistently taken	Referrals/contacts and Early Help assessments are received from the wider partnership Partnership audits, dip sampling Children, young people, parents and carers tell us
Needs of families are identified at the earliest opportunity	Presenting needs are clear and focused Increased recognition of vulnerabilities and risks such as neglect Improved use of evidenced based tool such as GCP2
Map out the training needs/requirements of partners across the partnership and identify key partners to be trained	Increased partners attending the <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Right Help, Right Time training• Lead Professional training• Neglect training• Restorative Practice training• Reducing Parental Conflict We will have a skilled and confident partnership workforce

Priority Two: Smart use of data – share local data to understand the needs of our children, young people and their family.

This is a priority because:

- We know from the current data available the needs of the children, young people and their families are changing and we need to respond and adapt the Early Help offer
- We know elements of partners data sets including those from education, health and police however we do not ‘overlay’ this data to enable us, from a data perspective, to take a ‘whole family’ approach
- We know what the Early Help core offer looks like, however we also know that the locality needs look different therefore so should the ‘locality offer’
- We know sharing data across local agencies and partners reduces duplication, optimises expertise, and aids improved identification of need, local evaluation of what works, how to problem solve and ensure improved outcomes for families, building resilience and ambition

To address this we will:

1. Develop a data sharing platform within localities to create the space and opportunity to look at a range of data sets to inform and to strengthen the earlier identification and support required
2. Agree and introduce a standard partnership data set for sharing at a strategic level as part of the Early Help Steering Group performance measures
3. Agree a partnership auditing framework and opportunities for learning from practice

Outcomes to achieve	How will we know
Develop a standardised locality performance scorecard and quality assurance framework to monitor demand, identify barriers, share learning across partnership audits and dip samples	Partnership audits and dip sampling Feedback from parents/carers children and young people
A strengthened core offer with additional bespoke ‘local offer’ based on the understanding of need	In addition to the Early Help ‘core offer’ will be an additional locality offer based on evidenced needs and predicted demand Data sharing Audits/Dip Sample
Improved identification of need	Reduction of inappropriate contacts/referrals
A whole family approach will be evident, no silo working and targeted support will be delivered in a co-ordinated ‘joined up way’	Joined up services within the Early Help roles and responsibilities – horizon scanning and earlier intervention offered, i.e. housing providers see rent arrears and think ‘whole family’ solutions, see beyond the arrears themselves – informed decisions and opportunities to support

Priority Three: Resilient Communities: use local resources in the most effective way

This is a priority because:

- We know communities have ‘solutions’
- We know we do not build the ‘community scaffolding’ of continued support for children, young people and families
- We know we do not ‘tap into’ and utilise the voluntary sector effectively enough or consistently
- We know there are barriers preventing children, young people and families from participating in parts of community life
- We know that communities do come together in time of need, evidenced by the response provided during the COVID 19 pandemic

A quote from a young person

I would really like to go on University visits but only the top performing classes are allowed on these. I think if the school gave the other classes the opportunity too, more kids (including me) would feel more inspired to work harder and get better grades.”

To address this we will:

1. Improve our knowledge base of local resources
2. Utilise and include local communities
3. Develop further pathways and referral routes
4. Develop an Early Help Volunteers programme to support families at a local level, supporting the use of local resources and the ‘community scaffolding’
5. Further develop our co-location model with key voluntary and community partners
6. Introduce the Early Help ACTION Campaign, an awareness and training campaign across ALL practitioners in Walsall who work with, support or come into contact with children, young people and families, including contractors, housing officers, clean & green practitioners, private companies



Outcomes to achieve	How will we know
Services delivered at a local level	Additional partners working together and ‘co-located’ delivering services to children, young people and families in the area they live
Voluntary and community services become our partners	Attendance at locality meetings Co-location of partners
All key services understand ‘Early Help and the positive difference early intervention has on family life and opportunities	Training, awareness delivered across the borough Case studies Feedback Skilled and knowledgeable partners

Priority Four: Voice: children, young people, parents & carers are heard

This is a priority because:

- We know the views and involvement of our children, young people, parents & carers matter
- We know working with children, young people, parents and carers achieve better outcomes and opportunities for their future
- We know this is their service and they do and will support us in shaping the future delivery model
- We know children and young people want us to be open and honest
- We know co-production is essential
- We know relationships matter

To address this we will:

1. Work with children and young people to develop a meaningful ‘feedback’ questionnaire
2. Work with parents and carers to develop a meaningful ‘feedback’ questionnaire
3. Utilise the feedback to help shape services and improve practice across the partnership
4. Develop, together, a Children & Young Peoples Early Help forum and a Parent/Carer forum
5. Introduce a ‘daily conversation programme’ where we will consult with children and young people on specific topics

Outcomes to achieve	How will we know
Children young people and parents/ carers are at the heart of transforming our services	Co-production/ co–design of the refreshed Early Help assessment, plan review Self-help tools , information advice and guidance are provided in partnership with children, young people, parents/carers Walsall Right 4 Children Big Conversation tells us
Children, young people, parents/carers are at the heart of all decisions made	Early Help plans and review Feedback questionnaires Compliments/complaints Audits & dip samples

12. Governance & Accountability

This strategy will be governed and overseen by the Early Help Partnership Steering Group.
The steering group will monitor progress, performance and review the action plan associated with the strategy.
The Early Help Partnership Steering Group has representation from key partners including

- Public Health
- Housing Providers
- Teenage Pregnancy Services
- School Health
- Speech & Language
- Police
- DWP
- One Walsall, Voluntary Sector
- Money, Home, Job
- Education
- Children’s Social Care
- Early Years
- Employment & Skills

13. Link strategies and support documents

Strategies

- Neglect Strategy
- Inclusion Strategy
- Behaviour & Wellbeing Strategy
- SEND Strategy
- Accessibility Strategy

Support

Nurture BRICS
Mental Health Support in Schools
Our Parenting Offer
Behaviour & Relationship Guidance and Support in schools
DV Bill
Best Start

Appendix 1

Early Help Needs Analyses

Contact made to the Early Help Hub between April 2019 and March 2021

Locality	Total	Percentage of EH contacts	Population 0-17	Rate per 1,000 0-17 population
North	2,491	28%	15,931	1,56.4
East	1,652	18%	17,964	92.0
South & Central	1,799	20%	17,302	104.0
West	2,366	26%	18,043	131.1
Out of Borough	750	8%		N/A
Total	9058			

The main presenting needs of the children, young people and their families at the contact stage were

1. Domestic abuse/violence (21%)
2. Challenging behaviour (16%)
3. Mental Health concerns of parent/carer (15%)
4. Emotional wellbeing of child/young person (14%)
5. Mental health concerns of child/young person (7%)
6. SEND concerns (7%)
7. Educational issues (7%)
8. Housing issues (6%)
9. Abuse/Neglect (6%)

Presenting needs change following assessment, once a full understanding of the issues children, young people and their families were experiencing, three of the same top 5 presenting needs are present both at point of contact and assessment. Whereas domestic violence is identified at contact, mental health (child) and learning disabilities (child) are more evident at assessment.

Following assessment:

1. Mental health concerns of parent/carer
2. Emotional wellbeing of child/young person
3. Mental health concerns of child/young person
4. Challenging behaviour
5. Learning disabilities

Locality	Total	Percentage of EH contacts	Population 0-17	Rate per 1,000 0-17 population
North	2,491	28%	15,931	1,56.4
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West	2,366	26%	18,043	131.1
Out of Borough	750	8%		N/A
Total	9058			

Early Help Assessments	North	East	South	West	Total
Mental Health (parent/carer)	115 (26.9%)	87 (23.3%)	74 (29.0%)	82 (22.8%)	358 (25.3%)
Emotional Wellbeing (child)	77 (18.0%)	91 (24.4%)	74 (29.0%)	77 (21.4%)	319 (22.6%)
Mental Health (Child)	82 (19.2%)	77 (20.6%)	39 (15.3%)	70 (19.5%)	268 (19.0%)
Challenging Behaviour (child)	87 (20.4%)	73 (19.6%)	34 (13.3%)	72 (20.1%)	266 (18.8%)
Learning Disabilities (child)	66 (15.5%)	45 (12.1%)	34 (13.3%)	58 (16.2%)	203 (14.4%)

Locality needs of children, young people and their family, differ within the locality area of their home address:

Top 5 Presenting Needs	North	East	South & Central	West	Total
Mental Health (parent/carer)	115 (26.9%)	87 (23.3%)	74 (29.0%)	82 (22.8%)	358 (25.3%)
Emotional Wellbeing (child)	77 (18.0%)	91 (24.4%)	74 (29.0%)	77 (21.4%)	319 (22.6%)
Mental Health (Child)	82 (19.2%)	77 (20.6%)	39 (15.3%)	70 (19.5%)	268 (19.0%)
Challenging Behaviour (child)	87 (20.4%)	73 (19.6%)	34 (13.3%)	72 (20.1%)	266 (18.8%)
Learning Disabilities (child)	66 (15.5%)	45 (12.1%)	34 (13.3%)	58 (16.2%)	203 (14.4%)

Contacts by Age Group

When looking at the age groups of contacts received to Early Help they are mostly relating to children and young people aged between 10 and 15 years of age across all localities. However in the North, South & Central and West localities contacts relating to children and young people aged between 0 and 5 years of age are only slightly lower than 10 to 15 year of age as shown in the table below

Age Group	North	East	South & Central	West
0-5 years	822 (33%)	484 (29%)	602 (33%)	778 (33%)
6-9 years	587 (24%)	357 (22%)	353 (20%)	552 (23%)
10-15 years	848 (34%)	637 (39%)	646 (36%)	778 (33%)
16+ years	218 (9%)	167 (10%)	189 (11%)	238 (10%)

Contacts by Ethnicity

Most of the contacts to Early Help are related to children and young people from white ethnic backgrounds. With the exception to the Central & South locality where there is a slightly larger proportion of contacts received relating to Asian or Asian British children and young people.

Ethnicity	East	North	South & Central	West
White	1139 (69%)	1569 (63%)	564 (31%)	1474 (62%)
Mixed	94 (6%)	210 (8%)	168 (9%)	183 (8%)
Black or Black British	35 (2%)	173 (7%)	116 (5%)	108 (5%)
Asian or Asian British	56 (3%)	131 (5%)	570 (32%)	154 (7%)
Chinese or Other	266 (16%)	339 (14%)	301 (17%)	354 (15%)
Unknown	62 (4%)	69 (3%)	80 (4%)	93 (4%)

Of all the contacts received 23% (2083) led to a Multi-Agency Early Help Assessment.

Of the 23% (2083) less than 10% of the assessments had a Lead Professional of a partner outside of the local authorities Early Help Service, this needs further analyses across the partnership, given that Early Help is ‘everyones business and responsibility’.

Appendix B
Early Help Partnership Action Plan 2021 - 2023

OUR QUICK GUIDE TO
EARLY HELP IN WALSALL



What is Early Help?

This is the term we use to describe the support we give to children, young people and their families when they need extra help.

We take a partnership approach as it's difficult at times for one single agency to deliver effective support alone. It means we work alongside a number of services to help you and your family.

As we like to say: 'Early Help is everybody's business and responsibility.'

Walsall's Early Help Partnerships commitment is:

- To provide 'effective whole family support' to prevent escalation into statutory services, to ensure families thrive, build resilience and have ambition.
- To create the space for services to work together proactively, identifying and solving problems rather than reacting to crisis



Walsall Council



We, the partnership, take action to support you and work with you and your family as soon as a problem emerges. This can be at any stage of your child's or other family member's life and we're here to help when you can no longer cope on your own.

We aim to help your family achieve its full potential. Our goal is to improve the quality of family life, help children and young people have the best possible start, are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

Who is it for?

Our Early Help offer is for children and young people aged 0-19 and their families.

Who provides the support?

If your family needs support, it could be provided by a School, School Nurse, Health Visitor, Teacher, Speech & Language Therapist, Locality Family Support Practitioner, Domestic Abuse Advocate, Youth Worker or Housing Officer.

How do we do it? – Right Help Right Time

Where you or a practitioner feels that your child may need additional support (beyond that available from a single agency), they will speak to you and your family and with consent arrange for an Early Help Assessment to be completed with you.

This provides you and the practitioner and other partners the opportunity to have an open and honest conversation to clarify the nature of the concerns, identify the needs of your family, and agree the appropriate response and how it will be co-ordinated.

A support plan will be written, this is your families plan and nothing will be added that you do not want to be included. The support will be co-ordinated by a 'Lead Professional', this is someone who will be the main point of contact for you and your family and will ensure the help that has been agreed is delivered.

The support will be reviewed, by you, your family and others, at least every 6 weeks to make sure the support is the right support, to make sure things start to improve, you see positive changes in your family life, children and young people's concerns are reduced, along with those of partners who are working with you.

We will provide the support and hold reviews until the support is no longer needed.

We will be open and honest with you throughout.

For more information or if you want some help, or know someone who wants some help you can speak to your child's school, your health visitor, school nurse, housing officer or contact the Early Help team either within your local area or the central based team on: 03005558266

Your Local Family Hubs:

West Locality Hub

Address:
Ilmington House, Crescent
Road, Wednesbury,
WS10 8AE
Contact Details:
0121 526 5537

North Locality Hub

Address:
275 Blakenall Heath,
Walsall, WS3 1HJ
Contact Details:
01922 476698

Central and South Hub

Address:
Birchills Street,
Walsall, WS2 8NG
Contact Details:
01922 646 574

East Locality Hub

Address:
Silver Court, Brownhills,
Walsall, WS8 6HA
Contact Details:



Title of the Report: Youth Justice Annual Plan and Strategic Priorities

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Cllr T Wilson - Children's Services Social Care

1. Aim and purpose

- 1.1 Youth Justice partnerships have a statutory duty to produce an annual youth justice plan for submission to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales showing how youth justice services will be provided and funded with the identification of strategic priorities.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 For Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the contents of the report and Strategic Plan and consider if a progress report should be heard at a future meeting.

3. Report detail: know

Context

- 3.1 Walsall Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a statutory multi-agency service under Section 37 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act in partnership with the Local Authority, Walsall Children's Services, West Midlands Police, National Probation Service and Health. The YJS is also supported by numerous other partners who contribute to the YJS' agenda.
- 3.2 The principle aim of the YJS partnership is to prevent and reduce offending and re-offending behaviour in children and young people and we have three national key performance indicators:
- a) Reducing the number of young people entering the justice system for the first time (FTE)
 - b) Reducing re-offending
 - c) Reducing the use of custodial disposals.
- 3.3 Youth justice partnerships have a statutory duty to produce an annual youth justice plan for submission to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales showing how youth justice services will be provided and funded.

- 3.4 The Youth Justice Plan is prepared on an annual basis in accordance with the YJB governance and leadership guidance and specific conditions as set within the Youth Justice Board Effective Practice Grant. The youth justice plan sets out key achievements over the past 12 months, how Walsall Youth Justice Service is structured and funded and also identifies risks to service delivery and improvement.
- 3.5 The YJB are resolute that youth justice services should use the template they have provided and work from guidance they have released.
- 3.6 The plan and its priorities have been informed by the HMIP assurance review completed in November 2021 and a Board development workshop in January 2022.
- 3.7 The plan identifies 5 main priorities as stated below:
- Reducing Serious Youth Violence:
Strategic Lead: Superintendent Walsall Police.
This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership and recognises the Serious Violence Duty (2021) and the delegated responsibilities on agencies and partnership.
 - Responding to Disproportionality
Strategic Lead: Head of Service – Children’s Social Care.
This priority is linked to the Council’s Corporate Equality Group and objectives within the Corporate Plan 2022-25.
 - Transitions and Resettlement.
Strategic Lead: Head of Probation
This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership reducing re-offending priority and the regional Transition 2 Adulthood policy framework.
 - Identifying and responding to unmet need (health).
Strategic Lead: Head of CAMHS commissioning
Our partnership recognise that there is a clear need to ‘level up’ health provision for Walsall children in line with the Black country and regional developments.
 - Voice of our children
Strategic Lead: YJS Strategic Lead
Following the findings of the HMIP assurance review in 2021, the partnership are committed to better evidencing that we hear and are responsive to the voices of our children both strategically and operationally.
- 3.8 Child First Vision:
The Youth Justice Partnership is resolute in our ‘child first’ vision. We believe that offending behaviour is a symptom of childhood adversity and trauma and that developing strengths and resilience will be most effective in reducing risk. These

principles align with our Walsall Right 4 Children vision aimed at ensuring the right children are in the right place with the right support for as long as it is needed so they are safe from harm, happy and learning well.

- 3.9 Walsall YJS are a trauma aware organisation. We understand that our children have experienced significant childhood adversity during their short lives which includes a range of trauma and abuse. It becomes clear that involvement within the justice system can at times re-traumatise them. Child First practice is about working in a way that reduces the stigmatisation that contact with the justice system brings

4. *Financial information*

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. *Reducing Inequalities*

- 5.1 The provision of Youth Justice Services to young people aims to support those at risk of harm and who need safeguarding. This includes young people from protected characteristics of gender, disability, race and religion. We are aware that there is overrepresentation of black and mixed heritage young people within the justice system in Walsall at this time and our wider plans will seek to improve outcomes for this group and others.

6. *Decide*

- 6.1 For overview and scrutiny committee to consider if a progress report should be presented to a future meeting.

7. *Respond*

- 7.1 It was a statutory requirement in the Youth Justice Effective Practice Grant to submit the approved plan to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in June 2022. Following approval by the YJS Performance and Partnership Board, the plan was submitted on time to the YJB.

8. *Review*

- 8.1 Progress against the priorities and the delivery plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the YJS Performance and Partnership Board.

Background papers

Please see attached Strategic Plan.

Author

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Strategic Lead – Youth Justice Services

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Walsall Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025



Child First

Service	Walsall Youth Justice Service
Service Manager/ Lead	Phil Rutherford
Chair of YJS Board	Sally Rowe

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1. [Introduction, vision and strategy](#)

Foreword from Chair of the Youth Justice Partnership:

As chair of the youth justice partnership I am pleased to introduce the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2022 -2025. This a good opportunity to take stock of the hard work and progress achieved by the Youth Justice Service and our partners over the past year and be clear in our commitment to improving outcomes for our children and families.

We are resolute in our 'child first' vision. We believe that offending behaviour is a symptom of childhood adversity and trauma and that developing strengths and resilience will be most effective in reducing risk. These principles align with our Walsall Right 4 Children vision aimed at ensuring the right children are in the right place with the right support for as long as it is needed so they are safe from harm, happy and learning well.

I am again in a position to look back upon a year that has been impacted by a global pandemic and continue to be inspired by the dedication of the workforce who have made a difference in the lives of the families we serve. The youth justice team have continued to support some of our most vulnerable children, in the face of Covid restrictions, by embracing different ways of working and moving towards a blended approach in buildings with 'presence with a purpose'. The co-location of youth justice practitioners with our social care exploitation team and police is an exciting development.

In 2021, the YJS Performance and Partnership Board commissioned an independent review of progress against Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation's (HMIP) recommendations from 2019. Whilst we recognise that there is always more to be done, we are pleased with how the partnership responded to the inspection findings and we are now looking forwards to continue striving to reduce offending, protect the public and keep our children and communities safe.

The partners have worked together to identify the youth justice strategic priorities for 2022 – 2025 by listening to our children, our practitioners and managers, and aligning our strategy with the Safer Walsall Partnership, the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit. As strategic partners and Board members, we are asking more of each other to take ownership of youth justice priorities, to drive forward progress and provide oversight, and to better represent children in the justice system throughout wider strategic networks.

Sally Rowe
Chair of the Youth Justice Partnership

Introduction:

On behalf of the Youth Justice Service Performance and Partnership Board we are proud to introduce Walsall Youth Justice Service's (YJS) Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025. This plan has been approved by the YJS Performance and Partnership Board.

Our Youth Justice partnership is committed to continual learning and development to improve life outcomes for the children and families, to have fewer victims of youth crime and a safer Walsall.

We share the Youth Justice Board's vision for a 'Child First' youth justice system:

"A youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society."

As an integral part of Walsall Children's Services, the YJS aligns with the Walsall Right 4 Children vision aimed at ensuring the right children are in the right place with the right support for as long as it is needed so they are safe from harm, happy and learning well.



Behind our partnership's vision for children in the youth justice system, and for those at risk of entering it, is a desire to ensure that they are seen as children first, that their uniqueness is understood and responded to and that their voices are clear and strong within our delivery. We believe in understanding the adversity and trauma a child goes through and having a strength based approach which is based upon a positive youth offer to build resilience for a sustainable crime free life.

Executive Summary:

Walsall Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a statutory multi-agency service under Section 37 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act in partnership with the Local Authority, Walsall Children's Services, West Midlands Police, National Probation Service and Health. The YJS is also supported by numerous other partners who contribute to the YJS' agenda. The principle aim of the YJS partnership is to prevent and reduce offending and re-offending behaviour in children and young people and we have three national key performance indicators:

- a) Reducing the number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time
- b) Reducing re-offending
- c) Reducing the use of custodial disposals.

Reducing the number of young people entering the Youth Justice System also remains a key Council objective. Between April 2021 and March 2022 the number of first time entrants in Walsall reduced when compared to the previous 12 month period. The total number at the end of March had accumulated to 55. Our local tracking of the data suggests an improving trajectory as a result of a developing diversion offer.

Published re-offending data for Walsall YJS has demonstrated a 7% improvement in the binary rate when compared to the previous 12 month period. The latest proportion of young people re-offending is measured at 29.6% which is better than our regional and national comparators. Although the proportion of young people re-offending is reducing, the number of re-offences that are committed has increased when compared to the same reporting period the year before and is now measured at 4.59 per re-offender.

The number of custodial sentences imposed on Walsall children has remained consistently low during April 2021 to March 2022. Published data confirm only 5 custodial sentences during that period which mirrors the excellent performance from the previous 12 months.

Key achievements from the past 12 months:

The practitioners and managers within the YJS should feel incredibly proud of what they have achieved during the past 12 months. The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact on and restrict all of our lives and our service to children continued to be adaptive and agile as we ensured that the needs of our children were met with face to face contact a priority. Despite the need to prioritise the operational running of the YJS and manage risk to the public underneath the cloud of a pandemic, the Service has pushed forward towards a 'business as usual' approach and had many significant achievements over the past year:

- Covid-19 recovery; practitioners successfully navigated a blended approach to working from home and accessing locality and community venues to work with their children. They've embedded the use of technology and a multi-modal approach to effectively engaging with children and meeting statutory obligations.
- Development of the YJS partnership panel and our diversion offer; our joint-decision making partnership panel has developed this year to establish a clear pathway with the Police to identify diversion opportunities for young people at risk of violent behaviour. We have been joined by our local partners and colleagues from the Violence Reduction Unit to identify who is best placed to work with families in need.
- Walsall's Exploitation and Missing Hub; the YJS is working closely with our partners in Social Care and the Police to develop Walsall's Exploitation Hub. YJS managers chair and support the daily multi-agency exploitation and missing triage discussions and establish disruption and professionals meetings with practitioners. YJS practitioners complete exploitation assessments with their young people and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) notifications where appropriate with support of the Exploitation Hub. Our partnership will continue to develop through 2022 as the YJS aligns and co-locates with the MASH and the Exploitation and Missing Hub.
- Lived Experienced Mentors; the YJS was successful in securing funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), through the Safer Walsall Partnership

(SWP), to work with St-Giles and provide a mentor for our young people involved in serious violence and criminal exploitation. Through this partnership we have also delivered staff training and group work programmes for young people and parents. We have had positive outcomes for young people and as such we have committed to providing lived experienced mentors for the next 3 years.

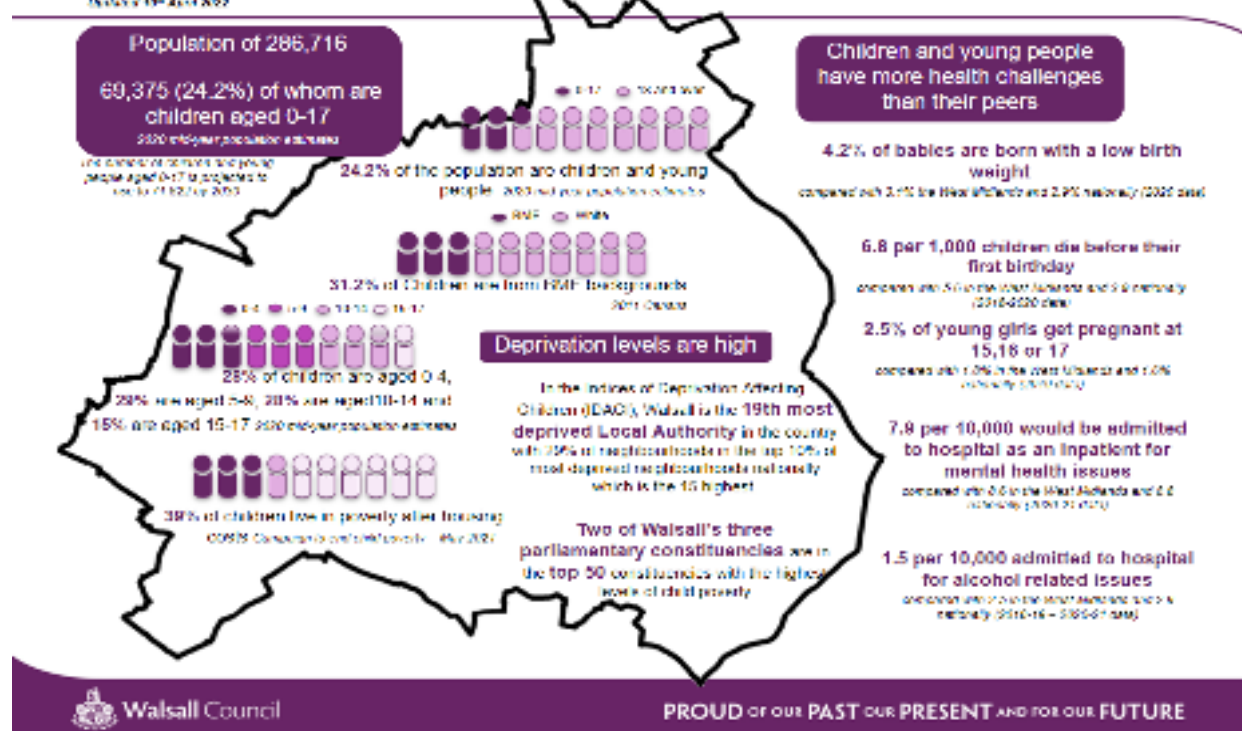
- Equality and Disproportionality Forum; building upon our progress from 2020 and in the wake of George Floyd's death, the YJS established its Equality and Disproportionality Forum. In 2021 the Forum has provided practitioners with a safe space to discuss equality and the overrepresentation of boys with black and mixed ethnicity in the justice system. The Forum oversees progress against our action plan and has set up a practice improvement sub-group.
- Inclusion and Wellbeing Strategy; the YJS is committed to supporting its staff to ensure that our workforce is representative of the communities we serve and also resilient enough to tackle a challenging and difficult role. The strategy identifies progression pathways for staff to develop and remain in practice; and also to develop into management careers. Inclusion and diversity are at the heart of the strategy; it recognises that not all are starting from a 'level playing field' and identifies what the service is doing to support those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.
- Quality Assurance Framework; the YJS have aligned it's auditing framework with Children's Services to include a schedule of deep dive child journey auditing plus themed dip sample audits to respond to new performance data trends or to demonstrate the effectiveness of models of delivery.
- Education; at the time of writing this plan, no children open to the YJS were classified as a child missing education (CME). The total numbers of children over the age of 16 who were not in education, training and employment have continued to reduce to 16% to the lowest it has been for the past two years. Support for children aged 16 and above has improved with the creation of the NEET Action Group for this cohort in partnership with the Employment and Skills Team in the Council and Walsall Works, an initiative to support local people to find jobs, apprenticeships and access training, while also supporting local businesses that are looking to expand and invest in their future workforce.
- Youth Justice Apprenticeship; responding to the partnership's aims of improving the employment outcomes of young people in the justice system, the YJS established a Youth Justice Apprenticeship post in 2021. The main functions of the role are to bridge the gap between practitioners and children and pro-actively seek their views on service delivery and issues affecting them in their communities. Our apprentice led our annual safer lives surveys with children to understand their experiences of knife crime, violence and issues of community safety.

- Our Youth Offer: as we have moved out of Covid restrictions it has been important to ensure that our positive activity offer for our children has remained strong and focusses on strength based approaches and building resilience. Mostly through external funding and strong partnership relationships our offer has included;
 - Sport; our partnership continues with the Inspire Group to deliver multi-sports diversion activities and mentoring across Walsall and also provide children with links to local sport clubs and coaching qualifications. Our children tell us that they would like to participate in boxing activities and as such we have continued our partnership with coaches at Walsall Wood ABC.
 - Co-Lab YTH; our music studio mentoring programme has continued throughout 2021 and we are looking for ways to fund the project for 2022 onwards. Co-Lab YTH consists of a local music artist, producer and Walsall youth worker who provide our young people with a safe space to express themselves through music who also receive support to avoid exploitation, issues around gangs and knife crime. This is hugely popular with our children.
 - Bike Project; we are in partnership with Walsall police and a local social enterprise to rescue lost and broken bikes and work with our children to repair and sell them. The project aims to provide young people with new technical and entrepreneurial skills, qualifications and a positive diversion.

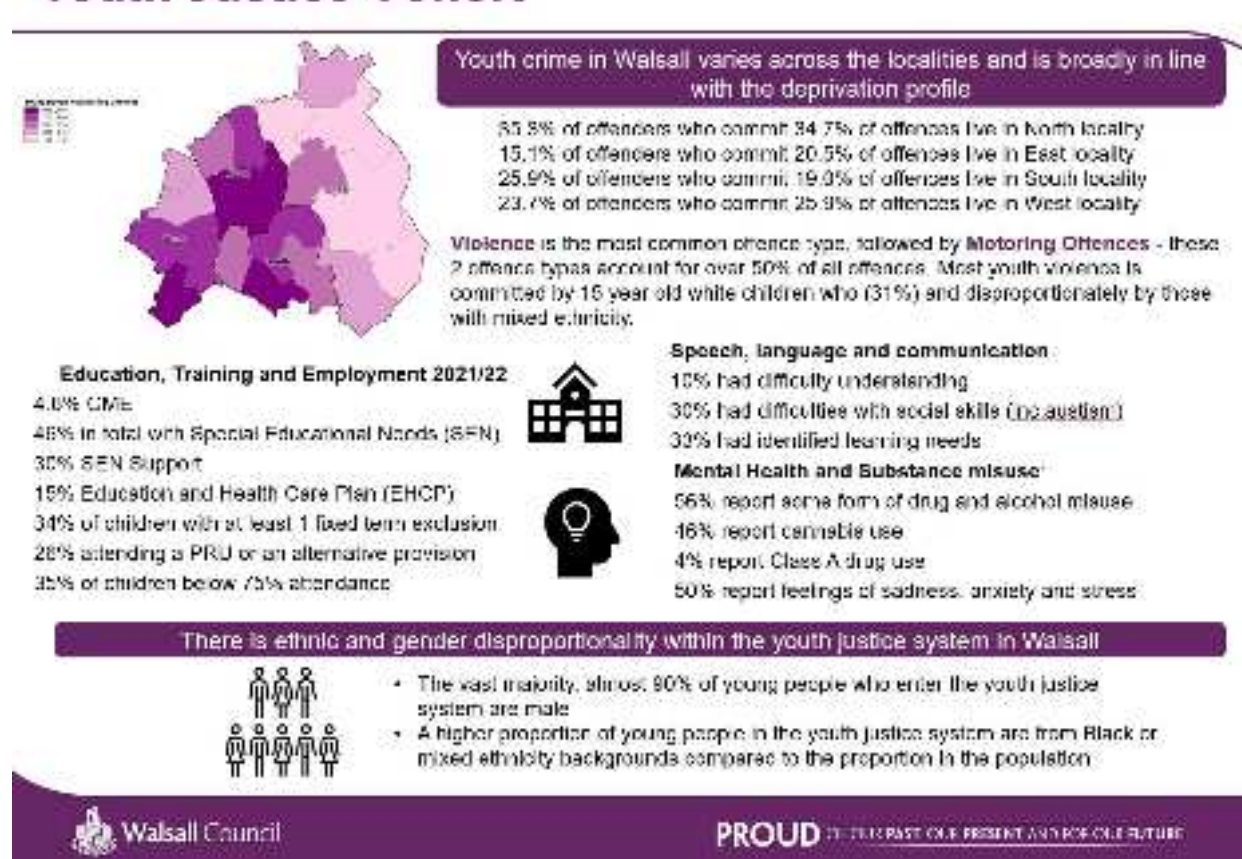
2. Local context

Children Living in Walsall

Updated 19th April 2022



Youth Justice Cohort



3. Child First

Walsall YJS are a trauma aware organisation. We understand that our children have experienced significant childhood adversity during their short lives which includes a range of trauma and abuse. It becomes clear that involvement within the justice system can at times re-traumatise them. Child First practice is about working in a way that reduces the stigmatisation that contact with the justice system brings. Our youth justice partnership shares the Youth Justice Board's Child First vision and our delivery is based upon the YJB's approach as below:

1. Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.

2. Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.

3. Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.

4. Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

The YJS is committed to enabling practitioners to undertake the Child First Effective Practice Award, 2 of the practitioners are completing the award and we are exploring funding options for the full practitioner workforce to complete the qualification. This course gives you the opportunity to explore the four tenets of Child First practice, focussed on supporting practitioners to build constructive relationships with their children and families. Our training offer for staff is good and we expect all our managers and practitioners to complete the wider Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate as an additional vocational qualification.

During 2021 we have also ensured that our managers and practitioners have completed motivational interviewing training to actively support participation, engagement and wider social inclusion for our children. We know that sustainable desistance is achieved by building pro-social identities through the identification of strengths. In addition, the Service has again delivered restorative practice training to practitioners in 2021, including our colleagues from Victim Support, and we have recently appointed a new Victims and Restorative Justice Officer to continue to improve our collaborative approach with children.

Learning from the HMIP thematic review of working with young people during the Covid pandemic, Walsall YJS routinely assess our children's technical ability and access to information technology. More and more, interventions and contacts can be delivered through information technology and it is important to ensure our children have the same access and opportunities as others. We also secured laptops for some of most vulnerable children during Covid lockdowns and periods away from school.

As part of Race Equalities week, the YJS adopted using a name pronunciation tool to use with our children, so we were clear on the importance of spelling and the phonetic

way in which they would like professionals to record and say their name. Getting the names of our children right is an important part of respecting their heritage, identity and pride. Our disproportionality champions have also delivered workshops with the team to support practitioner in discussing ethnicity and identity with our children and recording this on our database.

The 'Child First' approach is not limited to the practice examples given above. Strategically our partnership is determined to ensure that the Child First tenets are visible within our Performance and Partnership Board, that our children are central to our discussions and that we hear their voice.

4. Voice of the child

The YJS seeks to hear the views of our children in the time we spend with them every day and we have implemented a recording tool that helps capture what they have to say each time we meet. Practitioners use this information to help tailor their work together and informs the types of interventions that work best for that child. The YJS also seeks the views of our children to consider models of delivery, changes in practice and reviews of policy. They also help us recruit new staff. We have embedded the use of a restorative 'MyPlan' for our children and their families to ensure that the help and support they receive is written by them and inclusive, taking into account the views of those important people in the child's life.

Enabling children in the justice system to shape the wider strategic partnership discussions:

Children open to the Youth Justice Service are often involved with other parts of the children's services system and as such we ensure that our children's voice is key when undertaking wider consultation. In 2021, Walsall YJS participated in two key pieces of Children's Services engagement activity which helped to explore what it is like for a child to grow up in Walsall which has shaped the priorities of Walsall's Children's Alliance. Children's Services created the Big Conversation programme as part of its Walsall Right 4 Children transformation journey. This included a programme of activities aimed at listening to and acting on what children and families are saying about the services we deliver as well as seeking out opportunities to collaborate with them on aspects of day to day practice.

During the summer the partnership took time to talk to 323 children, including 13 children supported by the YJS, and 102 parents with the aim to better understand;

- Their lived experience of growing up in Walsall?
- The impact of COVID on their lives, their peers and their community
- What might help improve their lived experience now
- What their ambitions are for the future
- What might be barriers to achieving their future ambition
- What help or support could help remove these barriers to achieve their ambition

The Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza DBE, launched the Big Ask in 2021 as a means of hearing the voices of as many children in England as possible. She undertook this as one of her first tasks on becoming Children's Commissioner. Every school and Local Authority were asked to engage with over half a million children aged 6-17 responded to the survey. Over 1,700 children and young people in Walsall responded to the questionnaire. This data was made available to help our local developments. YJS practitioners completed this consultation with the children they work with.

The YJS have worked with One Palfrey Big Local community association to deliver the Lionheart Challenge with schools and Walsall neighbourhood policing. The Lionheart Challenge is a business, enterprise and citizenship programme designed for school pupils aimed at nurturing them as future business leaders, responsible citizens and enterprising employees. The pupils were asked to devise a community action project to address serious youth violence in their neighbourhoods and as part of the 'Grand Final' challenge at Walsall Football Club's Bescot Stadium, we consulted with over 200 children

to understand their views on safety issues affecting their community. We will be using these views to help shape our delivery in 2022.

Enabling children in the justice system to shape youth justice services:

In 2021, Walsall YJS employed our first Youth Justice Apprentice. The role was created as our young people told us that earning money is a priority for them, they struggle to find training and employment opportunities that interest them and that having a criminal record can often automatically destroy their chances. Improving education, training and employment outcomes for our young people was a strategic priority for 2021-22 and we will continue to fight to improve education outcomes for our children. We are proud to be able to offer the apprenticeship opportunity to someone who has experienced the youth justice system, who has made positive changes to their life and is keen to help others do the same. The main job purpose of the apprenticeship is to bridge the gap between youth justice officers and children and actively engage with them to seek their views. Our apprentice led our youth justice safer lives survey (see appendix 3) with our children this year to better understand issues around violence, knife crime and community safety. The YJS has learnt important lessons in 2021 and supported our apprentice to transition to permanent full time employment. This year we have increased the level of apprenticeship and are currently recruiting our 2nd apprentice.

Based on restorative practice and Child First principles, the YJS has created 'MyPlan' to enable children and families to form a plan, in their own words, to help them stay out of trouble with objectives that build upon their strengths and the issues that are facing. The Youth Justice Officers facilitate the plan and help fill in the gaps based upon assessment and the developing relationship already in place. We have adopted the 'MyPlan' for all children receiving an out of court disposal or conviction in Court.

As part of our consultation work with our children and their parents, we understood that sometimes they received mixed messages at differing stages of the justice system and at times the way these messages were delivered were difficult to understand. As a result we developed a series of literature detailing what was happening and what to expect at these different stages. Our young people gave advice as to the wording and layout and we consulted with our CAMHs team to understand if the leaflets were accessible for families with special educational needs. We have also worked closely with our Education Psychology colleagues to develop videos for our children and parents helping them to understand their diagnosis of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder and autistic spectrum disorder, accessible through a QR code.

From 2022 we are developing our ability to hear the views of children, and adults, who have been the victim of youth crime. Our new victim officer is developing the way we receive feedback from those impacted by youth crime including their levels of satisfaction. Improving how we hear and respond to our children's voice will be a strategic priority for 2022 onwards.

5. [Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements](#)

Walsall YJS sits within the Children's Services directorate and the Strategic Lead for the YJS reports into the Director for Early Help and Partnerships with close alignment to Social Care and Education. A disproportionate number of children are open to Social Care Services and there are clear links between children in the youth justice system and those involved in exploitation, going missing or who are excluded from education. The YJS Strategic Lead is part of the senior leadership team within Children's Services.

Walsall Youth Justice Service Performance and Partnership Board meet quarterly and is chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services. Partners from the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health, Police and National Probation Service regularly attend. Board membership can be found in Appendix 1. The agenda is set by the Chair of the Performance and Partnership Board and contains regular reports on issues that impact upon YJS delivery and factors that are impacting on the daily lives of children in Walsall. Throughout 2021, the Board focussed on monitoring and improving models of delivery, through audit and review, and commissioned an independent assurance review to understand the distance travelled against the HMIP recommendations in 2019.

For 2022 onwards, the YJS Board has aligned its structure with the Safer Walsall Partnership, has reviewed its terms of reference and has adopted a model of quarterly themed learning meetings based upon our agreed strategic priorities. Below this structure, strategic leaders from the partnership will drive forward progress within delivery sub-groups dedicated to the strategic priorities. The YJS Board members are committed to proactively engaging with the youth justice agenda and ensuring that they hear and respond to what our children have to say and proactively advocate for them within their wider strategic networks.

- **Safer Walsall Community Safety Partnership (SWP)**

The YJS Strategic Lead sits on the Safer Walsall Partnership Board and ensures alignment with the YJS Performance and Partnership Board with shared strategic priorities. The YJS Strategic Lead also leads the criminal justice strand of Walsall's Violence Reduction Strategy.

a) Strategic Violence Reduction sub-group

b) Violence Against Women and Girls sub-group

The YJS Performance and Partnership Board has strengthened the ties with the Safer Walsall Partnership in 2021 and ensures connectivity through Walsall's Police Superintendent who is the strategic lead for the Serious Violence Duty for both partnerships.

- **West Midlands Local Criminal Justice Board**

The YJS participates in the regional LCJB Youth Sub Group to ensure that the desistence needs of children are given the appropriate focus. Within this forum, the YJS are also able to engage with regional criminal justice partners, including West Midlands Police and the office of the police and crime commissioner, to effectively horizon scan including working with the West Midlands Combined Authority and the potential for a Trailblazer Devolution Deal.

- **West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP).**

The YJS is a key partner to the VRP and the Strategic Lead sits on the West Midlands VRP Strategic Board and Programme Delivery Board. To support strategic delivery, the YJS Strategic lead also supports the;

a) VRP Sports Strategic Partnership Board.

- b) *School Exclusion sub-group*
 - c) *Commissioning sub-group*
- **Contest (the UK's strategy for counter terrorism: Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare)**

The Strategic Lead for Walsall YJS is the Chair of the Local Authority's Channel Panel and as such sits upon Walsall's Contest Board which is responsible for driving forward the delivery and implementation of the government's Contest Strategy.
- **Walsall Safeguarding Partnership**

The YJS Strategic Lead sits on the WSCB and contributes to the following sub-groups:

 - a) *Performance and Quality Assurance (PQA) subcommittee*
 - b) *Exploitation subcommittee*
 - c) *Strategic Exploitation Panel*
- **Children's Services Performance Board**

The YJS Strategic Lead sits on the Children's Services Performance Board and presents YJS data against key performance indicators and locally agreed priorities- including the Social Care/YJS interface and first time entrants.

6. Resources and services

Walsall YJS is resourced through a range of partnership funding, deployed staff and dedicated pathways which are overseen by the YJS Performance and Partnership Board. The YJB grant is a main stream of funding which the partnership uses to finance staffing and resources to deliver functions across the youth justice partnership and within the YJS (see appendix 4). The local authority's financial contribution, through Children's Services, supports the YJB grant and ensures that YJS staff are equipped to meet the needs of the children we support. Our performance will be improved as we move through 2022 as the YJS will be co-located space with the Exploitation and Missing Team and Walsall Partnership Police. This exciting development will strengthen our partnership work and collaboration, improve information sharing and provide better support for our shared cohort of children at risk. The partnership have chosen a strategic priority for 2022 to focus on identifying and responding to the unmet needs of children as they enter the justice system. Improved resources and services from health and education will be pivotal to driving forward changes.

The Police also make a significant contribution to the partnership. Walsall Police provide a financial contribution, deploy a Youth Crime Officer and have nominated Youth Offender Managers aligned to the YJS. This is in addition to a financial contribution from the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which is used to fund practitioners who deliver crime prevention and diversion interventions. Walsall children in the justice system are further supported through PCC funding through the Safer Walsall Partnership to focus on our strategic priorities in improving outcomes for those children involved in serious youth violence and criminal exploitation through lived experienced mentors, and providing a dedicated offer for boys with black and mixed ethnicities who are overrepresented in the justice system.

The National Probation Service provide a 0.6 full time equivalent Probation Officer who oversees transition to adulthood work and a 0.25 full time equivalent Probation Service Officer who is based in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who contributes to daily referral screenings and is now engaged in the weekly Youth Justice Partnership Panel. These posts will be crucial in driving forward improvements within our strategic priority to strengthen transitions, including resettlement. Through the clinical commissioning group, health provide funding for a 0.5 full time equivalent CAMHS practitioner to support our children with mental health needs. The education needs of children open to the YJS are supported and monitored by Walsall's Virtual School for Looked After Children and a named specialist lead for this cohort of children. The Council's Employment Team also deploy an Impact Worker to engage with our children aged 16 and over.

Walsall YJS confirms that it is compliant with the minimum staffing requirements as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Partners have confirmed that their contributions to the Service have been maintained for 2021-22 and the establishment is fully funded.

Workforce demographics:

As of 1st April 2022, the YJS has 17.5 permanent staff paid by the local authority who are supported by 2 business support officers. A full service structure can be found in appendix 2. The management team is stable and has been in place for over 12 months, although we have seen changes within the practitioner group during 2021 during and following the pandemic. Our current workforce demographics 11% male and 89% female with 40% have a self-reported black, Asian or minority ethnicity.

7. [Progress on previous plan](#)

The YJS Performance and Partnership Board reviewed its progress against last year's priorities as part of a Board development event in January 2022 and within a management board meeting in February 2022. This activity was informed by an independent review of progress against HMIP recommendations from Walsall YJS' inspection in 2019. The partnership recognised the hard work and dedication of the managers and practitioners within the YJS who have strived to improve delivery and practice in the 2 years following inspection against the backdrop of a global pandemic.

Walsall YJS' strategic plan for 2021-2022 identified the following priorities;

- Reducing exploitation and youth violence.
- Ensuring that education, training and employment outcomes improve for 16+ young people in the Youth Justice System.
- Reducing disproportionality in the youth justice system.
- Effective COVID-19 recovery.
- Improving quality of practice and demonstrating outcomes

The delivery plan for 2021-2022 contained development actions from the latest national standards audit from 2020. Below is a summary of progress against that Delivery Plan:

National Standard 1 'Out of Court Disposals'	
Priority	Commentary on Progress against Operational Objectives
Reducing Youth Violence Improving quality	<p>Significant attention has been given during 2021 to improving the quality of risk of serious harm assessments for young people subject to youth cautions and court orders. All staff have received risk matrix training and managers have received operational management training delivered through the Association of YOT Managers. Our focus on improving risk assessments to include identified and potential victims has been achieved through reviewing our quality assurance processes and our staff supervision policy.</p> <p>So what? Audit work and an independent review of progress identified improvement in assessment has been made, although further work was needed to improve the partnership's model of victim work.</p>
Commentary on Progress against Strategic Objectives	
Disproportionality Covid recovery	<p>The partnership's ability to monitor and measure the cohort of children entering the system for the first time has improved over 2021. We understand that on average 50% of children enter the YJS by receiving a caution and that 45% of out of court disposals were given to children from minority ethnic backgrounds. Our ability to track re-offenders has improved over the past year, however we want to go further to better understand the re-offending rates of diversion interventions and out of court disposals.</p> <p>As a partnership, we have been forerunners in the use of Outcome 22 deferred prosecutions for children and have led an Operation Checkpoint pilot for working with children involved in knife crime. Walsall YJS are actively exploring a regional out of court disposal scrutiny group dedicated to young people alongside regional colleagues and the office of the PCC.</p> <p>So what? 18 young people have received Outcome 22's and 17 have been successfully diverted from the Youth Justice System.</p>

National Standard 2 'In Court'	
Priority	Commentary on progress against Operational Objectives
Disproportionality Improving quality	<p>As part of our consultations with children and parents, we heard that there were occasions where conflicting messages were received from different agencies within the youth justice system. Walsall YJS have refreshed the literature that we share with children and parents at different stages of the justice system, particularly at court. We have ensured that the literature can be shared electronically as we've moved towards more digital approaches.</p> <p>We know that in Walsall, children with mixed ethnicity are overrepresented in the number of breach of bail offences and slightly higher rates of non-compliance with Court Orders. As such our practitioners have reviewed our induction processes for children to ensure that expectation upon them and their worker are clearly explained at the start of our involvement.</p> <p>So what? Parents and children have provided positive feedback regarding the literature. Breach rates have remained low.</p>
	Commentary on progress against Strategic Objectives
Disproportionality Improving quality	<p>As part of the governance from the YJS Equality & Disproportionality Forum, the practice improvement subgroup has been established. The subgroup monitors Pre-Sentence Report proposal congruence with sentencing and enables practitioners to review the language used to understand the use of unconscious bias and any pejorative language.</p> <p>Our ethnicity analysis has been reviewed and there continues to be an overrepresentation of boys with black and mixed ethnicity who receive a disproportionate number of bail offences and breach of community orders. The YJS practice improvement subgroup is reviewing the YJS' compliance and engagement procedures to recognise and respond to this disparity.</p> <p>The chair of the Youth Magistrates for the Black Country is invited to attend the YJS Performance and Partnership Board. YJS managers attend youth magistrate meetings and support with training on young person issues.</p> <p>So what? Initial QA processes identify an improved use of language within reports and 95% congruence between sentence and proposal. Backlogs of children in the youth court, as a result of Covid, have been worked through successfully.</p>

National Standard 3 'In the Community'	
Priority	Commentary on progress against operational objectives
Reducing youth violence Improving quality Education Covid recovery	<p>The YJS has improved the quality of safety planning for victims in assessments and the child's bespoke 'MyPlan' through staff training and developed quality assurance processes. As we moved through Covid restrictions, the value of face to face contact with our families became more apparent and we increased the number of home visits to better safeguard.</p> <p>Building upon the resilience of our children through the pandemic has been important and for many their risks to others increased during this time. As such we established a partnership with St-Giles to provide a lived experienced mentor for our most vulnerable children involved in exploitation and knife carrying and quickly re-established our positive activities, including sport, reparation and group work, with more robust risk assessments.</p>

	<p>Improvements have been made to the way the Service monitors and reviews education, training and employment (ETE) data and we have established a NEET Action Group for those 16+ young people who need additional support. We have improved our partnership with the Walsall Works Initiative.</p> <p>So what? 11 high risk children involved in criminal exploitation have been supported by our St Giles mentor.</p> <p>We have reported lower rates of young people who are not engaged ETE (15.4% in March 2022).</p>
	Commentary on progress against strategic objectives
<p>Covid recovery</p> <p>Reducing youth violence</p> <p>Improving quality</p>	<p>During 2021, the YJS Performance and Partnership Board have monitored the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on Walsall children and have reviewed our progress against the HMIP thematic report examining the effect the pandemic had upon practice and children. We amended our QA processes to ensure we assessed a child's ability to engage using technology.</p> <p>The YJS' audit programme for 2021/22 has been embedded, it has supported the Performance and Partnership Board in reviewing the effectiveness of delivery, including victim work and out of court disposals, and has been instrumental in implementing new practice models.</p> <p>The YJS is committed to the partnership's exploitation strategy and provides resource to the exploitation hub and daily triage process. We recognise that our children involved in crime are often exploited and have taken a lead in driving this new model forward. As we move into 2022-23, we are co-locating with colleagues from Social Care and Exploitation Police.</p> <p>The YJS are working closely with the Police to lead on the reducing serious youth violence work stream under the Safer Walsall Partnership's Violence Strategy. The YJS and the SWP are aligned and share the priority.</p> <p>So what? The YJS identified young people who needed their education prioritising, including access to laptops and support to get into school. A new victim model was approved by the YJS Board and implemented.</p>

National Standard 4 'In Secure'	
Priority	Commentary on progress against operational objective
Reducing youth violence	<p>To improve oversight of assessment, planning and intervention, the terms of reference for the YJS high-risk panel has been reviewed to include planning for resettlement and ensuring young people receive the support they need. In 2022-23 the resettlement policy will need to be reviewed with colleagues from Social Care to incorporate the recommendations from a focus visit from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in February 2022.</p> <p>YJS staff have worked closely with colleagues in the secure estate to re-establish professional visits and assist families to visit their children to support sentence planning and resettlement back home. Progress against this has been dependent upon Covid-19, local outbreaks and government restrictions. Despite these challenges, YJS staff have maintained close relationships with their children and with staff working within the secure estate.</p> <p>So what? The number of Walsall children receiving custodial sentences is positively low (5 in 2021/22).</p>

Priority	Commentary on progress against Strategic Objectives
Improving quality Covid recovery	<p>The YJS performance and partnership board has supported regional efforts to seek assurances from the Youth Custody Service (YCS) that Walsall children are cared for appropriately in the secure estate. This occurred via regular regional meeting with the YCS Safeguarding Lead. The YJS' Board has also sought and received assurances from the YCS that issues of escalating violence within the secure estate are being addressed. Similarly, the Board received regular reports from Werrington YOI regarding the impact of Covid, including education and offending programmes.</p> <p>A strategic audit would be beneficial to understand the resettlement challenges for Walsall young people and improve partnership pathways to better support seamless transition (with particular focus on health and accommodation). This will inform the review of the resettlement policy and incorporate the recommendations from the DLUHC focused visit.</p>

National Standard 5 'On Transition'	
Priority	Commentary on progress against Operational Objectives
Education	<p>In understanding the negative impact of exclusion and moves between schools, the YJS has embedded the Vulnerability Personal Education Plan for young people who are classified as a Child Missing Education (CME). The YJS has a partnership in place with the Brindley Foundation Youth Academy which has supported 16+ young people who are NEET and provides work experience. Through support from Impact, we are also working with Walsall Works to provide work experience and placement opportunities.</p> <p>Over the past 12 months the YJS has improved its assessments and planning through training and QA. Restorative MyPlans are used for all young people to ensure that transitions (Transition2Adulthood, education, resettlement, accommodation) are articulated and the right support is provided. We also reviewed the YJS closure process to ensure consistent recording of exit strategies and smooth transition to the community.</p> <p>So what? The number of children not in ETE is low at 15%. At the time of writing this plan, no YJS children were classified as CME. YJS Probation Officer supporting all children 17.5 years and above. All children complete a MyPlan, including specific 'transition' objectives.</p>
Priority	Commentary on progress against Strategic Objectives
Improving quality	<p>The partnership have ensured that there is suitable education representatives on the YJS Performance and Partnership Board and include the Director for Access and Inclusion (Chief Education Officer), supported by the Virtual School Head and local authority's Employment and Skills Manager. This ensures that education activity and support for our young people receives the right level of oversight and development.</p> <p>Moving into 2022, the partnership recognise that the health needs of children in the justice system require greater understanding and an improved partnership response. A wider health needs analysis and audit will be beneficial to support changes to our delivery model. We also recognise that transitions for our children need greater partnership focus going forward.</p>

8. Performance and priorities

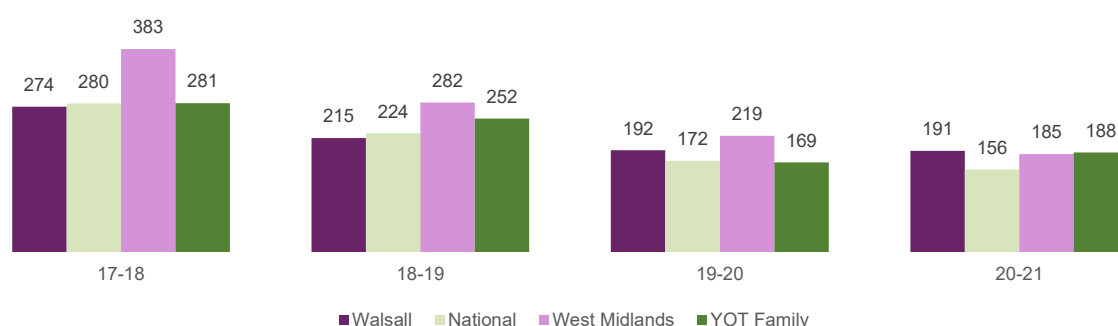
Over the past twelve months the YJS Performance and Partnership Board have continued to work with Children's Service performance analysts to improve the partnerships ability to monitor and respond to data, key performance indicators and local information. This has resulted in an improving monthly performance scorecard which steers our audit process and the partnership's ability to learn and change practice to benefit the children we support. Board members and YJS managers and practitioners have an improved and more detailed understanding of the cohort we are working with from diversion interventions to custodial sentences. In depth analysis such as the YJS Ethnicity Report and audit reports have furthered the partnerships knowledge of some of the challenges we are facing and enable us to make evidence based practice decisions.

First Time Entrants:

What we have done to reduce first time entrants during 2021/22:

- Introduction of Operation Checkpoint to provide diversion opportunities for children involved in knife crime.
- Use of Outcome 22 deferred prosecution for children involved in low level offending behaviour.
- Evolution of the YJS Out of Court Disposal Joint Decision Making Panel towards a wider Youth Justice Partnership Panel which identifies and supports children at risk of engaging in violent behaviour.
- The YJS is a key partner in Exploitation Hub and chairs the daily multi-agency exploitation triage with Social Care and the Police.
- Close relationship with schools and the Violence Reduction Unit and we are developing a Reducing Exclusion Pathway.

First Time Entrants (FTE) - PNC Rate per 100,000 0-17 Population



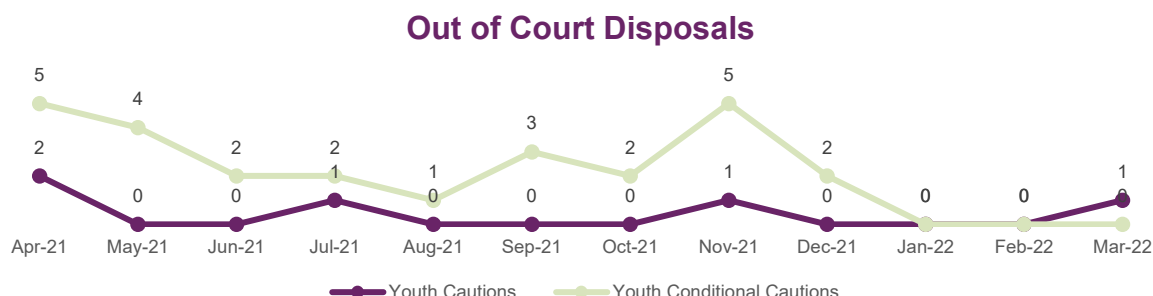
The above FTE chart is the latest published information from the Youth Justice Board and details a rolling 12 month period. It relates to 57 children entering the system for the first time between October 2020 and September 2021, the same number as the previous 12 month period. Our local monitoring indicates that at the end of March 2022, 55 children had entered the system since April 2021. Just under half of these young people received a formal Police disposal. We know that over 90% of FTEs are boys and that a disproportionate number of boys with mixed ethnicity (21%) enter the system. Children from Black ethnicity groups enter the system at a younger age, compared to other ethnicity groups. Almost half of the FTEs from these ethnicity groups (43%) are aged

under 14. Whereas the average age of a child entering the system for the first time is 16 years old.

Diversion and Out of Court Disposals:

What we have done to improve diversion interventions and out of court disposals during 2021/22:

- Established a well-resourced Youth Justice Partnership Panel to provide oversight of diversion referrals and joint out of court disposal decisions.
- Early Help are a new and valued partner to the panel and the relationship with the Violence Reduction Unit provides additional capacity and resource.
- The YJS have increased its practitioner capacity to work with children through the diversion pathway or who receive out of court disposals.
- Children are assessed using ASSET+ prior to a decision regarding the suitability of an out of court disposal.
- YJS practitioners deliver a range of creative and bespoke interventions for our children and have access to a strong youth offer.



At the end of March 2022, Walsall YJS were working with 6 children who were receiving a diversion intervention and 3 children who were subject to an Outcome 22 Deferred Prosecution. On average, over the past 6 months, the number of children receiving support who were not in the formal justice system would be 12 per month. The Youth Justice partnership approved a diversion pathway for children at risk of engaging in violent behaviour, offending behaviour and harmful sexual behaviour. In partnership with Walsall police we have established a daily triage process to identify children involved in violent behaviour and have established a Youth Justice Partnership Panel to make joint decisions as to the appropriateness of diversion intervention. The panel is well resourced with colleagues from Children's Services, NHS Liaison and Diversion, Beacon Drug and Alcohol Services, representatives from the Violence Reduction Unit and commissioned intervention provides such as Base 25 mentoring. The panel identify the need for assessment and assign a lead profession to engage with the child and deliver intervention and support.

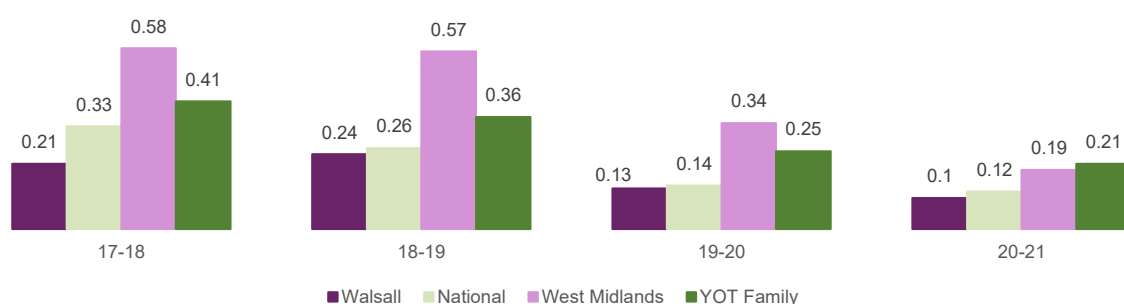
All children eligible for out of court police disposals are discussed at the Youth Justice Partnership Panel. A joint decision is made regarding eligibility and then allocated to a Youth Justice Prevention officer to undertake an assessment and make a proposal for suitability based on risk, need, offence seriousness and the wishes of victims. The numbers of cautions imposed by the Police has positively reduced over the past month due to the new Diversion pathways and the Youth Justice Partnership Panel.

Children in custody:

What we have done during 2021/22 to reduce the use of custody and improve outcomes:

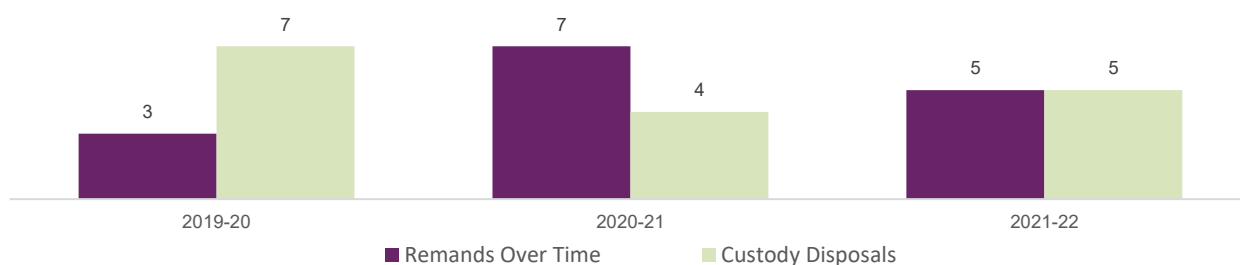
- The partnership closely monitors the numbers of children who enter the secure estate, undertakes audits and learning has been shared with the YJS Performance and Partnership Board.
- A resettlement policy is in place in partnership with Social Care.
- As part of the YJS High Risk process, dedicated resettlement support panels are held for children subject to custodial sentences to support release plans.
- The YJS participate in a focussed visit from the Home Office Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and has adopted wider children's services recommendations, such as referencing St Basil's Youth Justice Accommodation Pathway toolkit.
- The YJS are exploring a resettlement partnership with Phoenix United who provide mentoring support for children involved in serious youth violence and gangs upon their release from custody.

Use of Custody Rate per 1,000 0-17 Population



Reducing the number of Walsall children receiving custodial sentences is a key performance indicator and positively remains very low. The chart above represents our latest published data and relates to 3 children during the calendar year 2021. All 3 children were aged 16 or 17 and had committed offences of serious violence, including a sexual offence. The 3 children had white, black and mixed ethnicities. Violence against the person is the most common form of offence type (55%) for children entering the secure estate. Although this isn't the main offence of most, it is concerning that 1 of these young people had breached their statutory court order and 2 had entered the system for the first time (FTE) with custodial sentences.

Total Remands & Custody Disposals

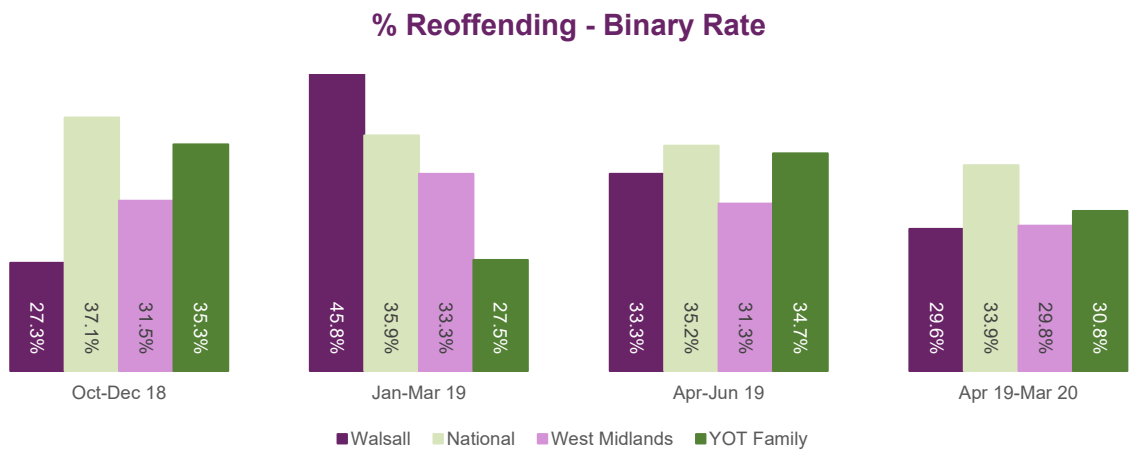


Remands into the secure estate are tracked by the YJS as they can often lead to custodial sentences, have implications for Social Care and can be a very traumatic experience for our children. 5 remands between April 2021 and March 2022 relate to 2 white children, 1 Asian, 1 Black and 1 with mixed ethnicity. The children were aged 16 and 17.

Re-offending:

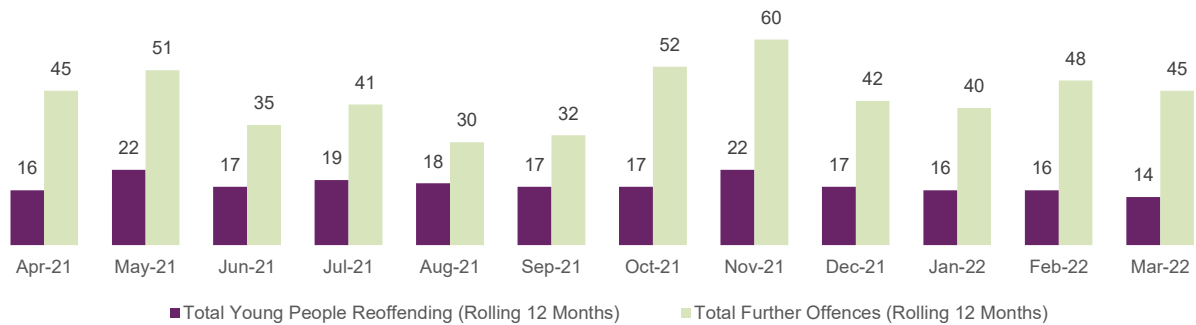
What we have done during 2021/22 to reduce re-offending:

- The YJS has focussed on improving the assessment practice of youth justice officers, including a focus on reviewing desistance, public protection and safeguarding, and safely reducing risk in the right circumstances.
- Walsall have continued to embed the use of a restorative ‘MyPlan’ with our children subject to both out of court disposals and court orders. The MyPlan helps children and families take ownership of some of the problems impacting upon their lives by empowering them to write objectives to help in their own words.
- The YJS has reviewed and implemented quality assurance processes and tools to provide better focus on issues impacting upon desistance, such as culture and identity, victim work and the importance of external controls in protecting the public.
- We have a good partnership in place with pro-active and supportive Police colleagues within the Offender Management Unit.
- There is a strong positive activity offer for our children with multiple projects available such as the Bike Repair programme, Co-LAB YTH music programme and our sport programmes. Positive activities are further strengthened by a growing community reparation offer including work at our local allotments.
- Our partnership with St-Giles is set to continue over the next 3 years to provide lived experienced mentors to some of our most vulnerable and risky children in addition to training and support for schools.



The above chart represents the latest published re-offending data for Walsall in comparison to its regional, national and statistical comparators. Our binary performance is very good which means that fewer (34) Walsall children are re-offending. However, it should be noted that these children are committing on average 4.59 re-offences which is higher than the national average. Our local and current tracking of children who re-offend, as seen below, suggests that the total number of children who have re-offended is the lowest is been within the past 12 months at 14 with an average of 3.2 re-offences which suggests a 30% reduction.

Number of Reoffenders & Further Offences

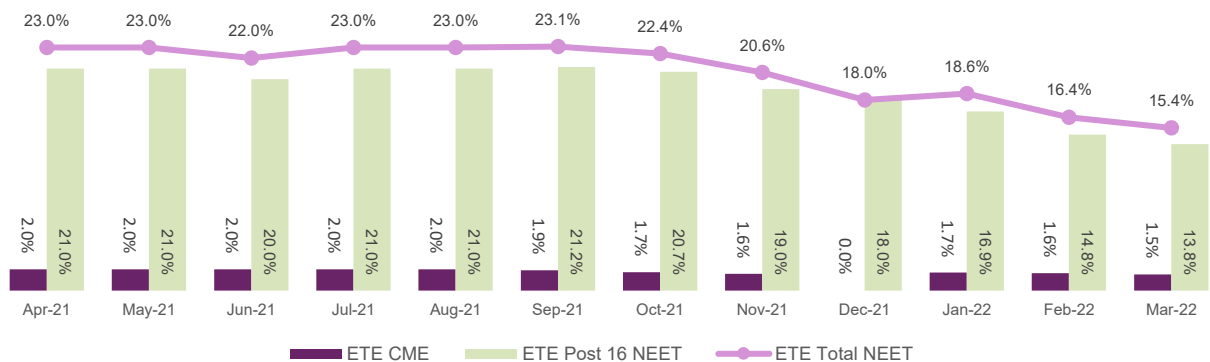


Education, Training and Employment:

What we have done to improve education, training and employment outcomes during 2021/22:

- The YJS' partnership with the Virtual School is strong and support our children under the age of 16.
- We have introduced a youth justice personal education plan for any child missing education (CME).
- The YJS has an Impact Worker deployed to the team to support young people over the age of 16.
- Our partnership with the Local Authority's employment and skills team actively monitors and manages our 16+ children with a NEET Action Group
- We are supported by Walsall Works, an initiative supported by local businesses to help young people find employment, a local charities employment academy to develop work experience opportunities.
- The YJS is in partnership with the Violence Reduction Unit to develop a reducing exclusion pathway.
- We run a Bike Repair Project which teaches our children business and entrepreneurial skills.

Children Not in Education, Training and Employment (ETE)



Over the last 12 months the overall number and percentage of children not in education, training and employment has continued to reduce even though the total number of children we are working with has increased during that time. We are aware through regular and close monitoring that the numbers of school age children missing education (CME) is very low (3 children since September 2021) and that our partnership with the Virtual School works quickly to ensure that suitable school places are found and that we support those at risk of permanent exclusion.

We do recognise that children often enter the youth justice system with special educational needs (46%) and that children completing their intervention with us will often have reduced timetables, receive their education in short stay 'pupil referral units' (26%) and have experienced exclusion. 34% of our children have on average experienced at least 1 fixed term exclusion. We are also faced with challenges when supporting Children in Walsall over the age of 16. Often the 'pull' of working for 'cash in hand' is greater than attending a training provision with longer term benefits, combined with difficulties created by a difficult education history, experience of exclusion and few qualifications.

Overrepresentation:

What we have done during 2021/22 to reduce disproportionality and improve outcomes for children with black and mixed ethnicities:

- Reviewed the partnership full Ethnicity Analysis for 2019-2021
- We have established the YJS Equality and Disproportionality Forum that provides oversight of an action plan and enables youth justice professionals a safe space to discuss equality and diversity issues that impact upon our children, communities and staffing group.
- A Disproportionality Practice Improvement Sub-Group meets regularly to consider practice developments needed as identified by the overarching Disproportionality Forum.
- The YJS have used funding through the Safer Walsall Partnership to set up a partnership with Open Lens Media to develop a Development and Engagement Programme for boys with black and mixed ethnicities, using film and media and personal coaching to improve outcomes for this group.
- We have identified practitioner Disproportionality Champions to help lead on issues impacting our children.
- We have identified a lead for working with fathers to improve our practice.
- The YJS are in partnership with the Kitchen Table Talk Programme and refer parents who require support for helping their child through the youth justice journey.
- The YJS have supported Palfrey One Big Local in the schools Lionheart Challenge to help local children develop ideas to reduce the levels of violence within that community.
- Although the number we work with is small, the YJS have supported a regional working group to improve outcomes for girls in the justice system and have signed up to a minimum bespoke offer for girls as they enter the system.
- In partnership with the office of the police and crime commissioner we deliver Stop and Search Programmes for our children to improve their understanding of the law and their rights.

Ethnicity by Population and Number of Children in the System 1.4.19 – 31.3.21				
Ethnicity	Percentage 10-17 Population	Percentage of Offenders	Difference	Number of offences / offender
Asian or Asian British	19% (5,473)	6% (10)	-13%	1.60
Black or Black British	3% (723)	10% (18)	7%	5.00
Chinese or other ethnic group	1% (423)	1% (1)	0%	1.00
Mixed	5% (1,396)	25% (45)	20%	2.38
White	72% (20,253)	59% (107)	-13%	3.64

Ethnicity by Offence Type 1.4.19 – 31.3.21						
Offence Type	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese or other ethnic group	Mixed	White	Total
Violent Crime	11 (69%)	39 (45%)	1 (100%)	58 (73%)	120 (54%)	232 (57%)
Acquisitive Crime	0 (0%)	17 (20%)	0 (0%)	12 (15%)	81 (36%)	112 (27%)
Drugs Offences	5 (31%)	14 (16%)	0 (0%)	3 (4%)	12 (5%)	34 (8%)
Breach Offences	0 (0%)	17 (20%)	0 (0%)	6 (8%)	9 (4%)	32 (8%)
Total	16	87	1	79	222	410

The youth justice partnership has reviewed its full ethnicity analysis to help us understand local disproportionality in the justice system in addition to monthly monitoring. The charts above tell us that similarly to the national picture we are seeing the overrepresentation of black boys and boys with mixed ethnicity within the local justice system. Although over this year we have seen a slight increase in the number of Asian young people entering the system for the first time, overall this group remains underrepresented in the formal justice system. We know that most recorded violent offences are committed by white children, however a disproportionate amount of violence is committed by children with black and mixed ethnicity. Our data also tells us that black young children commit a disproportionate amount of breach of bail offences and that 43% enter the system on average at a younger age of 14 or below. A recent audit based upon the recommendations from the HMIP Thematic in the experiences of boys with black and mixed ethnicities in the justice system has also highlighted that our service needs to improve how we engage with fathers and also understand the impact of a missing father.

Reducing disproportionality has been a priority for the YJS during 2021-22 and will continue to be a priority over the next 3 year period.

9. [National standards](#)

The introduction of 'Standards for children in the youth justice system 2019' required all youth justice services to undertake a base-line self-assessment in 2020. In 2020, Walsall YJS Performance and Partnership Board assigned strategic leaders from across the partnership to ensure joint accountability and have oversight of each of the standards within the self-assessment process. The self-assessment was split into two parts; an operational audit and a strategic audit of governance arrangements. The operational audits were undertaken by youth justice managers and practitioners using audit tools adapted from the suggested YJB template. The findings from the operational audits were then shared with the relevant strategic leads to start the strategic assessment process. Please refer to Walsall YJS' Strategic Plan 2020-21 for further details.

An action plan was put in place following the self-assessment and despite the pandemic, significant progress was made across all five national standards. The YJS partnership identified a priority of improving quality of practice in 2021/22 and amalgamated the outstanding action from the national standards audit within its service delivery plan for last year. Please refer to section 7 of this plan for details.

10. Challenges, risks and issues

The challenges and risks associated with Covid-19 have not gone away. Although restrictions have been lifted and the YJS has adopted a 'business as usual' approach, we continue to have staff who become ill through Covid and this has presented some disruption to services. As re-infections are becoming more common it is likely that we will continue to see staff absences from work this year. The impact of the pandemic has also been felt in other ways amongst the staffing group as some practitioners had an opportunity to reflect on their home to work balance and have taken different career paths. This has meant that we have needed to recruit to new youth justice officers which has presented us with an opportunity to develop the team as we move out of the pandemic. Our Workforce and Inclusion Strategy now details career pathways for our staff who are looking for progression or who are wanting to develop their skills and opportunities within their current role. It also expands upon the welfare support that is on offer to managers and practitioners who undertake a difficult and challenging job. Walsall YJS are committed to investing in the workforce.

The challenges of remote working have been felt throughout the team. Therefore this year we are also co-locating with our colleagues in the police and children's services exploitation team within the civic centre. This will provide the managers and the practitioners the much needed physical space to more effectively manage risk and support the children we work with. It also improves our ability to monitor the wellbeing of the team and provide safe spaces to support each other. Our clinical supervision offer and our Workforce and Inclusion Strategy also put other measures in place to ensure that our team are properly supported and resilient enough to work with some of the most vulnerable children.

Serious youth violence in the borough remains a concern for the partnership and will again be a priority for us to work on. Violence against the person remains the most common offence type our children are committing and we are seeing increases in violent behaviour in specific localities in Walsall. We are working closely with our partners in the Police, community safety team and children's services exploitation team to address the levels of violence in these areas. The YJS has improved its community links in the area, has engaged with local community association and established intervention centres next to a local park where there is often concerning behaviour. We have also linked in with local schools where our children attend, have engaged in community events such as the Lionheart Project, and provided diversion interventions to those children caught in the or on the periphery of the violence and disorder. However, these are long term multi-generational issues that need addressing and continued work in these localities will need to continue.

Our children have told us that often they feel unsafe in their neighbourhoods and that they carry knives as this makes them feel safer. Serious youth violence within their communities is a priority for them. The children that we have consulted with overwhelmingly believe that one of the major contributing factor to the increase in youth violence is that there is a lack of positive activities for them in their communities. As a Youth Justice Service we recognise the need to have a strong and varied positive activity offer for our children which includes sport, music and other projects and programmes. We also know that the children we work with can be additionally vulnerable to exploitation or abuse outside of the family or school environment. This can take a variety of different forms including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and radicalisation. As a key

partner within the Exploitation Hub and daily exploitation triage meetings we are working together to identify and respond to safeguarding risks as soon as possible, as first responders our practitioners complete referrals through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and undertake exploitation assessments with our children. The YJS has also established a clear pathway between exploitation triage and the youth justice partnership panel to enable us to offer diversion interventions where appropriate.

Our youth justice partnership recognises that our health pathways for children in the justice system in Walsall need to improve and level up with other local authorities in the Black Country. Speech, language and communication provision and pathways need to be developed locally. The partnership have identified this as a key priority for 2022 and will establish an 'Unmet Need' subgroup of the performance and partnership board, led by a strategic leader, to drive forward changes

11. Service improvement plan

Walsall YJS's Child First vision is built upon the 4 tenets of Youth Justice Board's Child First approach as outlined in its Strategic Plan 2021-24. Our service improvements contained within this strategic plan will have a basis on that approach. Informed by an independent review of progress, our local Performance and Partnership Board have held a workshop in January 2022 to support the development of this plan and to determine strategic governance arrangements that will drive forward service improvements. Board members will own strategic priorities and chair sub-groups to ensure progress is being made with oversight from the Performance and Partnership Board.

The YJS are changing office space in 2022 to co-locate with colleagues in the Police, Walsall's Exploitation Team and the MASH. We believe there are clear strategic and operational benefits to be had from the co-location of managers and practitioners:

- Improve our focus on our Reducing Serious Youth Violence strategic priority
- Improve our strong relationship with the police and support of high risk children
- Develop our partnership with the Multi-agency Exploitation Hub and work to reduce exploitation.
- Better information sharing between partners and more efficient daily triage processes
- Develop our pathways with Children's Social Care through the MASH front door.

Workforce Development:

Section 3 of this plan details service training during 2021 that focussed on motivational interviewing, restorative practice, risk assessment and planning. Walsall YJS are committed to investing in its staff to complete the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate (YJEPC) and the recently launched Child First qualification through Unitas. We currently have 3 new practitioners undertaking the YJEPC and 2 completing Child First. In 2022, linked to our strategic priorities, we have identified the need for further training to improve the 'cultural competence' of our staff in engaging with communities and following operational management training, we will roll out a further series of training for practitioner to develop their assessment skills.

Our practice and delivery in 2022 and onwards is informed by a training plan linked to our Workforce and Inclusion Strategy supporting practitioners and managers within the Service to develop in their current roles and to aspire for progression. As a result of the Covid pandemic and remote working we have prioritised health and safety training for staff in 2021, we now have trained Mental Health First Aiders and Managers are being trained in supporting staff who are receiving clinical supervision with psychologists. Our wellbeing offer for the team will continue in 2022.

Thematic Review:

To support the partnership's improvement journey, during 2021 the YJS Performance and Partnership have discussed learning from HMIP thematic reports exploring '*the work of youth offending services during the COVID-19 pandemic- November 2020*' and '*experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system- October 2021*'.

A thematic review of the work of youth offending services during the COVID-19 pandemic <i>A review by HM Inspectorate of Probation November 2020</i>	
YJS management boards should:	What we did:
Identify the backlog of cases that are being processed through courts, and ensure that there is sufficient workforce capacity to deal with increased caseloads	The backlog within the Youth Court was quickly worked through by the summer of 2021. Court staff were provided with the technology to engage virtually and attended Court in person. Caseloads consistently monitored and resources re-purposed for the increase in Out of Court Disposals
Work with partners to include children who are defined as high vulnerability by YOTs within the local definition of vulnerable children.	Children in the YJS cohort were defined locally as highly vulnerable and our partner the Virtual School prioritised support this group.
Consider how this group of children are to be reintroduced to school, education and employment and how any attainment gap is to be addressed.	YJS children were provided with the opportunity to receive laptops to enable them to better re-engage with school. School hours, attendance and placement suitable monitored on a monthly basis.
YJSs should:	
Routinely assess children's access to IT and remote communication methods as a standard part of assessments.	QA process updated to ensure that upon entering the YJS children were assessed for IT capability.

The experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system A thematic inspection <i>by HM Inspectorate of Probation October 2021</i>	
YJS partnership boards should:	What we did:
have a vision and strategy for improving outcomes for black and mixed heritage boys, and make sure these are understood by staff and partner agencies	Funding through the PCC and SWP has enabled the YJS to work with a local organisation to develop our Disproportionality Strategy in 2022
ensure that all board members contribute data from their individual services that identifies areas of disproportionality and the action being taken to address them, and that this data is used to develop a joint strategic needs assessment	Following the YJS ethnicity analysis, children's services commissioned analysis from across all part of CS, including education and supported this will a full locality analysis
have a joint set of targets, for example with children's services, for improving service delivery for these boys, and make sure mechanisms are in place to monitor and evaluate outcomes.	Reducing disproportionality remains a priority for the YJS with a Board member, (Head of Children's Social Care) taking strategic lead for this work across the partnership
YJS managers should:	
establish effective processes for gaining feedback from black and mixed heritage boys on the services they receive and use this feedback to assess, review and improve the quality and suitability of service provision	The role of the YJS apprentice is to gather the views of our children. Our work with Open Lens will have a child steering group to gather feedback from children as part of the engagement and development programme to establish legacy
make sure that staff understand what is expected of them in their work with black and mixed heritage boys and that they are inducted, trained and supported to work effectively with this group of children	YJS staff have been trained in engaging our black children and we undertook commissioned unconscious bias training. Further training is planned for 2022 and we are working local community leaders to support this.
improve the quality of management oversight to make sure it is sufficiently focused on diversity, what this means in practice and that there are clear escalation routes to address any barriers to black and mixed heritage boys accessing services	Audit tools and QA gatekeeping tools have been amended to improve our oversight of this cohort of children. We have also undertake audits based on the recommendations of this thematic review
address gaps in specialist provision for black and mixed heritage boys, either by delivering it in-house or by commissioning it from appropriate local community organisations and evaluate referral and uptake rates for the services provided	We have commissioned specialist provision for our black and mixed heritage boys- an engagement and development programme based on improving ETE skills through media.
offer suitable support and intervention to the parents/carers of black and mixed heritage boys and review the suitability of this provision	We have continued to work with first class legacy during 2021 to refer parents to the kitchen table talks programme

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) Assurance Review 2021:

In a desire to continually move forward, the YJS Partnership commissioned an independent assurance review of progress based on the recommendations made within Walsall's HMIP inspection report in 2019.



Context and methodology of the HMIP Assurance Review:

It is important to place the review in context as the evidence examined will reflect what has been happening to the service. The unprecedented challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic cannot be underestimated particularly during periods of national 'lockdown' which significantly curtailed the delivery of public services including youth justice. This period of disruption and uncertainty commenced only 6 months after the HMIP report for Walsall was published and therefore early in the life of the improvement plan. Eighteen months later recovery is still taking place and the service is operating remotely for the most part.

In keeping with the peer review ethos, the process was essentially evidence based with desktop analysis and review of key documentation taking place throughout. Over 80 separate local documents were examined alongside relevant national guidance and legislation including the revised HMIP Inspection Standards for OOD. The written evidence ranged from operational policies and guidance, to strategic plans, partnership board minutes and papers and performance information. Of particular importance were the statutory Youth Justice Plan for Walsall and the 2019 Inspection report and subsequent improvement plans.

In order to test and validate the written evidence a programme of meetings and focus groups took place involving 24 individuals including service managers, YJS practitioners and partnership staff. Due to Covid restrictions these encounters were conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams. Additional triangulation of evidence was provided through an analysis of a small number of case records consisting of 3 court ordered cases and 2 OOD cases. Access to the ChildView case management system was provided at the Walsall Council House site.

Areas Considered within the HMIP Assurance Review	Summary of Progress	Actions
Out of Court Disposal Model	The issues raised by HMIP have been successfully addressed and practice has been adjusted to provide a more robust approach to OOC. Some minor adjustments are needed to reflect the updated inspection standards.	Develop the performance reporting of the YJS 'front door' Review the YJS Crime Prevention Strategy Review the pre-court assessment tool
Management of risk of harm	The main issues with respect to practice highlighted by HMIP have been successfully addressed through training and ongoing quality assurance. However there have been consequences that may have led to unsustainable levels of high-risk cases placing pressure on the service. Partnership commitment to working with high-risk cases needs refreshing.	Implement review assessment training with practitioners Review the ToR for the YJS high risk panel Improve the use of MyPlan to capture external controls Review the partnership with the Police OMU
Victim Model	Despite swift actions to respond to HMIP findings, which did result in removing the dual role from YJS practitioners, it became clear over time that the arrangements have not delivered the improvements required. However, the service and partnership deserve great credit for keeping this topic under close review and taking steps to try to resolve issues before agreeing that a change of approach was needed. It is encouraging that the Board have approved the recruitment of a dedicated victim officer to lead practice change.	Recruit a dedicated victim officer to lead on practice.
Performance and Partnership Board	The issues raised by HMIP with respect to information provided to the Partnership Board have been successfully addressed with comprehensive routine data provided. This is supported by more in-depth reports on priority topics. The Board has responded decisively to the areas identified in inspection and reached a stage where it can press ahead by making best use of the strategic position it holds. It will be aided by creating a firmer relationship with the operational service, deepening its understanding of youth justice activity and ensuring the child's voice plays a more prominent role.	Improve the performance scorecard to include diversion work. Commission a deep dive analysis of first time entrants Expand the range of information the Board receives by reviewing the model. Develop the links between the operational service and Board members Ensure the voice of children is heard within in Board.

The recommendations from the review have supported the partnership in identifying its strategic priorities for 2022 and actions will be included within delivery plans.

12. Evidence-based practice and innovation

Through 2021 we have worked closely with Children's Service's performance team to develop our quality assurance framework. This included a developing performance data scorecard and an audit process aligned with early help and children's social care. Combined with learning from practice reviews and inspections, the improvements in our oversight and the evidence gained from better analysis have supported changes in practice. Below are examples of how the YJS has adopted evidence based practice:

'Punishing Abuse'

Dr Alex Chard and the West Midlands Combined Authority published the 'Punishing Abuse' research report in 2021. Walsall YJS used funding to ensure that we trained all of our practitioners and managers in undertaking the action research used to provide the research base for Punishing Abuse. Its goal was to fully understand the extent of abuse and childhood adversity that children in the justice system have experienced. Through the commission of the research, the ALTAR™ framework was developed by Dr Chard which focused on Abuse, Loss, Trauma, Attachment and Resilience (ALTAR) as the evidence base for considering these children.

The Walsall YJS specific research report identified that within the sample group that our children had experienced a significant amount of Adverse childhood Experiences (ACEs) with one of the children experiencing 11 of the 12 recognised ACEs. Within this, the research found a number of themes through the narratives and storylines of the children considered. This included, but not limited to; high levels of household violence, increase levels of emotional abuse and neglect, the extent of poverty these children experienced and a disproportionate amount of parental substance misuse and poor mental health. However, in addition to this the research uncovered further childhood adversity not traditionally considered within the ACE model. These included:

- Radicalisation within a family;
- Trafficking and Criminal exploitation;
- Witnessing the near death of a parent
- Being left abroad without parents;
- Possible substance abuse during pregnancy; and,
- The impact of immigration

As an example of practice change as a result of increased trauma awareness, the YJS adapted our policy on compliance and engagement. We adopted a 'was not brought' to appointments, rather than 'did not attend' and we implemented 'engagement meetings with managers and parents to uncover barriers to effective participation. Managers adapted their quality assurance processes to provide a spot light on issues of childhood adversity within our assessments, plans and reports. Work is ongoing within the Service and we are engaging with Dr Chard and the Office of the PCC to consider how we can continue to transform youth justice based on this research.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Through our deployed CAMHS worker we have a Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) offer for our children. There is a wealth of evidence supporting the use of DBT and since its inception to support those suffering with borderline personality disorders, the use of DBT has been developed to help children with a variety of conditions or mental health concerns. In Walsall, our trained therapists, understand that the adolescent brain and personality does not stop developing until the age of 25 and such there are many opportunities to engage with our children to help stop stigmatised diagnoses as an adult.

When our practitioners recognised potential trauma in our children, our CAMHs therapist will use DBT to develop the skills of our children to better manage distress before going on to try and address the pain through trauma focussed therapy. We use DBT to help our children address a number of issues they are facing such as deliberate self-harm, anger, impulsivity, chaotic relationships and difficulties with sense of self.

Our YJS practitioners are trained in Motivation Interviewing and this works well in support of our DBT offer. Motivation Interviewing (MI) is an evidence based method of communication that is used to support behaviour change.

“MI is a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person’s own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013)

We have worked closely with Walsall Children’s Services Practice Development Hub to deliver MI training to YJS staff and it has been rolled out across Children’s Social Care to align the approach across the workforce for the benefit of our children.

Diversion

The Centre for Justice Innovation argue that for the majority of young people involved in crime, formal criminal justice processing makes them more likely to commit crime again. There is a strong evidence base that clearly shows that youth diversion is a better way of addressing low level criminal behaviour— multiple studies show that youth diversion can reduce crime, cut costs, and create better outcomes for young people.

Core principles of youth diversion *(The Centre for Justice Innovation Toolkit)*

- Minimise labelling: Youth diversion schemes should take all reasonable steps to avoid stigmatising the young people they work with, and to prevent them from forming deviant or delinquent identities that may interfere with their development.
- Avoid net-widening: Ensure that the scheme operates as an alternative to the formal justice system, rather than as a supplement to it. Diversion should only be for young people who would otherwise be dealt with formally in the criminal justice system.
- Do not overdose young people: Programming offered through diversion should be therapeutic and targeted. For most diverted young people, this will generally be light touch and informal

Research in Northamptonshire Youth Offending Service found that prosecuting children increased the likelihood of them re-offending even when considering different offence types and personal characteristics *(Kemp V, Sorsby A, Liddle M, Merrington S (2002). Assessing responses to youth offending in Northamptonshire. Nacro Research briefing 2.)*

During 2021, Walsall YJS developed its diversion offer for children involved in low level offending and when there is evidence of increased risk of violent behaviour, arrest and harmful sexual behaviour. Our Joint Decision Making Panel has evolved into a well attended and resourced Youth Justice Partnership Panel which provides a vehicle to discuss children at risk and identify a suitable agency to provide intervention based on the core principles of youth diversion. Although the Panel is jointly chaired by the YJS and the Police and oversight is provided through the YJS Performance and Partnership Board, lead agencies for support are often from the community and removed from the justice system. The partnership are developing our ability to track the offending behaviour of this group of children to demonstrate effectiveness.

13. [Looking forward](#)

Walsall youth justice partnership are a forward facing learning organisation that has a Child First Vision at its heart. We have aligned our priorities with our strategic partners and we have listened to our young people and practitioners that experience the justice system every day.



The YJS partnership recognise that these priorities will take time and as such we are publishing a 3 year plan. We know it will require investment and energy to achieve positive change. Our YJS board members, managers and practitioners are committed to the child first vision and to improving outcomes for our children.

❖ Reducing Serious Youth Violence:

Strategic Lead: Superintendent Walsall Police.

This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership and recognises the Serious Violence Duty (2021) and the delegated responsibilities on agencies and partnership.

❖ Disproportionality

Strategic Lead: Head of Service – Children’s Social Care.

This priority is linked to the Council’s Corporate Equality Group and objectives within the Corporate Plan 2022-25.

❖ Transitions and Resettlement.

Strategic Lead: Head of Probation

This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership reducing re-offending priority and the regional Transition 2 Adulthood policy framework.

❖ Identifying and responding to unmet need (health).

Strategic Lead: Head of CAMHS commissioning

Our partnership recognise that there is a clear need to 'level up' health provision for Walsall children in line with the Black country and regional developments.

❖ Voice of our children

Strategic Lead: YJS Strategic Lead

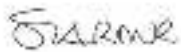

Following the findings of the HMIP assurance review in 2021, the partnership are committed to better evidencing that we are hear and are responsive to the voices of our children both strategically and operationally.

Walsall YJS Performance and Partnership Board are determined to improve its governance of the partnership in line with HMIP inspections standards and reviewed governance from the Youth Justice Board. As such we have reviewed the terms of reference for the Board and its members and we have created a new infrastructure where full board meetings are focussed upon individual themed priorities. Underneath this model, the strategic leads identified above will chair sub-groups based upon the priorities to drive forward progress.

For 2022 onwards, Board members want to be more involved in service delivery and better understand the complex lives of the children we support. Therefore we have reviewed our Board member induction pack and, in addition to the priority sub-groups, introduced a series of observations and participation activities for Board members with the practitioners and managers within the YJS. To further improve our understanding of the lived experience of our children we have identified hearing their voice as a priority for 2022 and we are exploring different ways to highlight their stories and bring their voices closer to strategic decision makers.

These are exciting developments for Walsall's youth justice partnership in 2022. The Youth Justice Service practitioners and managers, alongside our strategic board members, are committed to driving forward delivery for children in the justice system and continuing to improve their outcomes.

14. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board	Sally Rowe- Executive Director of Childrens Services	Phil Rutherford- YJS Strategic Lead
Signature		
Date	22.06.2022	22.06.2022

Current YJS Performance and Partnership Board membership:

- West Midlands Police – Superintendent
- National Probation Service – NPS lead for the Black Country
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services- Head of Commissioning
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services- Clinical Lead
- Black Country Magistrates Youth Panel Chair
- Local Authority –
 - Director of Children's Services (Chair)
 - Public Health – Head of Social Inclusion
 - Community Safety – Head of Community Safety and Enforcement
 - Education- Director of Access and Achievement

Supporting Officers-

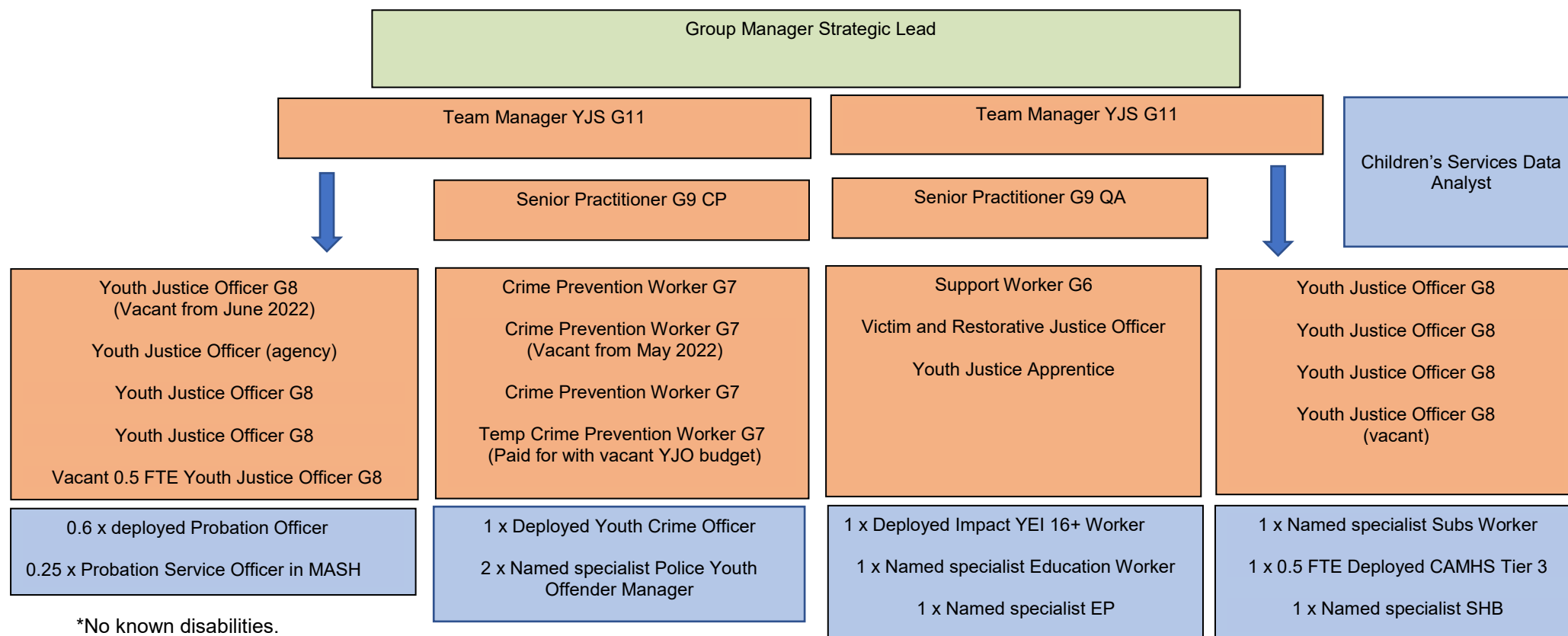
- Youth Justice Service Strategic Lead, Walsall Children's Services
- Youth Justice Service Team Managers
- Youth Justice Board- Head of Innovation and Engagement
- Virtual School Lead
- 16+ Education- employment and skills manager
- Local Authority Accountant – finance.
- Local Authority Performance Officer
- Administrative Support, Youth Justice Service

YJS Performance and Partnership Board dates;

- 10th May 2022
- 9th February 2022
- 24th January 2022 Board Development Workshop
- 10th November 2021
- 28th July 2021
- 5th May 2021
- 3rd February 2021

Appendix 2

Walsall Youth Justice Service- Structure Chart April 2022



Position	Sex	Ethnicity
Strategic Lead	Male	White
Team Managers	1 x male and 1 x female	2 x White
Senior Practitioners	2 x female	2 x White
Youth Justice Officers	7 x female	2 x white, 3 x black, 1 x Asian, 1 x Mixed
Crime Prevention Workers	2 x female	1 x white, w x Asian
Support Worker	Male	Black

Appendix 3

Safer Lives Survey Summary:

Exposure to violent media: 60% of young people surveyed stated that they saw violent images or videos on social media on a weekly basis. 65% watched violent TV or films that contained violence & 60% played violent computer games on a daily basis. Over 65% of young people surveyed listened to violent lyrics each day.

Exposure to violence in daily life: 20% of the young people had seen violence within their school or college on a monthly basis, with only 1 of those that were surveyed stating that this occurred each day. The majority (60%) had never seen violence within the local neighbourhood during the past year but no one admitted that violence was commonplace. The picture changes when considering violence in other areas with 40% experiencing violence each month.

How safe do our young people feel?: The vast majority of young people surveyed expressed that they felt safe within their school or college and their local neighbourhood. When asked about how safe the young person felt within their own home, when compared to being in school or out in the neighbourhood, all but one young person claimed they felt least safe when at home. This is in stark contrast to previous findings from the survey which highlighted that young people felt most safe in other neighbourhoods.

The people they know: All children surveyed knew someone who had previously been the victim of serious violence and someone who needed hospital treatment. A small number of young people stated that they know 10 or more young people who had been the victim of violence. 50% of the young people knew at least one person who carried a knife, with 50% knowing someone involved in the supply of drugs. The majority of young people in the survey felt they could talk to their parents if they were worried about violence and 5 of the young people felt confident in approaching the police. Young people were generally able to identify individuals who could help them. 5 of the young people sadly felt they had no-one they could turn to.

What is important to our young people: 25% young people thought that having expensive clothes and jewellery was important to them and only 6 believed having designer goods were important. Hugely concerning was that 60% of the young people stated that young people carry a knife to make them safer. Positively 70% of young people believed that their education and getting good grades was important.

What would they do to make things safer? 40% of the young people believed that having more things for them to do in their local community including more youth clubs would make them feel safer. 2 young people said that the Police should 'check for knives' and 'do more stop and search' and 2 other young people thought they needed 'more police and community officers around and to be able to talk to them'. Knives featured in 80% of responses and most felt that better education around knife carrying was important.

Appendix 3

2021-22 Budget and expenditure:

EXPENDITURE	Youth Justice Board ²	Local Authority	Police	Police and Crime Commissioner	Probation	Health*	Other	Total
Salaries	£360,364	£444,054	£21,888	£76,885				£903,191
Activity costs	£2,477	£3,732					£34,894**	£41,103
Accommodation	£0							£0
Overheads	£52,003	£73,334			£5,000			£130,337
Equipment	£10,875	£16,382						£27,257
Total expenditure	£425,719	£537,502	£21,888	£76,885	£5,000	£0	£34,894	£1,101,888

* Walsall CCG provide £15,000 directly to CAMHS for the provision of a 0.5 FTE CAMHS practitioner.

**Programme funding received through the Safer Walsall Partnership.

Common youth justice terms

Please add any locally used terminology

ACE	Adverse childhood experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
AIM 2 and 3	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenants to this approach, it should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment
EHE	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school

EOTAS	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPA	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recommendation Tracker 2022/23

Committee Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action/Recommendation	Officer responsible	Status	Target Completion Date	Notes
	Areas of Focus	The glossary and summary data in relation to children in care, starters and leavers to be shared with the committee via e-mail	Colleen Male	Complete		
		A work programme for the municipal year be produced containing agreed areas of focus, for agreement by the Committee.			26 September 2022	

Black Country Executive Joint Committee Forward Plan of Key Decisions Published up to December 2022				
Date created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main Consultees	Date of meeting
09/05/2022	Future working arrangements of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Consider the future working arrangements in light of the receipt of Government correspondence dated 31 March 2022: Integrating Local Enterprise Partnerships into local democratic institutions.	Sarah Middleton Sarah.Middleton@blackcountryconsortium.co.uk	Dudley MBC Sandwell MBC Walsall MBC City of Wolverhampton Council	19/10/2022
Black Country Enterprise Zone (EZ)				
06/06/2022	Governance Principles: Enterprise Zones Approval of the amended Supplemental Deed of <i>Governance Principles: Enterprise Zones</i> , relating to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement.	Simon Neilson Simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk	Walsall Council	19/10/2022
Local Growth Fund (LGF)		Programme changes		
06/04/2021	Dudley Advanced Construction Centre 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	Helen Martin Helen.Martin@dudley.gov.uk	Dudley Council	19/10/2022

	the Dudley Advanced Construction Centre project with delivery to continue in the 2022/23 financial year. Note that change request relates to a change in outputs.			
06/09/2021	<p>Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills</p> <p>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 (ECMS) project with delivery to continue in the 2022/23 financial year. Note that change request relates to a change in outputs.</p>	<p>Richard Lawrence Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk</p>	Wolverhampton City Council	19/10/2022

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022/23

Committee date	27 September	3 November	8 December	30 January	13 March 2023	18 April 2023
Report Deadline	16 September	25 October	29 November	19 January	2 March	5 April
Budget setting process		xx				
Locality Hubs and working			xx			
Residential Homes				xx		
Early Help Strategy	xx					
Social Worker recruitment and retention		xx				
Private Fostering			xx			
Youth Justice priorities	xx					
Exploitation and Safeguarding Annual Report 2021/22						xx
Family Hubs – update and progress				xx		



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

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

5 September 2022

FORWARD PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) A key decision is:
 - (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the

making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or

(ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.

(2) The threshold for "significant" expenditure/savings is £500,000.

(3) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

Rules set

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS OCTOBER 2022 TO JANUARY 2023 (05.09.22)

1 7	2	3	4	5	6	
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
110/22 (6.6.22)	Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27: To provide an updated medium term financial outlook, draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2023/24 to 2026/27, including savings proposals, and to set out the process and timescales for setting a legally balanced budget for 2023/24.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Public Internal Services	Cllr Bird	19 October 2022

111/22 (6.6.22)	Corporate Financial Performance 2022/23: To report the financial position based on 5 months to August 2022, including the impact of Covid-19.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Public Internal Services	Cllr Bird	19 October 2022
127/22 (8.8.22)	Council Plan 2022/25: To note the Quarter 1 2022/23 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25	Cabinet Non-key decision	Elizabeth Connolly (Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk) Policy & Strategy Unit (policyandstrategy@walsall.gov.uk)	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	19 October 2022
108/22 (6.6.22)	Town Deal: To report for consideration business cases for the Town Deal.	Cabinet Key Decision	Philippa Venables Philippa.Venables@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services, Town Deal Board members	Cllr Andrew	19 October 2022
114/22 (4.7.22)	West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Scheme for Buses (Variation): To approve a revised scheme to improve bus travel in the West Midlands.	Cabinet Key Decision	Matt Crowton Matt.Crowton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	19 October 2022

107/22 (6.6.22)	Procurement of Corporate Landlord Strategic Partner: To seek approval to the appointment of a strategic partner to support the programme of capital schemes related to the council's property portfolio.	Cabinet Key Decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	19 October 2022
116/22 (4.7.22)	Young person homelessness accommodation and support contract awards: To approve the contract awards for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Dispersed temporary accommodation and intensive housing management 2) Supported lodgings, and Night Stop and Day Stop facility 	Cabinet Key Decision	Rashida Hussain Rashida.Hussain@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, service users, external stakeholders	Cllr Ali Cllr Wilson	19 October 2022
128/22 (5.9.22)	Climate Change Action Plan: To provide an update on the Climate Change Action Plan and agree a new target.	Cabinet Key Decision	Dave Brown Dave.Brown@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	19 October 2022
113/22 (20.6.22)	Adult Social Care – Extension of contractual arrangements: To approve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the extension of the interim contracts for Residential and Nursing Care Services for Older People, Complex Care and 	Cabinet Key Decision	Grace Charles Grace.Charles@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Pedley	19 October 2022

	<p>Mental Health Services from 1.4.23 to 31.3.24 with an option for a further 12 months should this be necessary.</p> <p>2) the extension of the current contractual arrangements for Community Based Services from 1.4.23 to 31.3.24 with an option for a further 12 months should this be necessary.</p>					
129/22 (5.9.22)	<p>Update on Resilient Communities Safer Streets Programme</p> <p>To report back on Safer Streets activity and will recommend any adjustments/additions to the programme.</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Non-key Decision</p>	<p>Paul Gordon</p> <p>Paul.Gordon@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal Services?	Cllr Perry	19 October 2022
109/22 (6.6.22)	<p>Schools Mainstream Local Funding Formula 2023/24:</p> <p>To approve a full consultation with all schools for the Mainstream Local Funding Formula, to be used for the allocation of mainstream funding to schools in Walsall</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Key Decision</p>	<p>Schools Forum</p> <p>ESFA – Schools revenue funding operation guide</p> <p>Richard Walley</p> <p>Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</p>	<p>Schools Forum</p> <p>Cabinet</p>	Cllr M. Statham	19 October 2022

130/22 (6.9.22)	Sexual Health and 0-19 Contracts To approve the extension of the integrated sexual health service, contract delivered by Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust from 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024; and To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Public Health and Hub in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing to extend contracts on behalf of the Council and to subsequently authorise the variations to the contractual arrangements for the services should this be required at any time during the term, in line with Public Contract Regulations and the Council's Contract Rules to 31 March 2024.	Cabinet Key Decision	Tony Meadows Interim Director of Commissioning	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	19 October 2022
131/22 (6.9.22)	Community Based Services (Adult and Children's) and Complex Needs (Children's) To approve the extension of the two current framework agreements.	Cabinet Key decision	David DeMay David.Demay@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Joint report Cllr Pedley and Cllr Wilson.	19 October 2022
121/22 (8.8.22)	Corporate Financial Performance 2022/23: To report the financial position based on 7 months to October 2022, including the impact of Covid-19.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	14 December 2022
122/22 (8.8.22)	Autumn Budget and Spending Review, and feedback from Overview and	Cabinet	Vicky Buckley	Public	Cllr Bird	14 December 2022

	<p>Scrutiny Committees on draft revenue and capital budget proposals, 2023/24 to 2026/27:</p> <p>To provide an update on the impact of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review on the medium term financial outlook, and to consider feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft revenue and capital budget.</p>	Non-key decision	Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services		
123/22 (8.8.22)	<p>Treasury Management Mid Year Position Statement 2022/23:</p> <p>The council is required through regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce a mid-year position statement reviewing treasury management activities and prudential and treasury indicator performance.</p>	Cabinet Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	14 December 2022
124/22 (8.8.22)	<p>Schools Mainstream Local Funding Formula 2023/24:</p> <p>That Cabinet approves the Mainstream Local Funding Formula, to be used for the allocation of mainstream funding to schools in Walsall</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Walsall Schools Forum report December 2022 – Proposed Schools Local Funding Formula 2023/24</p> <p>ESFA – Schools revenue funding operation guide</p> <p>Richard Walley</p>	Schools Forum Cabinet	Cllr M. Statham	14 December 2022

			Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk			
125/22 (8.8.22)	Housing First contract award: To approve the contract award enabling the continuation of flexible support to former rough sleepers housed through the Housing First initiative	Cabinet Key decision	Neil Hollyhead Neil.Hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, service users, external stakeholders	Cllr Ali	14 December 2022

Next = 132/22