



# Walsall Council

## **Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**7 December 2023 at 18.00**

**Meeting Venue: Conference Room 2 at the Council House, Lichfield Street,  
Walsall**

**[Livestream Link](#)**

Membership:

Councillor A. Hicken (Chair)  
Councillor T. Jukes (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor A. Garcha  
Councillor L. Harrison  
Councillor C. Horton  
Councillor N. Latham  
Councillor S. Nasreen  
Councillor L. Rattigan  
Councillor C. Statham  
Councillor J. Whitehouse  
Vacancy

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor S. Elson – Children's Services

Quorum:

Four Members

Democratic Services, The Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW  
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[Walsall Council Website](#)

**If you are disabled and require help to and from the meeting room,  
please contact the person above**

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:

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

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

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

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

## **Part 1 – Public Session**

**1. Apologies**

**2. Substitutions**

To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.

**3. Minutes**

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2023.

*(Enclosed – Pages 1 to 4)*

**4. Declarations of Interest**

**5. 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.

**6. Walsall Annual Safeguarding report 2022 - 2023**

An annual overview of the partnership performance in relation to safeguarding children and young people.

*(Enclosed - Page 5 to 72)*

**7. Locality Working and Family Hubs**

To provide an overview of the progress in relation to the delivery of locality working.

*(Enclosed - Page 73 to 80)*

**8. Early Help Strategy**

An overview of the Early Help Strategy.

*(Enclosed - Page 81 to 100)*

**9. Recommendation Tracker**

To review progress with recommendations from previous meetings.

*(Enclosed - Page 101)*

**10. Areas of Focus 2023/24**

To review the Committee Work Programme and the Forward Plans for Walsall Council and the Black Country Executive Committee

*(Enclosed – Pages 102 to 117)*

**11. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting will be 29 January 2024.

## **Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 2 November 2023, 6:00pm**

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

### **Committee Members present:**

Councillor Hicken (Chair)  
Councillor Jukes (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Garcha  
Councillor Horton  
Councillor Nasreen  
Councillor Rattigan  
Councillor C. Statham  
Councillor Whitehouse

### **Portfolio Holder**

Councillor S. Elson

### **Officers present:**

Rita Homer	Director, Children's Social Work
Tanya Collier	Finance Manager
Nikki Gough	Democratic Services Officer

### **18 Apologies**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Harrison and Councillor Latham.

### **19 Substitutions**

There were no substitutions.

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

No declarations of interest or party whip were received.

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

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

### **22 Minutes**

A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023 was submitted.

[Annexed]

### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

23 **Corporate Financial Performance – Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Position for 2023/24**

The Finance Manager presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The report summarised the forecast revenue and capital financial position for 2023/24, based on the position to September 2023, for services within the remit of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023. The total forecast position was an overspend of £3.28m for Children’s Services directorate as of 30 September 2023.

The Committee was informed that on-going placement sufficiency issues continued to be the biggest challenge for the service, which has been further compromised by changes in legislation. In addition to this, there has been further cost pressures throughout 2023/24 mainly caused by a larger portion of adolescents entering care with complex needs and vulnerabilities including exploitation, mental health difficulties and emotional dysregulation, some of whom required deprivation of liberty safeguards.

In response to a question, Officers described different strands of work that was aimed at improving placement sufficiency, such as work with the private market and the development of new residential homes. It was also noted that Walsall did well in terms of staff retention however the use of agency workers was still necessary to ensure service needs were met. Savings of £120k had been unattainable as agency staff needed to be employed for longer than had been expected.

Challenge was provided in relation to the rise in complex cases post covid. The Director explained that some children had not been seen by services during the covid lockdown with needs remaining unmet and some did not return to school. Work was underway to develop a multi-disciplinary team to reintroduce children back into school.

The Committee questioned how children’s social workers were recruited and retained. The Director explained that there was a good career pathway and good quality clinical supervision to ensure that staff were supported. The Service was also considering apprenticeships to increase social work staff and allow progression into qualified social workers.

A discussion ensued on the mitigations that were in place to reduce the financial overspend, it was stressed that difficulty recruiting foster carers was a national issue, however the Council was being as creative as possible to increase numbers. This included a council tax exemption for Walsall foster carers. Detail was provided on the ‘foster friendly status’ of the Council.

In response to a question relating to children classed as looked after but in the care of their parents, officers provided detail on the safeguarding model in place to support parent and conclude supervision orders.

In response to challenge around the ability to achieve savings and the risks of not doing so, the Director stated that the service was considering how work could be done more effectively to achieve savings.

The Portfolio Holder responded to a question to state that as a demand led service, children in need of care would be supported.

**Resolved.**

That the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the revenue and capital forecast for the financial year end 2023/24 for the services under the remit of the committee.

**24 Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28**

The Finance Manager presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). Members considered the budget proposals presented and sought further information and assurances on a number of the proposals contained within the draft revenue budget and draft capital programme 2024/25 – 2027/28.

During a period of questioning, detail was provided to the Committee on the reasons for an increased demand for services, which had led to increasing cost pressures. The Committee was informed that this included a serious incident resulting in the arrest of several children within the Borough. Officers informed Members that there has been an increase in large sibling groups and teenagers accessing services – although Walsall was comparable to neighbouring authorities. It was noted that there had been an increase in serious youth violence in Walsall and adolescents presenting with complex needs. This alongside the cost-of-living crisis, the covid-19 pandemic and a change in legislation had impacted on demand and cost to Council services. A discussion ensued on the rise in more complex cases, with societal issues as a driving factor in this, it was stressed that as such issues emerged social work adapted to respond to the need presenting.

Challenge was provided by the Committee in relation to the mitigation of risks and levels of inflation, it was acknowledged that the increase in foster carers fees and allowances set by the Department of Education had been significant, finance officers were only able to make an assumption however it was expected that this would not continue to rise at the elevated rate. Members challenged the savings outlined in appendix 2, and the level of confidence in the Council's ability to deliver them.

Members were assured that if a child needed to receive care support would always be provided. The Portfolio Holder stressed that children and young people would always be protected.

The capital investment and development of residential children's homes was welcomed as an investment which would produce savings, and most importantly, better outcomes for children and young people.

**The Committee Resolved:**

- 1. The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee request that the investments in children's services continue to receive Cabinet**

**support, as they are considered essential to delivering future savings within this service area.**

- 2. The work to recruit foster carers in the Borough was noted as positive and the Children's Services Overview Scrutiny Committee hopes to see continued success in this area.**

**25 Recommendation Tracker**

The Committee received the tracker of recommendations from previous meetings, including progress made and outstanding items.

[Annexed]

**Resolved:**

That the recommendation tracker be noted.

**26 Areas of Focus**

**Resolved that:**

The Areas of Focus be noted.

**27 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be 7 December 2023

There being no further business this meeting was terminated at 7:05pm.

Signed:

Date:



28th November 2023

**Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2022 - 23**

**Ward(s)** All  
**Portfolios:** Childrens Services and Education

**Report:**

1. The Children and Social Work Act 2017, The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance legislate for all local areas to publish Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children's Arrangements (MASA), led by three statutory agencies. Locally these are the Local Authority - Walsall Council, Black Country Integrated Care Board and West Midlands Police.
2. Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) has a combined Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangement of Walsall Safeguarding Children's Partnership (WSCP) and Walsall Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) and is required to produce an annual report which provides an assessment of the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements in working with adults and children.
3. Working Together 2018 (WT 2018) requires safeguarding partners to publish a report at least once in every twelve-month period and send copies to the Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (WWCSC).
4. This annual review of effectiveness report sets out what the Partnership (and the organisations that make up Walsall Safeguarding Children Partnership - WSCP) have done, in the last year of operation, to keep children and young people safe.
5. The report covers the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. This report sets out to update the Children and Families Scrutiny Board, on the key headlines from the Walsall Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) Annual Report. The full report will be published in December 2023.
6. The Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) annual report provides an overview of multiagency safeguarding activity during the year 2022-2023 and reflects the efforts of partner agencies who have worked in collaboration to promote the welfare and safeguarding of the children and young people of Walsall. It also includes identified learning from reviews, including child safeguarding practice reviews, undertaken by the partnership and their impact to support improvements in practice. The WSP annual report recognises the progress that has been made in working together to keep children safe from harm, the challenges that have been met and the work ahead of us.
7. **Section 2/3 Introduction** Sets out the work undertaken during this period to strengthen the statements that underpin the WSP purpose, Vision and Ambition. This supports the work to promote the individual identity of the WSP.

8. **Section 4 Walsall at a glance** of the report provides an overview of Walsall's demography and whilst there has not been vast change to the population there was rising concerns about youth and violent crime and issues of disproportionality amongst the cohort of young people involved. This prompted the WSP, Safer Walsall Partnership and Youth Justice Board to work in collaboration to consider a strategic response to address the issues identified.
9. **Section 5 What is Safeguarding Children?** Summarises the legislation that underpins the WSP arrangements. The WSP has continued to demonstrate its ability to provide stable and effective leadership and a tenacious focus on safeguarding matters impacting children young people and their families in Walsall.
10. Acknowledgement is given to all partner agencies and particularly Health colleagues who have been steadfast during significant organisational change with the introduction nationally of Integrated Care Boards in September 2022. During this challenging time, Health agencies have maintained their commitment to both regional and local partnership working to safeguard children.

11. **Section 6 Improvement Areas Identified from 2021-2022 Annual Report**  
**a. Review and restructure of the Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements.**

*In 2020 Penny Thomas, Independent Chair, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership, undertook a review of the effectiveness of WSP arrangements with a view to look at the strengths, limitations, opportunities, and threats of the joined-up arrangements.*

*A review and proposed restructure of the WSP was agreed, with implementation commencing in quarter 4. The WSP has been realigned with a separation of functions to provide greater focus of the children and adults agenda respectively through the additional appointment of a Chair.*

**b. Full Section 11 to be completed utilising the West Midlands Audit Tool.**

*There was a delay in the launch of the regional tool which resulted in the full section 11 audit being scheduled for completion between April and June 2023-2024*

**c. To deliver the proposed forward plan for practice development activity, informed by partnership learning.**

*Section 12 Workforce learning and Development sets out the improvement work undertaken to strengthen the multiagency learning offer and activity undertaken across the business year.*

**d. Continue to progress the All-Age Exploitation Strategy and Child Neglect Strategy as key priorities and measure their impact through the outcome framework.**

*Work within the respective sub-groups has been undertaken over the last 12 months to strengthen arrangements for Neglect and All Aged Exploitation as detailed in Section 7 Progress Against Priorities of the annual report.*

**e. Strengthen the Think Family approach.**

*Section 9 /a. Performance data and Family Safeguarding Model of the annual report details how post pandemic the Strengthening families approach continues to deliver positive outcomes for children and families. It is worth noting that since the introduction of Family Safeguarding there has been a significant reduction in the number of children becoming subject of a child protection plan and entering care. Where children are entering care, they are being supported to return home to their parents more quickly.*

**f. Additional scrutiny work to be commissioned in 2022-2023 to explore if it is possible to identify any changes or improvement in practice as a result of previous Serious Case Review recommendations and actions.**

Jane Wonnacot was commissioned by the WSP to identify the extent to which these actions have had a positive impact on practice. The evaluation was commissioned in June 2022 with an agreement that the focus would be on three specific practice issues that had been identified from a previous review W6 and issues that also emerged as themes in more recent cases:

- Working with neglect
- Child Sexual Abuse within the family
- Working with learning disabled parents.

The finding of the scrutiny work identified there is ample evidence of both partnership and single agency activity focused on improving practice in the areas of neglect and child sexual abuse. Audits show that this is beginning to have an impact on referrals and assessments and focus groups were able to describe changes to practice. This included school staff referring to training that had focused attention on the voice of the child and social workers feeling more confident in working with child sexual abuse.

There was minimal evidence of changes or improvements in work with learning disabled parents.

The outcome of this review is to be considered in work to be progressed on the revision of the Child Sexual Abuse and Neglect strategies.

Adults safeguarding will give specific focus to work to improve practice with learning disabled parents.

**g. Additional scrutiny work to be undertaken in relation to robustness of the functioning of the MASH, application of Right Help Right Time Guidance and use of single agency Early Help to meet need at the earliest opportunity.**

A review of the front door arrangements was completed in October 2022 to consider the functioning and robustness of MASH following the merge of the

Early Help hub and MASH in 2021, creating one front door. This was informed by a data analysis of pre and post merge contacts received to the front door which highlighted key areas of focus for the review.

A range of audit activity has been completed at part of the review, including scrutiny of application of thresholds in line with the RHRT guidance across the partnership and at the front door, to ensure timely and appropriate responses to children's needs in Walsall. The audits considered the quality, appropriateness and timeliness of referrals to the front door and the subsequent decision making within MASH, ensuring the right help and support was offered to children, young people and their families at the right time. Whilst there was assurance of robust, appropriate and timely decision making at the front door, inclusive of partnership screening and consideration of family history, it did highlight some further work required with the partnership in terms of early intervention and appropriate application of threshold.

In response to these findings, the RHRT training was updated, with more focus on early identification of need and exploring what help and support is required at the earliest opportunity across the partnership, with a particular focus on level 2 single agency Early Help. In addition, a RHRT training refresher was introduced. Bespoke training has been delivered to GP's and A&E, and a pod cast focusing on RHRT is being developed for West Midlands ambulance service and other 'Blue Light' services. 'Time to Talk' sessions within localities continued to be held every 8 weeks, bringing partners together who coordinate and support with the development and delivery of Early Help to children, young people and families in Walsall, providing opportunity to build locality knowledge, strengthen partnerships and enhance understanding around key priority areas to continue to support early identification and early intervention. Domestic abuse practitioners (DAP) were introduced within localities to offer early intervention and support families at level 2 single agency early help, who are experiencing domestic abuse and parental conflict.

The Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in November 2022 provided additional scrutiny of the front door arrangements and effectiveness of the partnership, and reported;

"Children who need help and protection receive a coordinated and effective multi-agency response at the 'front door' in Walsall. Senior leaders ensure that there is a culture of continuous and shared learning across the partnership, which is successfully disseminated to staff. This helps to support identification of risk and needs for children, at the earliest opportunity, and promotes improvements in services for children and their families".

**h. Re-establish capacity within the Business Unit and further the children and young people's engagement agenda.**

*Section 8 Business Unit Review of the annual report details the work undertaken to progress this action. In summary following the departure of the Permanent Business Manager and Quality Assurance Manager interim appointments were made to enable the partnership to continue business as*

*usual but also take the opportunity to undertake consultation, review and development work with the Business Unit and WSP members. The review of the business unit capacity has commenced, and further work is to be progressed to review all job roles.*

**12. Section 7 Progress against Priorities.**

13. The WSP identified three priorities for progression, Neglect, Self-Neglect and All-Age Exploitation this was reinforced by the outcome of the JTAI outcome published in February 2022.

**14. Neglect**

15. This is the second year of Neglect being progressed as a priority for the partnership. Steady progress has been made in improving the multiagency arrangements with work being undertaken to review and relaunch the neglect strategy and the implementation of the Graded Care Profile 2.

16. Adult self-neglect is also a priority for the WSP and work has been undertaken to ensure the 'Think Family' approach underpins the areas of practice identified in the Adult Self Neglect Strategy.

**17. All aged Exploitation**

18. WSP remain committed to an All-Aged Exploitation (AAE) approach to tackle the issues in the borough of risk and vulnerability to exploitation experience by young people and adults with care and support needs across the Borough.

19. The AAE sub-group has reviewed and implemented its multiagency arrangements. The commission of the Exploitation Hub has provided invaluable in person and direct support to residents to work on solutions to address issues of gang affiliation, related activity, and wider links between criminal offending behaviour and exploitation. The Hub is also working with schools, parents and carers to raise awareness of the signs of exploitation and what to do if they are concerned about their child.

20. Members will be reminded of the positive comments received from the Joint Targeted Area inspection in November 2022. The JTAI report summarised the following as key strengths and impacts from local arrangements to identify and respond to exploitation.

*"Risks to children from sexual or criminal exploitation are recognised well at the front door. The daily Exploitation Triage meeting is a well-attended multi-agency meeting that explores effectively the risks faced by children when they are reported as missing. Information is shared effectively in order to help professionals' understanding of risks and actions, which helps inform decision-making. "*

*"The chair of the Exploitation Triage meeting rotates between its core members, which is inclusive and indicative of confidence in the commitment and capability of the participants in the meeting. This ensures that responses to child protection are a shared responsibility across all partners."*

21. Whilst the work around adults' exploitation is less progressed with very few referrals being received by the partnership, the WSP is working with partners to increase identification, referrals, and response across the multiagency workforce. Work continues to improve the performance and quality assurance arrangements. The commission to produce a strategic needs assessment will be taken forward in 2023-2024 and will be instrumental in strengthening the understanding of the prevalence of exploitation in the Borough and enable more targeted multiagency response to address the issues.

## **22. Child sexual abuse**

23. Nationally child sexual abuse referrals have seen a significant decline. WSP has had a focus on child sexual abuse since 2019 and has worked with the Centre of Expertise to develop the CSA multi-agency Strategy 2020-2023. In quarter 4 of the business year the WSP Executive Group were presented with information which suggested that further work needed to be undertaken around Walsall's identification and response to Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). The CSA strategy will be subject to review through 2023-2024 and will consider any crosscutting issues for the adult safeguarding agenda.

## **24. Section 9 Performance Data - Children in the Safeguarding System**

25. The WSP Performance data and Quality Assurance activity of all children in the safeguarding system has told us the following:

- There were 299 contacts directly for Early Help Support. The largest proportion of contacts received in March 23 came from children and young people aged between 10 and 15 years old.
- 49% were relating to female children and the largest proportion of contacts were for children and young people from a white ethnic background.
- The Rate of referrals per 10,000 is 481 which is a decrease from 496 (2021-22). It is lower than the statistical neighbours (624), England (534) and West Midlands (503) averages.
- The number of referrals per 10,000 resulting in no further action (3) has decreased from 2021-22 (4) this is the lower than England average (8) and statistical neighbour average (10) but similar to West Midlands (3).
- 90% of Walsall's assessments in 2022-23 were completed with 45 working days, this is similar to 2021-22. Our performance is now higher than those of our statistical neighbours (80%) England (84%) and West Midlands (82%) averages.
- 84% of ICPC's were completed within 15 working days of a strategy discussion and performance is the same as in 2021-22 and is higher than our statistical neighbours (83) England (79) and West Midlands averages (82).
- Seen a reduction of 396, 372 of whom are 12 and under becoming subject of a plan.
- children who enter care following a child protection plan is reducing from 25.4% in 2019-20 to 17.9% in the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022
- 12 and under, this has reduced from 27.7% to 19.5%.
- the number of children entering care after a period of CP planning has reduced by 232 children, 202 of whom are 12 and under
- Neglect and emotional abuse continue to be the highest categories at initial assessment (36% and 47% respectively).

- Emotional abuse is significantly higher than England (38%) Statistical neighbour (40%) and West Midlands (44%) averages.
- Data relating to children in care (CiC) and care leavers is mainly positive, however where there are slight declines in performance relating to stability of children in care and this continues to be monitored by the Corporate Parenting Board

26. **Section 10 How feedback from children and families has informed our work and influenced provision.**

27. There was positive contribution to the annual report this year, but there remains more work to do to ensure a robust and embedded arrangement across the partnership, to consistently ask, listen and act on the views of children and their families.

This will continue to be a golden thread integral to the WSP strategic plans.

28. **Section 11 Opportunities to Learn and Improve**

29. Multi-agency audits provide an important view into the effectiveness of our safeguarding system and has identified some positive practice and possibly highlighted how factors such as workforce challenges can impact on the effectiveness of multi-agency working. This further illustrates the crucial role that partners across the system, but particularly as part of Performance and Quality Assurance process, play in identifying, addressing, and mitigating these factors.

30. Multiagency audits (MAA) - During 2022-2023, the MAA audits focused on three themes including self-harm, neglect and exploitation with the latter being a theme twice in the year. Exploitation was a focus for WSP due to the preparations required as part of the JTAI inspections and all three are strategic priorities.

As detailed in Table 1 in the annual report, overall, the grading of multi-agency practice has largely remained consistent during 2022-2023 with 85% being graded as good or requires improvement. Positively, this figure increased to 100% in Q2 when self-harm was the theme. However there has been, a 15% increase of cases rated inadequate when compared to 2021-2022.

31. Learning from Case Reviews

Through 2022-2023, 7 cases were heard at Rapid Review with 6 deemed not meeting threshold to progress onto a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR). One case was referred for consideration and was notified to the National Panel and Ofsted as a Serious Child Safeguarding Incident. This case progressed to a LCSPR and will continue to progress through 2023-24.

32. There were two alternative reviews and 1 tabletop review for a child sexual abuse incident. Four of the cases that did not meet criteria identified child neglect as a key theme. WSP approved the commission of an Independent Reviewer to complete a Thematic Review, which will focus on barriers to

effective implementation of the Neglect Strategy in practice. At the time of writing the review had not concluded.

33. Walsall also has responded swiftly to local, national learning arising from the Solihull review and the circumstances into the sad and untimely death of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson.

34. How the learning was shared

The WSP continue to develop new ways of cascading the learning arising from MAA and case reviews.

- a. The outcome of reviews are promptly applied and featured in WSP learning and training material.
- b. All learning from reviews is disseminated across the children and adult's workforce through 7-minute briefings. This is a well-known approach based on a technique adapted from the FBI!
- c. 7-minute briefings are sent out in WSP newsletters, prior or post publication of reports, at practitioner events, and policy or procedure development and launch events.
- d. Practitioner events are held in person and virtually, these are well received by multiagency practitioners. The events are recorded ensuring wider accessibility and sustainability of learning in the system and across the multiagency workforce.

35. **Section 12. Workforce learning and Development.**

36. The partnership continues to approach its work with practices adopted during the pandemic however over the year we have seen a steady increase of in person meetings across the partnership substructure and in training and other learning events. The hybrid approach continues to be an efficient and welcomed approach for partner members to manage their commitments across the partnership.

37. Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from Early Help to children looked after and care leavers.

Key Highlights

- 52 events either face to face or virtual have taken place.
- 1,504 attended virtual or face to face training.
- 920 completed evaluations which include post evaluation or Impact evaluations.
- 19 videos or webinars have been added to the website.
- Video recordings have been accessed 1,194 times.
- 1,123 eLearning modules have been completed – however, these are predominately by Walsall Council employees due to external partners being unable to access the Learning Management System.

38. One of the key areas for development in 2023-2024 is to develop and implement a framework to assess the impact of workforce learning on practice and its impact on 4th Partner (children and their family) outcomes.



39. **Section 13. What Scrutiny arrangements are in place and why these have been adopted? How successful have they been?**

40. The programme of independent scrutiny has existed through the appointment of an Independent Chair and Scrutineer Chairing and having oversight of the joint Performance and Quality Assurance (PQA) Subgroup and Operations and Scrutiny Subgroup. This was an active way for the Chair to gain insight and understanding into the quality of frontline practice.

41. The Independent Chair provides regular challenge to the system, and this is reflected in regular assurance reports to the Executives Group meeting.

42. Plans to split the adult and children's Operations and Scrutiny Group and appoint an additional Chair was enacted in quarter 4 with a gradual introduction to the changes to the partnership's governance and subgroup arrangements. This and more focussed response to independent scrutiny across the Partnership's activity is to be a key area for improvement in 2023-24.

43. **Section 14. Conclusion** How effective have our arrangements been?

44. Members will note the positive outcome of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to children and families who need help took place in November 2022. This provided the WSP with assurance that the partnership work was progressing well, and that practice is effective.

45. **Section 15. Strategic Plan 2023 - 2025**

The key priority areas identified for the WSCB in 2022 – 23 continue to be the main priority areas for further development and embedment for the Partnership in 2023/24. In addition, the Safeguarding Executive Group reached agreement that work to improve multi-agency oversight and management of child sexual abuse would be the 4th Priority. The review of the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy will consider any cross-cutting issues for the adult safeguarding agenda.

- Priority 1 - Neglect
- Priority 2 – Self-Neglect and Hoarding
- Priority 3 – All-Age Exploitation
- Priority 4 – Child Sexual Abuse

46. In addition, there is a programme of work planned to further strengthen the governance and leadership across the WSP substructure, to drive practice improvements, increase accountability and provide greater clarity of expectations for members of the partnership.

47. The summary plan sets out WSP ambitions and strategic priority areas of focus for 2023-2025 alongside summary actions that will help the partnership subgroups to devise plans to oversee activity that helps to keep children, young people, and adults, be and feel safe and protected from abuse and neglect.

**Recommendations:**

**That:**


1. The Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the content of the final draft WSP Childrens Annual Report 2022-2023 attached.



2023.11.28 - FINAL  
PROOF 105611 Safe

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Right for Children, Families and Adults

# Walsall Safeguarding Children Partnership **Annual Report** 2022-23





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## Section 1

# Foreword

## Safeguarding Partners

This report aims to highlight the work undertaken and the commitments made, by all Statutory Safeguarding Partners to deliver high quality services and to protect the children and young people of Walsall.

It reflects the actions taken against the identified priorities from last year, and endeavours to demonstrate good progress made in many areas. But it also recognises that there is further work to be done and is not complacent about the need to continually strive for better performance and understanding of safeguarding issues arising in the Borough.

There is a strong commitment to safeguarding children and young people in Walsall and this is demonstrated in the improvements made in the priority areas of Neglect, Self-Neglect and All-Age Exploitation, and the report highlights many achievements made throughout the year. It also shows that as a Partnership we are always examining our practice and approach through audits and reviews which shows us where there are areas for further improvements. We know that we need to make greater progress in certain areas, and this is shown, for example, in the exploitation work where we need to strengthen our efforts in understanding our position and improving our processes and the clarity of governance on these issues.

Great progress has been made in the area of neglect, in our shared understanding of it, and in the development of Hubs, but we also know that this needs refreshing, and a planned event for May 2023 will be at the centre of this reinvigoration.

In November 2022 a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) inspection took place which examined primarily services at the front door and essentially took a detailed look at how the partnership was working. This external scrutiny was welcomed and was very positive in confirming the strength of Partnership arrangements, commitment and willingness to take matters forward.

The report has identified that the priorities need to remain the same for the coming year so that we can continue to enhance our understanding and embed learning as we go forward. This report has also identified that we need to consider an additional priority around Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) for the coming year.

### **Sally Hodges**

Independent Chair & Scrutineer

## Section 2

# Introduction

### Business Unit/ Independent Chair Scrutineer

The Children and Social Work Act 2017, The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance legislate for all local areas to publish Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children's Arrangements (MASA), led by three statutory agencies. Locally these are the Local Authority - Walsall Council, Black Country Integrated Care Board and West Midlands Police.

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) has a combined Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangement of Walsall Safeguarding Children's Partnership (WSCP) and Walsall Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) and is required to produce an annual report which provides an assessment of the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements in working with adults and children.

Working Together 2018 (WT 2018) requires safeguarding partners to publish a report at least once in every twelve-month period and send copies to the Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (WWCSC).

This annual review of effectiveness report sets out what the Partnership (and the organisations that make up WSCP) have done, in the last year of operation, to keep children and young people safe. The report covers the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

The purpose of the safeguarding arrangements, is as set out in Chapter 3: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

1. Children are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted,
2. Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share, and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children,
3. Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively,
4. There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats,
5. Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice,
6. Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

## Section 3

# Our Purpose

It is important to note that WSP is not involved in operational practice. Our overarching purpose is to ensure that agencies work in partnership to deliver joined-up services that safeguard children and young people from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We do this by:

- Gaining assurance that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Children Act 2018 and Working Together 2018 statutory guidance.
- Working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect, where this is possible.
- Ensuring partner agencies know what to do and are effective when abuse and neglect has occurred and give timely and proportionate responses.
- Gain assurance that practice is child-centred and considers the voice and lived experience of children, young people and their families or carers.
- Striving for continuous improvement in safeguarding practice and supporting partner agencies to embed learning from local regional and national reviews and multi-agency audits.
- Work across other statutory / strategic multi-agency partnerships to ensure any cross-cutting themes arising from our respective safeguarding activity, (performance data or assurance work) are identified and addressed.

**Our Vision** is for all agencies to work together and effectively build resilience and empower communities in responding to abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to widely promote the message that safeguarding is everybody's business in that:

- Abuse of children (our 4<sup>th</sup> Partners) is not tolerated.
- People know what to do if abuse happens or is suspected.
- We will ask, listen and act on the experience of our 4th Partners, parents and carers to ensure the right help at the right time at the right quality.
- There will be no wrong door so we are assured that all organisations and staff will be proactive in their learning and development and in working together effectively to recognise and respond to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

### **The vision for all children and adults in Walsall is:**

WSP recognises that the ability to protect oneself from abuse, neglect or harm will vary from person to person in the diverse communities across Walsall. WSP will support our 4th partner through meaningful inclusion and promotion of equality and diversity amongst our partner organisations and their service delivery. WSP will work to best practice ensuring the Partnership is culturally competent, respects difference, celebrates diversity and is committed to removing barriers that discriminate in safeguarding practices and outcomes. We are committed to working inclusively with our 4th partner to ensure equal access to information and advice and ensuring their assessed needs for help and support is provided at the right time at the right quality and is consistently delivered by WSP member organisations and services.



## WSP Ambition

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership has agreed that its shared ambitions for 2023-2026 are:

- a. Improving our visibility with and amongst local communities and across the partnership;
- b. Embedding core values of equality, diversity and inclusion in all tiers of the WSP sub-structure and multi-agency safeguarding practice;
- c. Developing a stronger culture of working together to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe;
- d. Increasing the involvement (ask, listen and act) of children and, young people and adults in our work;
- e. Developing a culturally competent, confident, knowledgeable, and curious workforce who are supported to work together and deliver their safeguarding responsibilities;
- f. Ask, Listening and acting on the experiences of practitioners and the learning from data and assurance activity, to improve the quality of the safeguarding response to children, young people, and adults in need and at risk.



Section 4

Walsall at a glance

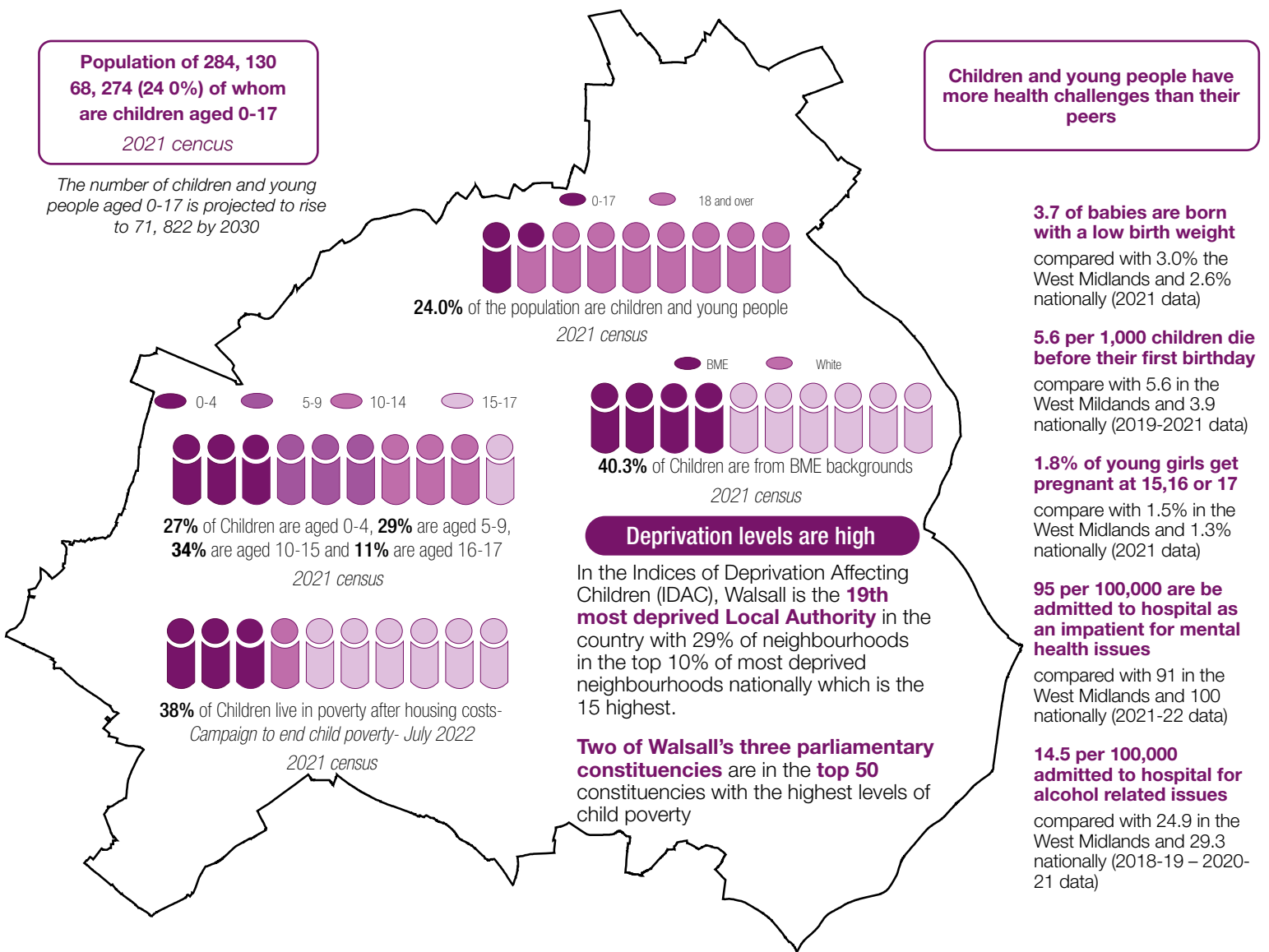
Population

Walsall has an estimated population of **284,130** and is a culturally diverse town where people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi background form the largest minority ethnic groups.

White British comprise the largest ethnic group at approximately 67.4% of the borough population, and more broadly the wider White ethnic category at 71.4%. Minority Ethnic groups have seen substantial increases, now accounting for 32.6% (1 in 3) of Walsall's population.

Walsall is expected to see continued and consistent population growth, projected to **increase by 7%** to an estimated **304,400 by 2030**

Children Living in Walsall



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In January 2023, WSP collaborated with Safer Walsall Partnership and the Youth Justice Board to respond to the rising concerns about youth and violent crime. Walsall has seen a series of serious youth violence incidents over the past 12 months leading to 14 young people being on remand and 7 children serving a custodial sentence within the secure estate. 11 remands occurred between December 2022 and February 2023.

Following the scale of young people and young adolescents arrested in one of the recent murders, the Youth Justice Board instigated a meeting with Safeguarding Partnership and Community Safety partners to seek assurance that:

- We are effectively supporting the 7 young people remanded into custody.
- There is an effective partnership plan to respond and safeguard children, young people and the wider community.
- Effective structures are in place to review and identify medium and long-term learning as a partnership.

The Chairs and Support Officers of Youth Justice Board, Safeguarding Partnership and the Safer Walsall Partnership agreed to develop a collaborative to ensure we maximised opportunities to effectively respond to incidents as well as focus on proactive system change following the learning from the incidents – the work of this group will be starting in April 2023. The responsibility for reducing youth violence sits with Safer Walsall partnership but the Safeguarding Partnership is working in collaboration to ensure that individual children and young people involved, are being appropriately safeguarded.



## Section 5

# What is Safeguarding Children

## The Legislation

The Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, places new duties on key agencies in a local area to work together, and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

“Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.”

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.”

## The Context

Individuals, organisations and agencies must ensure effective safeguarding is achieved by putting children at the centre of the system and by every individual and agency playing their full part. A child-centred approach to safeguarding is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. This means:

- Keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.
- Following the principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 - that state that the welfare of children is paramount and that they are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless compulsory intervention in family life is necessary.
- Recognising that children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. Practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take.

WSP do not operate in isolation of other multi-agency partnerships and boards within Walsall. Cross partnership collaborations have been established with Safer Walsall Partnership (Community Safety Partnership) – Walsall’s Health and Wellbeing Board and Youth Justice Board. All Boards and Partnership in Walsall are committed to working together to share and receive information that will maximise effectiveness and reduce duplicity in our effects to keep our citizens safe.

## Section 6

# Improvement Areas Identified from 2021-2022 Annual Report

### **a. Review and restructure of the Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements.**

In 2020 Penny Thomas, Independent Chair, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership, undertook a review of the effectiveness of WSP arrangements with a view to look at the strengths, limitations, opportunities, and threats of the joined-up arrangements.

A review and proposed restructure of the WSP was agreed, with implementation commencing in quarter 4. The WSP has been realigned with a separation of functions to provide greater focus of the children and adults agenda respectively through the additional appointment of a Chair.

### **b. Full Section 11 to be completed utilising the West Midlands Audit Tool.**

There was a delay in the launch of the regional tool which resulted in the full section 11 audit being scheduled for completion between April and June 2023-2024

### **c. To deliver the proposed forward plan for practice development activity, informed by partnership learning.**

Section 12 Workforce Learning and Development sets out the improvement work undertaken to strengthen the multiagency learning offer and activity undertaken across the business year.

### **d. Continue to progress the All-Age Exploitation Strategy and Child Neglect Strategy as key priorities and measure their impact through the outcome framework.**

Work within the respective sub-groups has been undertaken over the last 12 months to strengthen arrangements for Neglect and All Aged Exploitation as detailed in Section 7 Progress Against Priorities.

### **e. Strengthen the Think Family approach.**

Section 9 /a. Performance data and Family Safeguarding Model of the annual report details how post pandemic the Strengthening families approach continues to deliver positive outcomes for children and families.

It is worth noting that since the introduction of Family Safeguarding there has been a significant reduction in the number of children becoming subject of a child protection plan and entering care. Where children are entering care, they are being supported to return home to their parents more quickly.

### **f. Additional scrutiny work to be commissioned in 2022-2023 to explore if it is possible to identify any changes or improvement in practice as a result of previous Serious Case Review recommendations and actions.**

Jane Wonnacot was commissioned by the WSP to identify the extent to which these actions have had a positive impact on practice. The evaluation was commissioned in June 2022 with an agreement that the focus would be on three specific practice issues that had been identified from a previous review W6 and issues that also emerged as themes in more recent cases:

- Working with neglect
- Child Sexual Abuse within the family
- Working with learning disabled parents.

The finding of the scrutiny work identified there is ample evidence of both partnership and single agency activity focused on improving practice in the areas of neglect and child sexual abuse. Audits show that this is beginning to have an impact on referrals and assessments and focus groups were able to describe changes to practice. This included school staff referring to training that had focused attention on the voice of the child and social workers feeling more confident in working with child sexual abuse.

There was minimal evidence of changes or improvements in work with learning disabled parents.

The outcome of this review is to be considered in work to be progressed on the revision of the Child Sexual Abuse and Neglect strategies.

Adults safeguarding will give specific focus to work to improve practice with learning disabled parents.

**g. Additional scrutiny work to be undertaken in relation to robustness of the functioning of the MASH, application of Right Help Right Time Guidance and use of single agency Early Help to meet need at the earliest opportunity.**

A review of the front door arrangements was completed in October 2022 to consider the functioning and robustness of MASH following the merge of the Early Help hub and MASH in 2021, creating one front door. This was informed by a data analysis of pre and post merge contacts received to the front door which highlighted key areas of focus for the review.

A range of audit activity has been completed at part of the review, including scrutiny of application of thresholds in line with the RHRT guidance across the partnership and at the front door, to ensure timely and appropriate responses to children's needs in Walsall. The audits considered the quality, appropriateness and timeliness of referrals to the front door and the subsequent decision making within MASH, ensuring the right help and support was offered to children, young people and their families at the right time. Whilst there was assurance of robust, appropriate and timely decision making at the front door, inclusive of partnership screening and consideration of family history, it did highlight some further work required with the partnership in terms of early intervention and appropriate application of threshold.

In response to these findings, the RHRT training was updated, with more focus on early identification of need and exploring what help and support is required at the earliest opportunity across the partnership, with a particular focus on level 2 single agency Early Help. In addition, a RHRT training refresher was introduced. Bespoke training has been delivered to GP's and A&E, and a pod cast focusing on RHRT is being developed for West Midlands ambulance service and other 'Blue Light' services. 'Time to Talk' sessions within localities continued to be held every 8 weeks, bringing partners together who coordinate and support with the development and delivery of Early Help to children, young people and families in Walsall, providing opportunity to build locality knowledge, strengthen partnerships and enhance understanding around key priority areas to continue to support early identification and early intervention. Domestic abuse practitioners (DAP) were introduced within localities to offer early intervention and support families at level 2 single agency early help, who are experiencing domestic abuse and parental conflict.

The Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in November 2022 provided additional scrutiny of the front door arrangements and effectiveness of the partnership, and reported; "Children who need help and protection receive a coordinated and effective multi-agency response at the 'front door' in Walsall. Senior leaders ensure that there is a culture of continuous and shared learning across the partnership, which is successfully disseminated to staff. This helps to support identification of risk and needs for children, at the earliest opportunity, and promotes improvements in services for children and their families".



Section 7

Progress against our Priorities for 2022-2023

WSP Priorities 2022-2023

Priorities: Neglect, Self Neglect, Exploitation	Work-streams		
<p><b>Neglect:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve the awareness and understanding of neglect and the delivery of effective preventative support.</li> <li>To improve the recognition and assessment of children and young people living in neglectful situations before statutory intervention is required, including the use of appropriate assessment tools.</li> <li>Improve the effectiveness of interventions and reduce the impact of neglect.</li> <li>A strategic commitment and leadership that drives good practice and improvement in tackling neglect.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance and Quality Assurance activity</li> <li>Ensuring subgroups routinely feed assurances and areas of concern into PQA subgroup in order that progress can be monitored and quality assured.</li> <li>Provide assurance, scrutiny and challenge to agencies in ensuring they are fulfilling their statutory obligations.</li> <li>To receive performance reports in to measure the improvement and impact in safeguarding practice.</li> <li>Measuring the impact of case review and audit outcomes on multi-agency practice</li> <li>To ensure a high level of professional skill and development through the skill and development Subgroup and the delivery of the learning opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice Review activity</li> <li>Efficiently undertake review of those cases where it is appropriate to do so. Obtaining and reflecting on learning, sharing and improving practice where needed.</li> <li>Practice Review Subgroup will work with the Performance and Quality Assurance Subgroup to evaluate outcomes and impact of the work.</li> <li>Utilise regional and national learning to develop our local response and approaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice Improvement activity</li> <li>Undertake a training and development needs assessments across the partnership.</li> <li>Establish closer working relationships/ processes with other subgroups to deliver a practice improvement programme that draws on our understanding of safeguarding issues and learning from reviews across the borough.</li> <li>Develop a training strategy to support the partnership priorities 2021/22.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self Neglect:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a needs analysis.</li> <li>Develop a Self Neglect Strategy.</li> <li>Revise the Self Neglect Pathway.</li> </ol>			
<p><b>All Age Exploitation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather evidence and intelligence regarding the risk and prevalence within Walsall to identify further work required.</li> <li>Agree the partnership Exploitation Strategy.</li> <li>Develop delivery plans against the Strategy.</li> <li>Review the Strategy based on the above information and activity.</li> <li>Capture a qualitative narrative influenced and shaped by experts by experience.</li> <li>Agree multi-agency data scorecard the impact/outcome focus of the refreshed strategy.</li> </ol>			

Working with the Walsall Community: our 4<sup>th</sup> partner

Priority 1 - Neglect

This is the second year of strategic focus on Neglect for the Safeguarding Partnership. The neglect subgroup is chaired by the Director of Early Help Commissioning and Partnerships. In 2022 the subgroup delivery plan aimed to focus on 4 strands of work.

Walsall Neglect Strategy 2021 - 2024  
Be Part of Making a Difference





To view the full strategy scan here



Our Guiding principles

<p><b>Training</b></p> <p>Everyone in Walsall needs to recognize neglect and understand the impact it has on children and the role they can play in addressing neglect.</p> 	<p><b>Seeing &amp; Hearing Children</b></p> <p>Listening to children in every way possible – by talking with them, listening to them and seeing them.</p> 	<p><b>Taking Action</b></p> <p>Children identified that having at least one adult or a network of adults that listen; that they can trust and that offer support is key to good help.</p> 
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Why is tackling neglect important?

<p>Neglect is the most common form of child abuse.</p> 	<p>Neglect is featured in around three quarters of serious case reviews.</p> 	<p>Neglect can cause lifelong harm to a child's health, development and wellbeing.</p> 	<p>Neglect can be difficult to recognise and measure.</p> 
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Our priorities

<p><b>Priority One:</b> To improve the awareness and understanding of neglect and the delivery of effective preventative support.</p>	<p><b>Priority Two:</b> To improve the recognition and assessment of children and young people living in neglectful situations before statutory intervention is required, including the use of appropriate assessment tools, including GCP2.</p>	<p><b>Priority Three:</b> Improve the effectiveness of interventions and reduce the impact of neglect.</p>	<p><b>Priority Four:</b> A Strategic commitment and leadership that drives good practice and improvement in tackling neglect.</p>
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## Action taken

Since the launch of the strategy, we have:-

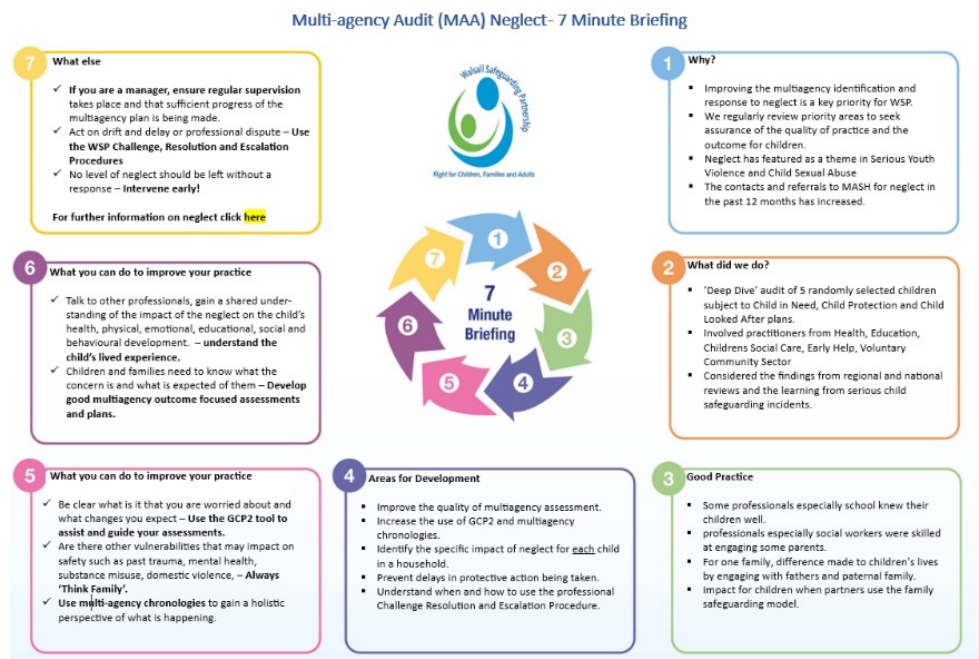
- Developed a multi-agency action plan setting out smart key actions across each of the priorities.
- Developed our multi-agency neglect outcome framework so we can measure our collective impact. This will be implemented as of April 2023.
- Continued to develop our training offer to deliver awareness, understanding and response to neglect. In the last 12 months we have focussed on early years providers and the voluntary and community sector.
- Utilised the early help action campaign (aware, care, think don't ignore or do nothing) to ensure we action on the guiding principles children and young people identified.
- Maximised opportunities through big programmes like holiday activity and food programme to ensure we maximise opportunities to identify and support children and families early.
- In order to strengthen practice across the partnership, we have secured partnership resource to recruit a neglect practice improvement coordinator. This post will be directly responsible to work across the partnership in developing a resource hub, training programmes, practice reflection sessions that will support practitioners in implementing effective practice in working with families where neglect is a identified need. This will include the consistent use of the grade care profile (an evidence-based tool in identification and working with families in addressing neglect). This post will be in place by June 2023.
- We are working with the police to see how their aware app (a mobile based app) can be used to better identify neglect and can be upscaled to be used by a wide range of agencies.
- We have embedded a 'think family' approach as part of the adult neglect strategy to ensure we identify effectively any children who may be impacted by adult self-neglect.
- The partnership has considered how the development of the family hubs can provide opportunities for effective support to families to prevent child neglect especially in those areas where we currently see low uptake of preventative programmes.

## Next steps

The steering group is currently planning a practitioner "Neglect Matters" event in May 2023 to continue to raise awareness, take stock on progress and refresh the action plan.

Walsall is one of 75 Local Authorities to receive support and funding for development of Family Hubs. The focus of the work has been on children 0 – 2: those born during the pandemic, to improve 4 areas of parenting practice:

1. Parent Support and home learning: those first-time parents – information and support, identifying those needing additional support for targeted programmes.
2. Breast Feeding.
3. Peri-mental Health: parents/carers in wider sense – workforce supervision/support.
4. Parent/Carer Panel: co-production and led by parents to drive forward, peer to peer support.





## Remaining Challenges

Further work is to be planned in 2023-2024 to re-visit and raise awareness of Neglect as WSP priority across the children and adult's workforce.

A launch event is planned for May 2023 across disciplines to raise awareness on identification, assessment practices including the use of the NSPCC graded Care Profile 2 tool (GCP2), effective intervention approaches and outcome focussed planning.

It is also recognised that further work needs to be undertaken to ensure the voice of our children and their families is proactively sort and informs the approaches taken to address any improvement plans and to support practitioners to engage, assess and plan intervention to reduce risk and meet needs of children and young people.



## Priority 2 - Self Neglect and Hoarding

This is the second year of strategic focus on Self-Neglect and Hoarding. The group is Chaired by Head of Service Manager from Adults Services and is attended by a range of statutory partners and relevant agencies including the voluntary and community sector agencies.

### Rationale

Under the Care Act 2014 self-neglect and hoarding are formally recognised within a safeguarding remit in England, therefore requiring responses from Local Authorities and their partners. Triggering instances from childhood, such as abuse, poverty, mental ill-health and sometimes physical health problems were cited as primary causes of self-neglect and/or hoarding.

The impact of self-neglect ranges from serious health implications, poor hygiene and personal care, social isolation, poor living conditions, and fire risk. In circumstances where adults with care and support needs are identified as having self-neglecting and hoarding behaviours, they would become subject to a section 42 safeguarding enquiry. A Section 42 safeguarding enquiry is the action taken by organisations to respond to abuse and neglect concerns in relation to an adult with care and support needs, who is unable to protect themselves from abuse and neglect or the risk of it.

Any person or agency can bring its concern or make a referral to the lead agency (the LA), through which multi-agency working is organised, so that fuller assessments and safeguarding planning can take place.

Self-neglect differs from other safeguarding concerns as there is no perpetrator of abuse, however, abuse cannot be ruled out as the reason some individuals become self-neglectful or hoard.

In Walsall an additional strand to this area of work relates to the wider 'Think Family' approach. A 'Think Family' approach refers to the steps taken by children's, and adult's practitioners to identify wider family needs which extend beyond the individual they are supporting.

For safeguarding children, this means where, for instance, practitioners are aware that children are living with parents/carers with self-neglecting and or hoarding behaviours it is also important to assess the whole family, their needs and risk and to share and request information to inform assessments, support, protection, or care planning for both the child and adult.

Self-neglect and hoarding are behaviours that have been hard to define, measure and address. In Walsall contact and referral rates remain low, yet self-neglect and hoarding is the most frequent type of abuse identified in multi-agency audit, local regional and national reviews.

### Strategic Intention

Walsall's strategic intention was to raise awareness of the issues across the adult's workforce in order that persons living with self-neglect and hoarding can be identified for assessment and support to reduce need and risk. The interface with children's safeguarding was also recognised and it was also essential that adult workforce recognised and knew when and how to respond where it was apparent that there were children living with adults in these circumstances. The importance of multi-agency collaboration across children and adults' disciplines was understood to safeguard both children, young people and adults with care and support needs. The partnership wanted assurance that practitioners were equipped:

- To create an adult Self-Neglect and Hoarding Strategy and Toolkit – which also references 'Think Family'; and the response for children within households.
- To undertake a needs analysis of self-neglect and hoarding in the Borough.
- To identify the training and development needs across the Partnership.
- To learn from SARs in the Borough and elsewhere.
- To establish the priorities for the forward plan 2023-2024.
- To operate a Partnership Self-Neglect and Hoarding Panel/Forum for cases to be referred for discussion where a Partnership approach is required to identifying and managing risks by working together in respect of individuals

## Self-Neglect

- To support the development of the Self-Neglect strategy a Self-Neglect Needs Analysis was undertaken last year but further multi agency response were required
- Current data is limited but following further needs analysis this will help inform discussions on specific KPI measures that may be asked for in future to develop a scorecard to support assurances on this priority

### What is working well?

Figures show increase in Self Neglect identified as abuse type in Q4 = 12, where self-neglect was identified at conclusion of Section 42 Enquiry as the type of abuse, rising from 5 in Q3 and on par with 11 in Q2, 12 in Q1. The annual total is 41 slightly down from the 47 reported in 2021-22

### What are we worried about?

During Q4 there was only 1 x referral to the self-neglect panel, a further decrease compared to two in Q3 and five in Q2. The panel numbers remain low regarding self neglect pathway. Hoarding Data in two levels increased compared to Q3 period of, however there was a reduction in severe levels this quarter. The total for 22-23 of 238 Hoarding cases has increased compared to 197 in 2021-22

### Is there anything else we need to know or do?

Data collection exercise was undertaken during Q3, agencies are asked to collate a snapshot of information on adults they are currently working with, who may be at risk of self neglect. The results were collated and analysed with a report going to Self-Neglect group in March 2023 – Update required

**One** Self-Neglect Panel referral was received during January to March 23. A total of 8 in the last 12 months

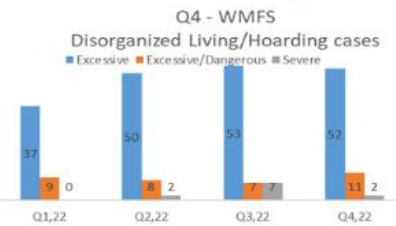


In Quarter 4 of 2022-23 **12 x** Concluded Section 42 Enquiries identified Self-Neglect as type of abuse (2.5%) compared to **5** in Q3 (2.0%), **11** in Q2 (3.8%) and **12** in Q1 period (4.8%)

**41** Enquiries identified Self-Neglect in 22-23 decreasing from **47** in 21-22

### WMFS Hoarding Data Q4

Excessive – 80.0% (79.1% in Q3,22) ↑  
Excessive/Dangerous -16.9% (10.4% in Q3,22) ↑  
Severe – 3.1% (10.4% in Q3,22) ↓



### Action taken:

Walsall partners recognised that self-neglect and compulsive hoarding are highly complex matters and require a collaborative and integrated approach to effectively respond to those individuals who live this experience.

The 'needs' assessment highlighted a range of challenges across the Partnership due to how organisations record and measure citizens in the Borough who self-neglect and hoard. There was 'anecdotal' activity from agencies but effectively measuring this provided many challenges in the Borough to strengthen the programme of work planned. The subgroup did, however, receive intelligence from the outcomes of multi-agency audits, and Safeguarding Adult Reviews regionally and nationally to inform the local picture and response.

An independent consultant was commissioned to support the Partnership in its development of a practitioner toolkit.

There is a multi-agency Self-Neglect and Hoarding Subgroup which meets bi-monthly to progress the identified plan.

The subgroup has also established a multi-agency Self-Neglect and Hoarding Panel.

### Impact

The self-neglect strategy and hoarding toolkit has been developed, there has however been significant delay due to a range of factors including changes in staffing and representation across the partnership and lack of timely contributions from partners. There is to be a re-launch of the multiagency response to self neglect and hoarding to include raising the awareness of the toolkit and the multiagency panel.

Unfortunately, referrals into the self-neglect and hoarding panel have remained very low across the year, yet the issue remains a prevalent theme in audits and review outcomes.

The practitioner toolkit has been developed at the end of the business year, it is too early to report on the difference this has made to referral rates and help and support identified as in need or at risk.

### Remaining Challenges

Further work is to be planned in 2023-2024 to re-visit and raise awareness of self-neglect and hoarding as a WSP strategic priority and launch the practitioner toolkit and the panel resource across the adults workforce.

The priorities strategic intention needs to be revisited to consider the following as the key drivers for improvement across the partnerships workforce:

To stop abuse and neglect wherever possible (for adults and children with lived experience).	To prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse / neglect to adults with care and support needs.	To promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned and enables them to make choices and have control about how they want to live.
Develop partnership training specifically where substance misuse is a factor, demonstrating embedment into practice across the partner organisations.	To raise public awareness so that communities, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying, and responding.	To develop and agree a consistent set of data measures to better understand prevalence, use of the tool and wider multi-agency performance.
To recognise indicators of hoarding and self-neglect and provide preventative measures to help people to stay safe but stay in control.	To provide information and support in accessible ways so that people know how to raise a concern and report abuse or neglect.	To have the resource to prevent and address what has caused the hoarding and / or self-neglect.

## Priority 3 - All Aged Exploitation

### Rationale

WSP recognised that exploitation does not stop on a person's 18th birthday. Where a child is experiencing exploitation at 17 years and is seen as a victim, it becomes more apparent that services needed to recognise and respond to the very likelihood that the same young person will continue to be vulnerable to the risk of exploitation and will continue to require support and or protection after their 18th birthday. It is for this reason WSP have agreed to an 'all age approach' to tackle exploitation in the Borough.

What this means is that Walsall Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Walsall Safeguarding Adults Board have committed to a collaborative approach to identify, respond and protect children and adults with care and support needs from all types of exploitation.

### Strategic Intention

A strategy and delivery plan has been in place since 2020. During 2022-2023 the following objectives were the focus of the subgroups work:

- 1. Build Strong Foundations:** Understand the "who," "what," "when," "where," and "how" associated with it. This involves analysing data and intelligence, engaging with our communities, analysing the evidence and implementing a public health approach.
- 2. Primary Prevention:** Recognise when intervention is needed at an early stage and put appropriate measures in place, for example early years support.
- 3. Secondary Prevention:** Recognise those who are vulnerable to violence and exploitation and intervene (individuals and communities) to prevent further harm. Encourage a culture of professional curiosity, training staff about contextual safeguarding and trauma informed practice.
- 4. Tertiary Prevention:** Support those who have been harmed and intervene to support them to cope, recover & rebuild their lives.
- 5. Enforcement & Criminal Justice:** Work in cross cutting ways, developing innovative practice, delivering effective enforcement across the borough and maximise the safety of individuals vulnerable to exploitation.

### Action taken:

Actions to deliver the objectives included the following:

- Produce and implement a Delivery Plan for the All-Age Exploitation Subgroup that would then inform the work of the Children/Adults Working Groups and Exploitation Panel.
- Produce an exploitation problem profile for Walsall.
- A Task and Finish Group around Modern Slavery Human Trafficking to be set up to move the agenda forward.
- Review of effectiveness and governance arrangements around the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Development of a dashboard to provide information /reassurance to the group on exploitation work.
- Delivery of an Exploitation Conference.
- Review of the Telford Enquiry and 'what next' discussion.

## Community based work within the Exploitation Hub:

Over the last twelve months, Mike Collyer (youth worker within the exploitation hub) has led on work within the Mossley area, working with a proactive group of residents around the issue of gangs and exploitation. The group has grown to become self sufficient and has set up as a Community Interest Company, applying for local funding to support children and families and to deliver youth work type of interventions to support young people.

The Exploitation Hub has also extended its work within schools offering support to parents in parent and carer workshops raising awareness of exploitation, signs to look out for and what to do if they have any worries their child may be vulnerable or at risk of exploitation. In addition, this work has included awareness building around missing young people and what to do to prevent missing episodes and how to respond if their child goes missing. This work has been led by Keiron Atkinson (youth worker in the exploitation hub).

The team continues to support children with positive engagement, Mike has been working with Bay 10 Studios to support young boys and men around the issue of criminal exploitation, young people have written, produced and performed new material reflecting on their experiences within their local areas. There has been a focus on reflective work, particularly around mental health and how this is impacted by grooming and control by adults around them.

The team has also continued to offer detached outreach work in partnership with Street Teams, Youth Connect and EYES, targeting locations that have been high risk for children, including transport hubs, high footfall spaces and shopping centres. This work has supported additional work to grow within the community safety teams within the council.

Exploitation continues to be an area for community development and workers within the hub offer support to housing providers around locations that have been invaded (Cuckooed). There has been a significant rise of this type of exploitation post periods of lockdown.

## Impact

The ongoing operational work around exploitation continues, however the way in which this is directed, how reassurance is provided and how gaps are identified remained a major source of discussion during the year. Significant work was undertaken to understand the full picture of governance and interrelated activity between the Safeguarding Board and the Safer Walsall Partnership. This led to a Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) Exploitation Diagnostic Report being written and discussed at the Safeguarding Leadership Group. This report led to an agreement that greater strategic direction was required, and this should be achieved through producing a problem profile, strategic needs assessment to understand the overall picture of exploitation in Walsall and a delivery plan and scorecard for ongoing monitoring and action management.

**The WSP was subject to a Joint Targeted Area inspection in November 2022. The Inspection outcome was published in January 2023. The JTAI report summarised the following as key strengths and impacts from local arrangements to identify and respond to exploitation.**

*“Risks to children from sexual or criminal exploitation are recognised well at the front door. The daily Exploitation Triage meeting is a well-attended multi-agency meeting that explores effectively the risks faced by children when they are reported as missing. Information is shared effectively in order to help professionals’ understanding of risks and actions, which helps inform decision-making.”*

*“The chair of the Exploitation Triage meeting rotates between its core members, which is inclusive and indicative of confidence in the commitment and capability of the participants in the meeting. This ensures that responses to child protection are a shared responsibility across all partners.”*

## Remaining Challenges

A significant amount of work has been undertaken to further develop on the Strategic Needs Assessment, review the WSP multiagency strategy and the sub-groups delivery plan .0to help drive forward the work in 2023-2024.

The Chair and Co-Chair arrangements for the All-Age Exploitation Subgroup and Adults Delivery Group changed through the year leading to some lack of continuity. The Safeguarding Business Unit have developed a robust framework for Chairs and Co-Chairs of groups which will assist in this issue moving forward.

Work continues to be undertaken with the Business Insights Team to develop on the WSP scorecards to support the progression of work.

## Child Sexual Abuse

Ofsted published a Joint Targeted Area Review (JTAI) report in February 2020 and considered the analysis of findings from other local authority inspections into the “Multi-Agency Response to Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment”. The report focused on the following areas of practice:

- child sexual exploitation and children missing from home, school or care;
- the response to children living with domestic abuse;
- the response to older children experiencing neglect;
- child exploitation (including sexual and criminal exploitation).

The report calls on professionals to give sexual abuse a higher priority in local areas, through improved training and awareness-raising of the problem, and states that, “more needs to be done to prevent the sexual abuse of children in the family environment and when it does happen, agencies must work better to protect and support victims and families”.

WSP has had a focus on child sexual abuse since 2019 and has worked with the Centre of Expertise to develop the CSA multi-agency Strategy 2020-2023. The strategy included a focus on awareness raising, training and development work, strengthening practice and pathways.

In quarter 4 of the business year the WSP Executive Group were presented with information which suggested that further work needed to be undertaken around Walsall’s identification and response to Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). The work has been aligned with the review of the CSA Strategy a priority to improve multi-agency oversight and management of child sexual abuse. The review of the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy will also consider any crosscutting issues for the adult safeguarding agenda.

## Section 8

### WSP Business Unit Review

In 2020 Penny Thomas, Independent Chair, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership, undertook a review of the effectiveness of WSP arrangements with a view to look at the strengths, limitations, opportunities and threats of the joined-up arrangements. The benefit of the joined approach is well understood, and it does provide a greater opportunity to respond more effectively and where possible to promote an 'All-Age Approach' to safeguarding in Walsall. This review was conducted with due consideration to responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 and Working Together 2018. The review identified a number of areas for improvement for WSP.

The Pandemic impacted on the implementation of the recommendations from the review. On the 23rd December 2022 a decision was made to progress with a full review of the Business Unit. This would include a review of the current establishment and a potential of changing job descriptions to ensure that the Business Unit staff can effectively meet the complex and emerging demands of the children and adults safeguarding agendas.

The review led to WSP arrangements being more closely aligned, the governance streamlined and the Business Unit working to support the new arrangements.

Difficulties in terms of recruiting to vacant roles in the Business Unit.

An awareness that staffing capacity and skillset in respect of the respective children and adult agenda was not sufficient to effectively support the potential development of work.

There is an increasing need to progress the integration of the children and adult agenda and the WSP Business Unit functions to support an all-age safeguarding agenda particularly in relation to the agreed shared priorities.





## Section 9

# Our Performance Data - Children in the Safeguarding System and Core Areas for Practice Development

## Family Safeguarding Model

In 2018 Walsall Children's Services developed the Walsall Right4Children transformation programme, which aims to get services and support right for all children across Walsall. One component of this was the family safeguarding model which is a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting meeting the needs of parents whose needs may be compromised owing to vulnerabilities such as domestic abuse, and poor mental health. Walsall adopted the Family Safeguarding Model with an 'go live date' of the 1st April 2020, but was delayed until 1st September due to the start of the pandemic. Despite this major setback our implementation journey began with support from the SFPF team. The implementation of the model coincided with a council wide transformation and modernisation programme which provided the context in which to embed the family safeguarding model, a whole scale change in safeguarding response to children and families centering on the value base that children's needs are best met within their own family.

The Family Safeguarding Model has allowed practitioners to focus on the whole family and make it easy for parents to access coordinated support they need from one team. The model is underpinned by Prochaska and DiClemente's theory of the cycle of change which conceptualizes behavioural change as a cyclical process. Practitioners utilise strengths-based working and motivational interviewing to support families in modifying behaviour that places children at risk of harm. Family safeguarding provides specially designed individual and group work programmes and a detailed parenting assessment, summarised in shared multi-professional case records. To date there has been several successful national evaluations of the Family Safeguarding model and the Walsall model has been evaluated by the 'What Works Centre'.

### Impact

1. Since the introduction of Family Safeguarding and different ways of working, there has been a significant reduction in the number of children becoming subject of a child protection plan and entering care. Where children are entering care, they are being supported to return home to their parents more quickly.
2. As the data below shows, there has been a 26.2% reduction in children becoming subject of a CP Plan since 2019-20 rising to 28.0% for children aged 12 and under. This is a reduction of 396, 372 of whom are 12 and under becoming subject of a plan.
3. The proportion of children who enter care following a child protection plan is reducing from 25.4% in 2019-20 to 17.9% in the 12 months to 31st December 2022. For children aged 12 and under, this has reduced from 27.7% to 19.5%. This reduction, alongside the reducing numbers of children becoming subject of a plan means that the number of children entering care after a period of CP planning has reduced by 232 children, 202 of whom are 12 and under.
4. Children entering care overall has also reduced by 33.1% for all children and 38.4% for children under 12 compared with 2019-20. This is an overall reduction of 214 children, 179 of whom are 12 and under, entering care.
5. Where children are entering care, they proportion of time spent in care continues to decrease. Of the children who entered care in 2019-20, just 17.8% left care within 9 months. This reduces to 11.9% for children 12 and under. However, in 2021-22, 27.9% of all children who entered care and 19.0% of those 12 and under left care within nine months – this may rise further as children who entered later in 2021-22 have not yet hit the nine-month mark.

*"I wanted to write to let you know how great SC has been with supporting our children at OC. She is organised, efficient and lovely with the children. She also communicates with us, which is so vital when working with outside agencies.*

*We are really impressed with the work she is doing and the service BCWA offer is excellent so thank you."*

*A Walsall Head Teacher*

## Early Help

- Contacts to Early Help - 2,612, Level 3 EHA requests 1,619
- Timeliness of Early Help contacts 85.22% - this has decreased from 89% in 2021-22
- Top 3 referring agencies 2023 are –Schools (22.09%), Police (21.98%) Health – other primary health services (18.11%)
- Top 3 presenting needs - emotional wellbeing of child/general behaviour/ emotional wellbeing of parent/carer
- Emotional wellbeing of parent has replaced Domestic Abuse to parent/carer compared with 2022 top 3 needs (1. Behaviour, 2. Emotional well-being of child, 3. DA parent/ carer)

## Overview of Children in Need

- Overall, the CIN Census has seen a 1.0% increase in the number of records loaded to the system this year.
- Number of referrals
  - The Rate of referrals per 10,000 is 481 which is a decrease from 496 (2021-22). It is lower than the statistical neighbours (624), England (534) and West Midlands (503) averages.
    - 3335 Referrals in 2022-23 which is a 3.1% decrease from 2021-22 (3440 Referrals)
- The number of referrals per 10,000 resulting in no further action (3) has decreased from 2021-22 (4) this is the lower than England average (8) and statistical neighbour average (10) but similar to West Midlands (3).

## Completed assessments

- The rate per 10,000 for completed assessments within the year is lower than our statistical neighbour (632), England (533) and West Midlands (542) averages. The Walsall 2022-23 rate is 491 this is lower than in 2021-22 (497).
  - 3,405 assessments were completed in 2022-23 which is a 1.2% decrease from 2021-22 (3,448 Assessments).
- 90% of Walsall's assessments in 2022-23 were completed with 45 working days, this is similar to 2021-22. Our performance is now higher than those of our statistical neighbours (80%) England (84%) and West Midlands (82%) averages.

## Factors identified at assessment

- Domestic abuse: concerns about the child's parent(s)/carer(s) being the subject of domestic abuse continues as the main factor (37%) but has decreased by 2% from 2021-22.
- Emotional abuse continues to be high with 27% in 2022-23 which is a 1% drop from 2021-22.
- The biggest decrease this year is Alcohol by the parent which has decreased from 12% in 2021-22 to 9% in 2022-23.
- The rate of Section 47 enquires has decreased in 2022-23 and is at 153.5 per 10,000. This is lower than England average (180), statistical neighbour (209) and West Midlands averages (196).

## Child Protection

- Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)
  - 84% of ICPC's were completed within 15 working days of a strategy discussion and performance is the same as in 2021-22 and is higher than our statistical neighbours (83) England (79) and West Midlands averages (82).
  - The rate of ICPC per 10,000 in the year has decreased significantly from 60 in 2021-22 to 47 per 10,000 in 2022-23 and is now significantly lower than our stat neighbours (75), England (61) and West Midlands averages (63).
  - The number of children subject of a child protection plan as at 31st March 2023 is 167, this is a rate of 24 per 10,000, which is significantly lower than our statistical neighbours (53), England (42) and West Midlands (43) averages.
  - The number of child protection plans started increased with a rate of 50 per 10,000 in 2021-22 compared to 47 in 2020-21. The rate of 50 per 10,000 puts us significantly lower than our statistical neighbours (74) and England average of 53.
  - The number of children who have started a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time has increased slightly this year from 28% in 2021-22 to 33% in 2022-23 taking us above statistical neighbours, England and West Midlands averages (22% and 23% respectively). However, numbers are small, and any small increase/decrease will have an effect on the percentage.

The Local Incentive Scheme (LIS) was commissioned in September 21 with the objective to align payments across the system and improve Primary Care engagement with Children and Adult Safeguarding systems. Throughout 22/23 audits have been completed and presented at PQA. This highlights health contribution and commitment to improving Primary Care engagement with regards to ICPC processes.

## Categories of Abuse

- Neglect and Emotional Abuse continue to be the highest categories **at initial assessment (36% and 47% respectively).**
- Emotional abuse is significantly higher than England (38%) Statistical neighbour (40%) and West Midlands (44%) averages.
- **Where the initial reason has changed to the latest category**
  - Emotional abuse continues to be the highest category at 51% but has decreased from 2021-22 where it was 54%.
  - Again, emotional abuse is significantly higher than England (41%) statistical neighbour (43%) and West Midlands (47) averages.
- The number of child protection plans ending this year has decreased (331) in 2022-23 from 350 in 2021-22.
- The number of child protection plans reviewed in timescale has decreased marginally this year from 90.5% to 89.1%.

## Children with Care Experience (former Children Looked After) and Care Leavers (NEET) status

Dashboard data over recent months has identified that:

The number of Children in Care saw a slight downward trend between August and December 2022 from 653 to 643. However, there was an increase during January from 643 to 655, and February 2023 saw a further slight increase to 656.

16.2% of Walsall's CLA are placed 20 plus miles from their home address. This has increased since January this year, continuing the overall upward trend during the last 12 months. The percentage with long term placement stability increased from 68.0% to 68.6%, following several decreases over the last six months.

9.1% of the CLA population have had 3 or more placements within a year. This has increased slightly from 8.9% in January, however, this figure has seen little change over the last six months.

In regard to performance measures, our monitoring arrangements for individual children is also outlined within performance data such as timeliness of statutory visits, effectiveness of care planning and through the statutory review process and key data in regards to health assessments.

The dashboard in regard to these areas identified that:

Currently, 80.8% of children in care (CiC) have an up-to-date health assessment, which has decreased slightly from 81.5% during January 2023.

In regard to ensuring children's views being included in care planning, it was positive that the child's views were recorded at 100% of CiC reviews in February 2023, which had increased slightly from 98% in January 2023.

In regard to attending Statutory Reviews, CLA attended 83.0% of reviews during February, which represents an increase compared to 77.8% in January.

The percentage of children seen alone at CLA statutory visits increased from 89.7% during January to 92.8% in February. The percentage of over 5s seen alone has also increased from 90.5% in January to 94.3% during February. These percentages do fluctuate from month to month and are a key performance indicator for managers to monitor.

The number of care leavers increased from 225 at the end of January 2023 to 230 as of the 28th February 2023. This figure has fluctuated but the fluctuations remain within a relatively small range between 225 and 243.

The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training for the 19 -21 age group has decreased in the last 3 months and is a key priority of those working in the leaving care service. Walsall continues to engage with both local and national initiatives to support care experienced people gain education, training and employment opportunities.

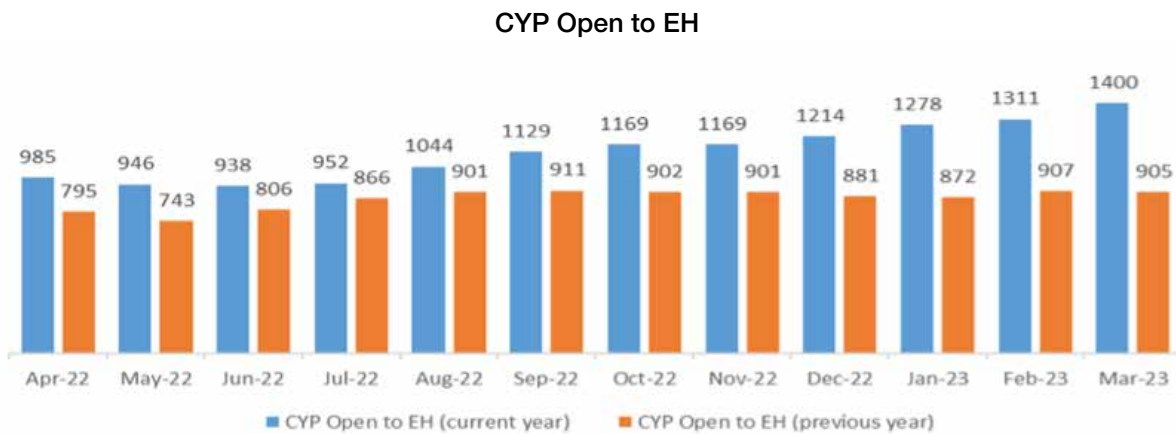
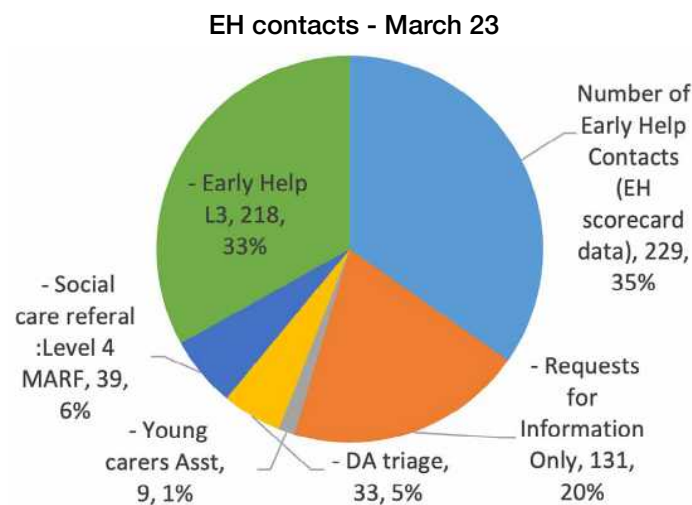
The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation remained high during February. Those that are not in suitable accommodation are largely our young people in custody.

## Other Key Areas of WSP Focus in 2022-2023

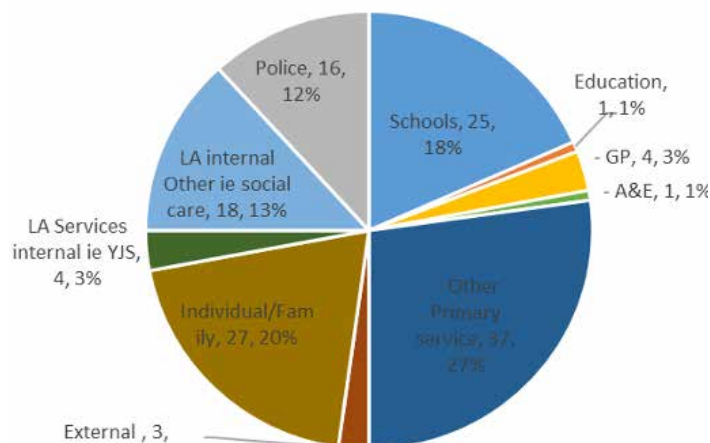
### Right Help Right Time

The Walsall Safeguarding Partners oversee, receive regular performance reports, review and dissemination the Right Help Right Time Thresholds Document. The RHRT Threshold Guidance brings together the Partnerships shared ambition to provide the right level of help at the right time so children and families can have their needs met outside of statutory safeguarding processes, where appropriate.

There were 299 contacts directly for Early Help Support. The largest proportion of contacts received in March 23 came from children and young people aged between 10 and 15 years old. 49% were relating to female children and the largest proportion of contacts were for children and young people from a white ethnic background.

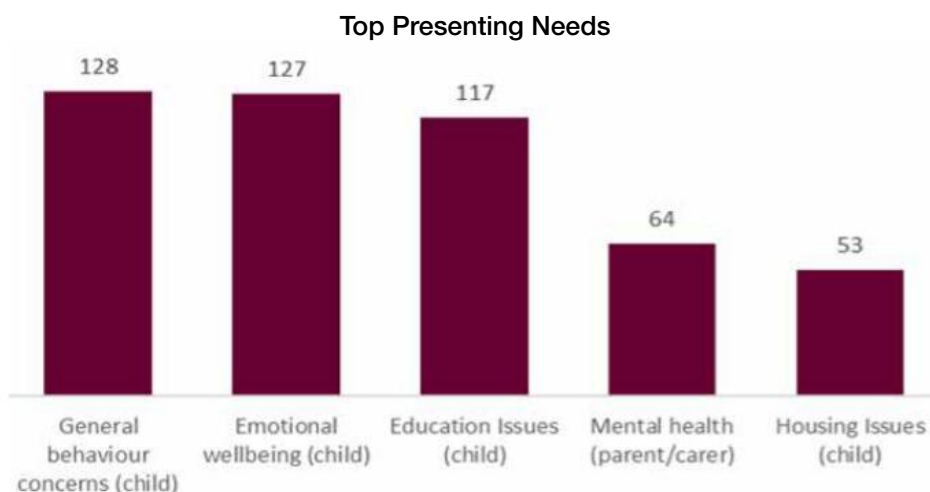


### NFA referral source Q4 (Excl Info Requests)



The source of contacts has mostly come from schools (74) health services - other primary services (56) and Police (67)

There has been a steady increase in children and young people open to Early Help over the last 9 months increasing from 952 in July 2022 to 1,400 in March 2023. When comparing March 23 figures with March 22 figures there has been a significant increase from 905 in March 22 to 1,400 in March 23. Presenting needs: March saw general behaviour concerns (child) as the top presenting needs, emotional wellbeing (Child), education issues (child), mental health (parent/carer) and housing (child) completed the top 5 presenting needs in March.



st children have had between 1 and 5 presenting needs identified, however, there are 35 children that have had 6 or more needs identified with 24 having 6, 6 having 7, and 5 having 8 needs or more identified.

The Right Help, Right Time Continuum of Need has been in place since 2019 and is being reviewed to incorporate the changes within Early Help arrangements, to reflect the 'supporting families' guidance, and the changes to the Front Door arrangements post the merger of the Early Help Hub and MASH. This will be done early into the next business year 2023-24, in consultation with front line practitioners who use the guidance in their day-to-day practice.



## Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

WSP continues to seek assurance on the effectiveness of its MASH arrangements. Recent analysis was undertaken by Childrens Services and considered performance data pre and post the merger of the Early Help Hub in its arrangements. The analysis highlighted key areas of focus for the Front Door review which included:

- repeat contacts,
- Domestic abuse triage outcomes and,
- Level 4 social care contacts that resulted in no further action.

Visits were undertaken to Leeds and Wolverhampton MASHs to explore their Front Door arrangements and further consider any learning that could be taken from other Local Authority MASH arrangements.

The JTAI inspection also gave additional opportunity to improve the Front Door arrangements. The improvement plan arising from the outcome of the review and JTAI will give specific focus to improving the effectiveness of MASH in ensuring timely and appropriate responses to children, young people and family needs. The improvement plans are monitored and reviewed within the MASH Management Group to ensure timely progression of action points.

As a result of the findings all MASH practitioners and partners were given training in relation to parental conflict and use of domestic abuse risk assessment tools to support appropriate decision making at the Front Door in response to domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse practitioners (DAP) have been embedded within localities and are supporting families where there are lower-level domestic abuse concerns identified at level 2 single agency support.

Surveys were sent out to MASH practitioners to obtain their feedback post Front Door merger and to understand what they felt worked well and identify areas of strength and areas for development. Whilst returns were low, practitioners shared a number of positives since the merger of the Front Door. They include the following points:

- A timelier response to children and young people's needs.
- More robust arrangements being in place to move between differing levels of need, with Early Help and Social Care practitioners being under one Front Door.
- Reduction of families having to re-tell their circumstances and experiences to multiple practitioners.
- The new arrangements supported timely decision making at the Front Door.

In 22/23 the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children in Walsall lead on the development of a Black Country Wide MASH Service Spec (including KPIs) and Health Standard Operating Procedure for health MASH Staff. We were asked to present this work at the Regional NHSE conference in December 2022 and on the MASH National Working Group which was chaired by Helen Adams (OHID) to highlight best practice.

## Electronic Multi-agency Referral Form (eMARF)

There was some inconsistency in terms of how referrals were received into the MASH and the quality of referrals, with some referrals being made by email or telephone call and not being followed up with a MARF. The partners developed and launched an eMARF on 28/11/22 in order to achieve more consistency in terms of quality of referral information being received from partners. The eMARF also ensured that mandatory fields were to be completed reducing the opportunity for essential information not to be recorded.

## Section 10

# How feedback from children and families has informed our work and influenced service provision.

WSP understands the importance of ensuring meaningful involvement of the child, young person or their parents and carers in decision making, planning and evaluation of services that intervene in their lives. The following provide a summary of activity undertaken to 'Ask, Listen and Act' on the voices and lived experience of children young people and families and to improve services and practice.

### Children With Care Experience

During 2022-23 we have seen continued positive co-production activity with the children in our care. We have 3 children in care councils and as part of their work over this year they have co-produced an action plan driving forward a number of changes across the council and have helped to shape changes to the working of the corporate parenting board. Young people continue to play an active role in the recruitment of all permanent staff to children social care and offer training to practitioners, managers and members. In 2022 we saw the development and implementation of our participation and language that cares action plan and they are both clear practice priorities for children social care. In 2022/23 we commenced the development of our family advisory board and have recruited a small but dedicated group of parents, we are working with them to recruit more parents and carers and spend time developing trusting relationships to enable them to support us effectively in our co-production moving forward.

A key concern for young people, as reported to the Corporate Parenting Board, was mental wellbeing. To respond to this concern, partner members requested information on the therapeutic support provided to children in care who are at greater risk of suffering poor emotional wellbeing or mental health than their peers not in care, often resulting from their early childhood experiences and trauma.

Therapeutic support to children in care is provided through the FLASH service and so the current service specification and how it meets the needs of the children has been reviewed. The multi-agency Corporate Parenting Board receive assurance that the service specification included key performance indicators and that these will provide both quantitative and qualitative information about the impact of the service and outcomes for children, this will include children referred to service and stepping down from specialist Child Adolescent Mental Health Service.

In line with Corporate Parenting Boards Participation Strategy, we are pushing forward in regard to the following engagement and co-production activities:

- Increase the number of children we consult and engage with across our care and safeguarding population. Timetable of consultation activity and participation events and activities clearly linked to Quality of Practice Framework.
- For children and young people to consistently participate in their conference and reviews. Training and resources to be co-produced to support young people to Chair their meetings/reviews.
- Co-production with children and young people of age-appropriate consultation, communication tools and resources to promote understanding of rights and processes. Roll out of direct work toolkits.
- Increase numbers of children and young people involved in recruitment and training. Begin to embed parents/carers into the recruitment and training offered.
- Ensure all workforce attendance at Total Respect Training and support children, young people and parent/carer's input into the development and delivery of wider training programme.
- Ensure all workforce attendance at Total Respect training and support children, young people and parent/carer's input into the development and delivery of wider training programme.

**The Integrated Care Board** have also listened and acted on the voices of children with care experience and based on their feedback they have ensured:

- Free prescriptions for eligible care leavers
- A Health Application for Care Leavers that links to the NHS app.

All health assessments include the voice of the young person, and this is actively reviewed as part of the quality assurance process of these assessments.



## Work with Fathers

Funding from the OPCC was secured in November 2022 to deliver a Fathers Peer Support Group and the MindKind Projects now deliver this crucial engagement and support. The Father's Peer Support Group facilitated by MindKind Projects have engaged over 30 fathers in Walsall. Fathers are telling us that the advice, support and space to chat has supported them towards better wellbeing, better parenting and improved relationships with loved ones. MindKind Projects have been delivering Saturday Dad's Stay and Play Groups from Walsall Family Hubs and this has been a much-needed resource for Dad's who tell us they don't always feel comfortable attending Stay and Plays often frequented by predominantly women. The Co-Founder and Lead Mental Health Social Worker for MindKind Projects also presented at the Family Safeguarding Working with Fathers Launch alongside fathers from the group. MindKind Projects continue to talk to professionals across Walsall about the importance of taking a trauma informed approach and by using recordings of interviews with the fathers they have been able to amplify the voices of our local fathers.

## Section 11

### Opportunities to Learn and Improve

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership scrutinises, evaluates and where necessary challenges the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements through its statutory functions and reviews. In doing so, WSP ensures that through continuous learning that services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults with care and support needs in Walsall focus on improved outcomes.

### Performance and Quality Assurance

#### Learning from Multi-Agency Audits (MAA)

Undertaking MAA audits enable WSP to review the quality and impact of safeguarding practice. Generally, WSP undertake four themed multi-agency audit rounds, one theme per quarter where the multi-agency practice in relation to five children and their families are evaluated.

The themes are identified due to strategic priorities, response to the findings of Child Safeguarding and Learning Reviews, Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs) Walsall data and intelligence. A report detailing findings from the audits is produced and as part of the learning from each audit; a 7-minute briefing will be developed and agreed by the PQA Subgroup. The audit reports routinely form part of WSP meetings where partners can scrutinise and challenge the findings. Learning from the briefing is shared using a range of different forums such as Practice Reflection Workshops, conferences, webinars and wider practice development.

During 2022-2023, the MAA audits focused on three themes including self-harm, neglect and exploitation with the latter being a theme twice in the year. Exploitation was a focus for WSP due to the preparations required as part of the JTA inspections and all three are strategic priorities. As detailed in Table 1 below, overall, the grading of multi-agency practice has largely remained consistent during 2022-2023 with 85% being graded as good or requires improvement. Positively, this figure increased to 100% in Q2 when self-harm was the theme. In three of the audit rounds, the quality of multi-agency practice has been rated as inadequate representing 15% of the overall cohort.

Year/Quarter 2022/2023	Theme	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Total
Q1	JTAI-Exploitation		2	2	1	5
Q2	Self-Harm		2	3		5
Q3	JTAI -Exploitation		1	3	1	5
Q4	Neglect		2	2	1	5
Total			7	10	3	20

**Table 1: Multi-Agency Children Audit Gradings 2022-2023**

When the MAA audit gradings in 2022-2023 are compared against previous years, on average there has been a reduction of approximately 25% rated as a good and an increase of 10% of graded as requires improvement when compared to the previous year. At the same time, there has been, a 15% increase of cases rated inadequate when compared to 2021-2022.

Year/Quarter	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
2022-2023	0%	35%	50%	15%
2021-2022	0%	60%	40%	0%
2020-2021	4%	61%	30%	4%
2019-2020	0%	23%	63%	15%

**Table 2: Comparison of annual audit grades for Children MAA from 2019-2023**

There are several factors that need to be taken into consideration. Audit grades relate to the quality of multi-agency working rather than overall practice. In addition to the multi-agency work rated as good, there could be positive elements of single and partnership agency working as well as areas for development particularly in those rated as requires improvement. Developing a bank of good practice Partnership examples which can be used as part of training and wider communication would be beneficial. Whilst this is a small sample size, due to the 'deep dive' nature of the evaluation of multi-agency practice, these findings often align with those identified by other WSP work such as learning reviews and other quality assurance activity. Robust multi-agency practice is an important part of achieving good outcomes when working with children. It should also be noted that no child was found to be at risk of harm through the MAA and that we have ensured necessary action has been taken to address inadequate judgements with the relevant organisations involved.

Understanding the reasons for the changes in grading are more complex and will require further analysis. Some possibilities include the themes chosen are not only priority areas locally when working with children and families, they often reflect challenges in practice regionally and nationally. Work has also been undertaken by the Business Unit to strengthen the Performance and Quality Assurance Framework. As part of the MAA process, this will involve incorporating the lived experience of children, increasing the involvement of practitioners as part of the assurance, measuring impact and influencing and informing service improvement. This could also provide further insight into possible solutions as well as the issues from a different perspective. Consideration of how this links with other partnership quality assurance activity could also be a consideration.

The next section provides an overview of the practice including good practice and areas for development. See appendix 1.1 for more information. Following this, are an overview of the themes and a summary.

**Q1: Exploitation Multi-agency audit completed June 2022 (Exploitation to check progress around practice against key WSP priority and JTAI Preparation).**

Audit rating:

Year/Quarter 2022/2023	Theme	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Q1	JTAI-Exploitation		2	2	1

**Q1 Exploitation**

This audit reviewed how effective the multi-agency partnership is in addressing the needs and safeguarding concerns for children who have experienced or are at risk of exploitation. All-Age Exploitation is a key priority for WSP, and the audit activity was undertaken in preparation for the Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the multi-agency response (JTAI). Risks were appropriately recognised, and timely responses identified which were supported by the Exploitation Hub and the use of the Toolkit. This enabled a better understanding of the needs of the child to be developed enabling purposeful support to be provided which made a difference to them and their families.

However, where vulnerabilities were identified, the Partnership response could have been improved. In some circumstances, better co-ordination of multi-agency working, information sharing between key agencies would ensure the timely provision of support. Ensuring a consistent approach to mapping would enable a contextual safeguarding approach to be adopted not focusing on the child's lived experience, protective factors but disruption linked to perpetrator/s.

How did we share learning?

- Several 7-minute briefings distributed on key themes.
  - 7 Minute Briefing** – Information Sharing shared across the Partnership.
  - 7 Minute Briefing** – 7 Golden Rules (Information Sharing) – shared across the partnership.
  - 7 Minute Briefing** – on communication shared across the partnership.
- An exploitation conference arranged for March 2023 was cancelled due to the need to undertake some diagnostic activity. This work is still being progressed and a rescheduled date needs to be identified.
- An exploitation 7-minute briefing needs to be developed and will be completed by August 2023.

**Q2: Self-Harm Multi-agency audit completed September 2022 (linked to CSPR's)**

Year/Quarter 2022/2023	Theme	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Q2	Self-Harm		2	3	

**Q2 Self Harm**

This audit reviewed how effective the multi-agency partnership is in addressing the needs and safeguarding concerns for children who self-harm. This was also linked to the findings from some Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Generally, children experiencing self-harm and their mental health needs was seen in the context of social, familial, and environmental factors, and previous experiences and trauma, instead of just as a presenting concern or behaviour in of itself. Professionals were skilled in working with children and family members who were at points of challenge and crisis and the support provided included different services.

Developing a better understanding of children's lived experience based on their identity particularly in relation to Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and understanding their history would have enabled purposeful direct work to be undertaken. Plans would be improved if they were consistently developed and owned by the multi-agency group rather than the lead agency. Timely provision of specialised support where a need has been identified for a child would also improve the partnership response.

**How did we share learning?**

- A Practice Learning Event linked to self-harm will be taking place at the end of September 2023.
- A self-harm 7-minute briefing will be produced by August 2023.

**Q3: Exploitation: Multi-agency audit completed October 2022 – Exploitation to evaluate progress around practice against key WSP priority and JTAI Preparation).**

Year/Quarter 2022/2023	Theme	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Q1	JTAI-Exploitation		2	2	1
Q3	JTAI -Exploitation		1	3	1

**Q3 Exploitation**

This audit reviewed how effective the multi-agency partnership is in addressing the needs and safeguarding concerns for children who have experienced or are at risk of exploitation. This audit activity was repeated in preparation for JTAI. Exploitation was recognised and for the most part relevant assessments were completed and tools utilised. Positive examples of skilled professional work from several agencies with children, young people and families who were at points of crisis and had experienced trauma and adversity. Good examples of agencies engaging well with children and families were identified.

Multi-agency practice with some children would be improved by robust and timely information sharing between professionals to develop a better understanding of their history, current interventions and changing circumstances. Assessments and multi-agency planning whilst evident need to consistently be informed by a good understanding of the child's identity and vulnerabilities due to their special educational and mental health needs. Evidence of professionals reviewing the child's plan where specialist support was required alongside disruption planning was also required. Collectively, this is more likely to have resulted in robust plans for some children being developed based on a better understanding of their circumstances to improve their outcomes.

**How did we share learning?**

- An exploitation conference arranged for March 2023 was cancelled due to the need to undertake some diagnostic activity. This work is still being progressed and a rescheduled date for the conference will be identified.
- An exploitation 7-minute briefing needs to be developed and will be completed by August 2023 combining the findings from both audits.



**Q4: Neglect: Multi-agency audit completed February 2023 (Evaluate the effectiveness of the response to Neglect a Year on from the previous multi-agency audit)**

Year/Quarter	Theme	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
2022/2023					
Q4	Neglect		2	2	1

**Q4 Neglect**

The audit reviewed how effective the multi-agency partnership is in addressing the needs and safeguarding concerns for children within sibling groups experiencing neglect which is a key priority for WSP. Generally, professionals from different agencies were skilled at working with children and parents, building, and developing relationships when the need for statutory support was identified. Professionals were adept at engaging family members although some were reluctant to work with agencies. Use of the Family Safeguarding Model resulted in a continued focus upon the difference being made to children's lives and a 'Think Family' approach.

However, the quality of multi-agency assessment of neglect could have been improved using the Graded Care Profile 2 and chronologies enabling a shared understanding of the specific impact of neglect for each child when considering their health, physical, emotional, educational development, and wellbeing. In a few circumstances, practice would have been improved by timely action being taken where vulnerabilities were identified using the professional escalation processes. Ensuring that professionals consistently evidenced purposeful child centred practice informed by multi-agency plans developed, owned, and shared with families also needed to be better evidenced.

**How the learning was shared**

- Several 7-minute briefings distributed on key themes.
  - 7 Minute Briefing** – on Information Sharing shared across the Partnership.
  - 7 Minute Briefing** – on 7 Golden Rules (Information Sharing) shared across the partnership
  - 7 Minute Briefing** – on communication shared across the partnership.
- An exploitation conference arranged for March 2023 was cancelled due to the need to undertake some diagnostic activity. This work is still being progressed and a rescheduled date needs to be identified.
- An exploitation 7-minute briefing needs to be developed and will be completed by August 2023.
- A Practice Learning Event linked to self-harm will be taking place at the end of September 2023.
- A self-harm 7-minute briefing will be produced by August 2023.
- A 7-minute briefing was developed and distributed as part of the Neglect Conference scheduled for May 2023.
- Learning from the neglect MAA was part of the agenda of the Neglect Conference and shared with delegates.
- A consultation with practitioners using 'Mentimeter' was undertaken, and the findings will inform practice learning and development.
- The Neglect Conference is to be recorded and the learning about the MAA and the other themes will be available on the partnership website for practitioners to access.

## Children's Multi-Agency Audit Themes 2022-2023

The table below provides an overview of the cross-cutting themes over the year when the good practice and areas of development are considered.

Practice area	Overall Multi-Agency Audit Themes and Findings 2022/2023
Identification and response to risk	<b>Quality of referrals and use of professional escalation and challenge:</b> Where risks were clearly identified, purposeful and timely information sharing evidenced, thresholds were correctly applied and resulting in assessments, being undertaken (Q1 and Q2). However, in a few circumstances, where vulnerabilities were identified, referrals for statutory involvement were not accepted and children were remained in neglectful situations without the right support being provided at the right level. Where professional disagreement was a factor, the use of professional escalation was not evidenced.
Assessment	<b>Variability in the quality of multi-agency assessments:</b> Overall, in Q1, assessments were robust when exploitation was a factor due to the use of the toolkit and consultation with the Hub. In Q4, positive practice was noted where the Family Safeguarding Model was used resulting in the risks, needs being in assessing risks and planning.  However, across most of the audit rounds, the quality of the assessments was variable. Practice would have been improved by using chronologies to understand the child's history in the context of their family and their identity. Consideration of previous professional involvement and the use of evidence-based tools such as GCP2 were needed to develop a shared understanding of the risks, needs and impact on the individual child.
Child and Family Engagement	<b>The importance of purposeful professional interventions based upon a good understanding of the child's lived experience:</b> Across all four audit rounds, the quality of child and family engagement by practitioners across several agencies practice was found to be positive. Skilled professionals from several different agencies were able to work through varied and challenging relationship dynamics, to work in a trauma informed way to provide appropriate support.  Multi-agency practice would be improved by consistently ensuring relationships with children and their families and the interventions provided are informed by better understanding of their identity, additional needs, lived experience and preferred method of communication. In turn, this is more likely to ensure that these relationships were translated into purposeful practice that made a difference.
Decision making and Management oversight.	<b>Robust management oversight and decision making:</b> Overall, these areas were deemed to be appropriate across three of the audit rounds ((Q1-3) evidenced through timely strategy discussions, regular supervision where the needs of the child, effectiveness of the support and actions followed up and progress being made were considered. In the final audit round, whilst there was difference of opinion it was agreed that decisions should have been made sooner. Practice would have been strengthened had more reflection and analysis been evidenced about the timescales for change for the child, a shared understanding of the risks, and impact reducing drift and delay and escalation where required.
Planning	<b>Development of child centred, multi-agency plans which make a difference:</b> The quality of multi-agency plans was identified as an area for improvement across all the audit rounds. In Q1 and Q2, some plans were good, identifying support that children and families required, support provided and the role for different agencies resulting in purposeful intervention.  Most would be improved by being child centred, multi-agency and evidenced that they been developed with the family. Plans also need to be informed by an understanding of the child's identity, specify how their needs would be met and ensure better co-ordination to prevent drift and delay in better outcomes being achieved.
Multi-agency working	<b>Importance of robust multi-agency working:</b> There were positive examples of multi-agency working identified in most of the audit rounds (Q1,3 and 4) where partners worked effectively together. However, when assessing the quality of practice overall issues such as the lack of information sharing, better co-ordination of multi-agency working, and drift and delay were identified. Delay in being able to access the necessary assessments relating to health and education and timely provision of support was also a factor (Q2 and 4).
Impact for the child	Where identification and response to risks was timely, thresholds were appropriately applied, and purposeful interventions were provided based on meaningful engagement of children and a better understanding of what life was like for them and the help and support required to make a difference to their lives. Use of professional escalation, consistent use of evidence-based tools and multi-agency plans and interventions based on a deeper understanding of the culture, identity and background of children would further strengthen practice.

## Summary

Overall, the overview of multi-agency practice during 2022-2023 evidenced that most practice is graded as good or requires improvement with child and family engagement identified found to be the most positive. Development of the case examples where the impact of this work can be shared could be one way in which the learning could be shared more widely. There are also some re-occurring cross-cutting practice themes where partnership assurance activity, action plans are being developed or where the links with other assurance work could perhaps be strengthened. Findings have identified the importance of continuing to adopt best practice principles, compliance with pathways, guidance, evidence-based tools alongside the importance of purposeful and quality of multi-agency interventions that make a difference.

Multi-agency audits provide an important view into the effectiveness of our safeguarding system and has identified some positive practice and possibly highlighted how factors such as workforce challenges can impact on the effectiveness of multi-agency working. This further illustrates the crucial role that partners across the system, but particularly as part of Performance and Quality Assurance process, play in identifying, addressing, and mitigating these factors.

Throughout the year, partners have evidenced their commitment to MAA and provided feedback about the process particularly some aspects of the methodology. Introducing the views of children and families and involving practitioners will be required. Improving some aspects of the process particularly in relation to panel and report writing, the impact on the timeliness of sharing the learning, closing the loop and action plans. It also needs to be acknowledged that there have also been changes to staffing in relation to the MAA Chair and Quality Assurance Manager both who have oversight of the process. A plan has been identified to ensure that any outstanding learning is completed, shared, and a review of the process will take place. Both the Business Unit Leads and Partners from the MAA and Practice, Learning and Development Subgroups have identified the need to strengthen the links between these groups, consider the multi-agency practice learning offer in light of the findings and evidence the impact.



**Learning from case reviews** is a statutory function required to be in place for all Local Safeguarding Partnerships. In Walsall this function is delegated, overseen and monitored by the WSP Practice Review Group.

The subgroups' purpose is to coordinate the local framework for reviewing, serious child safeguarding cases as set out by Working Together 2018, and Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) in line with the Care Act 2024. The group focuses on identifying the improvements to be made to the adults and children's safeguarding system and also seeks to prevent and reduce the risk of recurrence of similar safeguarding incidents.

Key priorities for the group during 2022-23 were:

1. To improve the timeliness of the learning from the Safeguarding Adult review Process
2. To review the process for Review Referrals including the implementation of adult reviews in rapid time
3. To improve the oversight of the Practice Review Group and the Executive of the cases in progress and their status, including those where publication may be delayed due to criminal proceedings.
4. Streamline tracking and monitoring of recommendations across the Multi-Agency System
5. To review and enhance the dissemination of learning from all reviews including the National Panel LCSR completed on Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson.
6. Enhance the confidence and expertise of the group membership.

**The Solihull JTAI** completed following the death of Arthur Labinjo- Hughes was critical of the ways in which the learning from case reviews was shared across the system. This prompted a review of the current processes in place to ensure that learning was shared effectively with all partners.

This resulted in the review of the Safeguarding Partnership website which was updated with a clearly identifiable tab for 'Learning'.

- **A new website** is to be launched in 2023-4.
- **A Communications Strategy** was developed by the Partnership which addresses the dissemination of learning from reviews.
- **A quarterly newsletter from the Partnership** was developed and circulated summarising significant learning.

Through 2022-2023 7 cases were heard at rapid review with 6 deemed not meeting threshold to progress onto a local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR). One case was referred for consideration and was notified to the National Panel and Ofsted as a Serious Child Safeguarding Incident. This case progressed to a LCSPR and will continue to progress through 2023-4. There were two alternative reviews and 1 tabletop review for a child sexual abuse incident. Four of the cases that did not meet criteria identified child neglect as a key theme. WSP approved the commission of an independent reviewer to complete a thematic review, which will focus on barriers to effective implementation of the Neglect Strategy in practice. At the time of writing the review had not concluded.

There was three reviews in the system which due to delays in forensic experts advice resulted in the significant delay in drawing reviews to a conclusion, this has raised concern for the WSP.

- one children's review was completed in year leading to publication in April 2022 (W13 "Sam")
- There was 1 LCSPR from 2021 and 1 SCR from 2018 which are pending completion during the year. This case is delayed due to criminal proceedings.
- There was 1 SCR (from 2019) during the year where criminal proceedings came to a close and no further prosecution was made. The case is pending the outcome of the coroner's inquest before the review can be completed



## Partnership Learning and its Dissemination and embedment into practice

The outcome of reviews is also promptly applied and featured in **WSP learning and training material**. Partner representatives of the practice development group are responsible for ensure the learning is taken back into their own organisation and any single agency learning is updated accordingly.

### The use of 7 minute briefings

All learning from reviews is disseminated across the children and adult's workforce through 7-minute briefings. This is a well-known approach based on a technique adapted from the FBI! Research suggests that seven minutes is an ideal time span to concentrate, and learning is more memorable as it is simple and not clouded by other issues and pressures. 7-minute briefings are sent out in WSP newsletters, prior or post publication of reports, at practitioner events, and policy or procedure development and launch events.



## Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Learning from Case Reviews



**As a Safeguarding Partnership we have a duty of care towards children and adults with care and support needs, to explore how practice can be improved through changes to the system established through learning gained from multi agency reviews.**  
*In this edition we focus on the learning from our Walsall Safeguarding Reviews for adults and Rapid Reviews for children.*

Safeguarding Adult Reviews	Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	Rapid Review for Referral Consideration
<p>The Care Act 2014 states that Safeguarding Adult Boards (SABs) must arrange a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) when an adult in its area dies as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, or the adult is still alive, and the adult has experienced serious abuse or neglect, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked together more effectively to protect the adult.</p>	<p>Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) (formerly Serious Case Reviews (SCRs)) in England are undertaken when a child dies (including death by suspected suicide), and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. Additionally, Local Safeguarding Partnerships (formerly LSCBs) may decide to conduct an LCSPR if a child has been seriously harmed and, in accordance with the guidance in Working Together 2018, there is learning for the local area.</p>	<p>When a case might meet the criteria for a CSPR, a Rapid Review meeting is convened to consider initial agency information. Similarly, when a case is referred for consideration of a SAR, the Practice Review Subgroup will consider what agencies know about the situation. Sometimes learning can be identified at these meetings and actions agreed to improve practice, without the need to progress to a SAR or CSPR.</p>

## National Learning

The circumstances into the sad and untimely death of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson have been a key focus for Walsall safeguarding partners.

In response to the learning from the Solihull JTAI a review was undertaken of the current mechanisms to disseminate information and learning, this resulted in:

1. the review of the Safeguarding Partnership website which was updated with a clearly identifiable tab for 'Learning'.
2. A new website is to be launched in 2023-24.
3. A Communications Strategy was developed by the Partnership which addresses the dissemination of learning from reviews.
4. A quarterly newsletter from the Partnership was developed and circulated summarising significant learning. e review of the Safeguarding Partnership website which was updated with a clearly identifiable tab for 'Learning'. A new website is to be launched in 2023-4. A Communications Strategy was developed by the Partnership which addresses the dissemination of learning from reviews. A quarterly newsletter from the Partnership was developed and circulated summarising significant learning.

## Local learning

The review of MASH arrangements resulted in:

- The ICBs Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children in Walsall led on the development of a single specification for MASH, a single set of KPIs and both were added to the contract with Providers across the Black Country during 2022-23.
- A review of the safeguarding supervision arrangements for the cohort of staff undertaking this work.
- Shared Health Care – One Health Care Record was introduced in MASH.

*MASH in Walsall was the first area to use One Health Care Record to increase ease of access to a number of health records including Primary Care*

## Sub-group Developments

The work of the sub-group is aligned to the West Midlands regional procedures for coordinating rapid review and child safeguarding practice reviews.

**The Chair of the sub-group raised a concern of the low number of cases progressing on to LCSPR following rapid review**, this led the PRG to review its governance and its local referral pathway. Following consultation with partners, it was agreed that in the new business year the PRG will introduce a multi-agency pre discussion panel (involving the three statutory partners agencies), for considering cases referred for Rapid Review. This is to prevent referrals that did not meet the criterion for Rapid Review being presented and promote timelier single or multi-agency response to the issues that were being presented, outside of the case review process.

**To improve the oversight of all group members and the Executive in relation to reviews in the system at varying phases of completion**, the Business Unit redesigned a summary report detailing all the cases currently subject to review making it easier to monitor and track progress. It in addition streamlined the tracking and monitoring of recommendations from reviews across the multi-agency system.

The Business Unit relaunched a shared area where the actions/ recommendations from all reviews can be tracked. These can be updated by a variety of multi-agency partners (although Police cannot access the site currently).

## **Streamlining the tracking and monitoring of recommendations from reviews across the MA system**

This provides a valuable mechanism for group members to update recommendations/ avoid unnecessary duplication and is also a very useful assurance tool for the Partnership.

There is also a central repository for evidence of implementation.

Drift or delay can be seen easily and addressed.

Impact has been assessed from verbal feedback from subgroup Members, the Chair of PRG and the Business Unit.

Discussions with the sub-group members and observation has identified variability in confidence the need to build time in the groups arrangements to focus on development of the group members to confidently explore matters of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and make decisions regarding the criteria for statutory reviews in cases presented to the panel.

**The charring arrangements** for child rapid reviews has also been delegated to the Black Country ICB Designated Dr for Safeguarding, this provides opportunity to consistently apply thresholds and consider any learning from across the black country in the to cases presented to the sub-group.

The Practice Review Group will change its subgroup name in the new business year to the **Joint Case Review Group** in the new business year to better reflect its responsibilities for also overseeing the rapid review processes for safeguarding adults reviews (SARs) as well as serious child safeguarding incidents.

Remaining challenges/improvement required

- Improving EDI in case review discussions and capturing data to assist identifying profiles and target intervention and support
- Development of the capability, confidence of the group
- Capturing impact of actions taken is challenging and an area for focused improvement in 2023-24



## Section 12

# Workforce Learning and Development

### Strategic Intention

Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from Early Help to children looked after and care leavers.

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership is keen to promote a learning culture for its workforce to enable them to be reflective and responsive to the needs of children young people and families. The Practice, Learning and Development (PLD) Subgroup oversees the coordination of multi-agency training, the embedment of learning arising from national and local reviews and policy changes and multi-agency audit outcomes.

The subgroups priorities across the year have been informed by the following:

- Impact evaluations from training events. Pre-evaluation forms completed on the day of attendance at training to self-measure prior knowledge/skill. Post-session evaluation form at the end of the training events to self-evaluate the learning that has taken place and to commit to actions to implement the learning. Post course impact evaluations sent out eight weeks after the course to the delegate to ascertain how learning from the training has been applied in practice and what the outcomes have been.
- Reflective workshops have also been undertaken and professional knowledge utilised to decide upon the priority areas. Data, performance information and statistics based on local needs have also informed decision making, alongside the identified themes and concerns highlighted within DHRs, SARs and CSPRs. The priority areas were also informed by multi-agency audits which have been undertaken and the identified findings.
- The outcome of WSP multi-agency audits. Following the audit, a report and learning notes are provided highlighting areas of good practice and areas for improvement. The audit reports routinely form part of WSP meetings where partners can further challenge and scrutinise the findings. There is a robust audit cycle in place with identified themes linked to the WSP strategic priorities and includes learning from case reviews and emerging data themes.
- To develop a new learning management system that is accessible to all partners, that would enable reporting systems and impact systems in place to support with the impact of training.

### Action taken:

ICON awareness events took place within Walsall to raise awareness in relation to infant crying, how to prevent serious illness, injury or even the death of young babies because of abusive head trauma and which is linked to shaking a baby.

An ICON voice over radio advert (Bauer Music) was commissioned by all four Safeguarding Partnerships across the Black Country footprint to run from 19-30 September 22. The advert reached 65,000 on Greatest Hits Radio and a further 77,000 on Free Radio and was an innovative way to promote the ICON message across the wider system.

WSP responding robustly to the learning arising from the national review in relation to Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. The Executive Director of Childrens Services and Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership launched a large-scale learning event on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to all frontline practitioners, managers and senior managers across the partnership. 346 people attended the event. This was recorded and has been accessed on the website 324 times. The aim of the event was:

- To understand what happened to Arthur and Star during their short lives.
- To understand how agencies acted to safeguard Arthur and Star.
- To understand the recommendations and learning about how local and /or national safeguarding practice and systems should change.
- To have a better understanding of what changes have been made in Walsall so far and what we need to continue to work on.
- To share further learning opportunities that are available to practitioners around the learning from the report.

## Evaluation

As part of the evaluation of this event we asked delegates ‘how they intended to use the reflective questions used as part of the session to inform their practice and generate conversations with colleagues?’ Here were some of the responses:

- “I plan to have discussions in our teams Reflective Practice meeting next week, as the information shared today, also transfers into the supervision and support of connected families we are working with. This specifically includes the disguised compliance, avoidant behaviours, and manipulation that we can at times experience. The training areas will also be really helpful to all the team.”  
(Walsall Fostering Support and Development Team)
- “I will encourage my team to be curious and consider information they are given in circumstances that don’t seem to sit quite right and encourage them to discuss these feelings and thoughts with the team to gauge professional opinion.”  
(Manager of Early Years setting)
- “I will ensure this is discussed with GPS via GP Forum, share the video with them, very informative session.” (Integrated Care Board)
- “I found this very informative from both a national and local perspective, was good to hear about the work that is happening in Walsall, I will ensure the video is disseminated across the force and advocate the need to share information as this is paramount when working with partner agencies.”  
(West Midlands Police)

## Further Action Taken

Following the Launch the partnership held a series of successful workshops attended by the children’s workforce across the months of June and July 2022. The themes of the workshops included the following:

- Child Protection Medicals
- MASH Process
- More than words – Voice of the Child
- Hot Potato session – what are we most concerned about
- Beyond Disguised Compliance
- Solution Circles
- Coercive Control
- Working in Diverse Communities
- Cultural Genograms

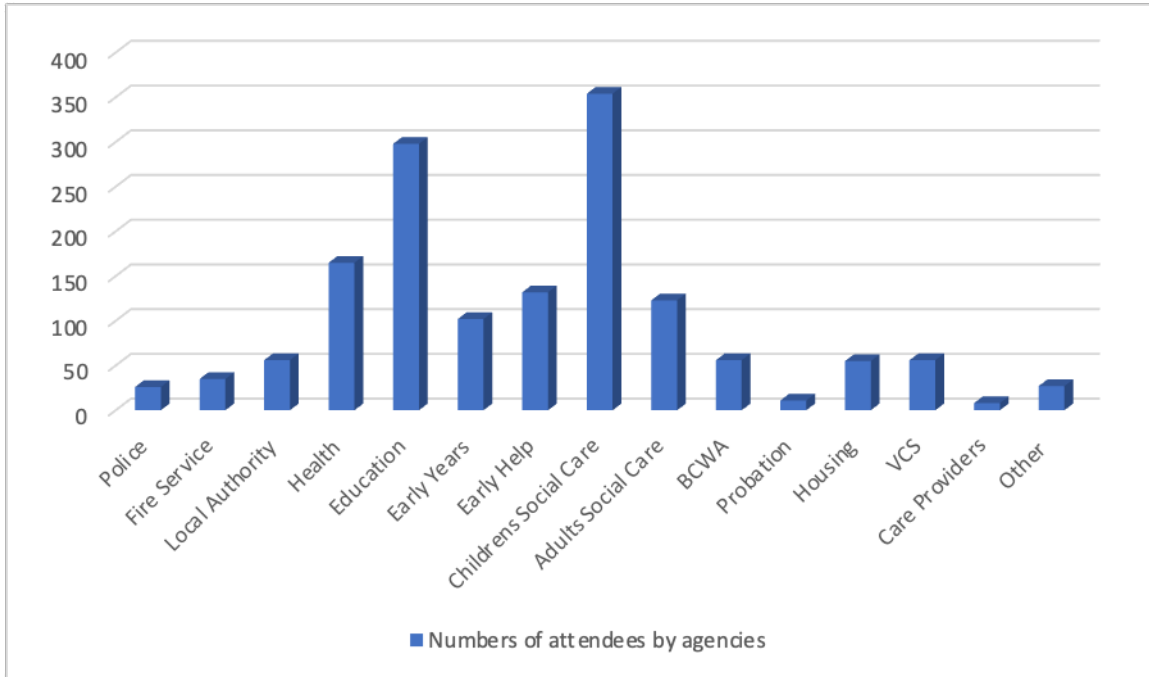
## Impact

One of the key areas for development in 2023-2024 is to develop and implement a framework to assess the impact of workforce learning on practice and its impact on 4th Partner (children and their family) outcomes.

## Highlights

- 52 events either face to face or virtual have taken place.
- 1,504 attended virtual or face to face training.
- 920 completed evaluations which include post evaluation or Impact evaluations.
- 19 videos or webinars have been added to the website.
- Video recordings have been accessed 1,194 times.
- 1,123 eLearning modules have been completed – however, these are predominately by Walsall Council employees due to external partners being unable to access the Learning Management System.

**Attendance by agency**



**Event Impact statements**

*“I found it really useful to learn more about the multi-agency audit process and the learning. I will use this moving forward when working with families where there is likely sexual abuse taking place, ensuring I use a restorative approach of working with the family. I will take what I have learnt back into my team.”*

*Social Worker (Learning from Audits, Theme: Child Sexual Abuse)*

*“I found this webinar really informative especially the information from the Fire Service around what support they can offer and hoarding classification. I know feel more equipped to give advice to members of my team and feel more confident in signposting to appropriate services that can support adults I work with.”*

*Social Worker (Identification and support for adults that are at risk of harm due to fire Webinar)*

*“Since attending the Understanding Neglect training, I have furthered my training by attending the Lead Professional and have taken on Early Help role in school. I was able to identify there was neglect, complete the Early Help Assessment and support with the use of GCP2.”*

*School Practitioner (Understanding Neglect)*

## Sub-group Developments

It was identified that the subgroup required police representation to ensure that their perspective and the learning from reviews was being shared within this organisation. Subgroup members are unaware of how identified learning from reviews has been received within the police and there is a lack of assurance that actions from reviews are being addressed. A meeting is arranged with a police colleague to identify a representative to attend future meetings.

It was identified that since the Policies and Procedures group stopped meeting approximately twenty-four months ago that there were several local and regional policies that required attention. A mapping activity has commenced to check the review dates of these policies and create a plan to prioritise the order in which the policies are overseen by the subgroup.

The subgroup recognise that previously there have been delays in identifying and delivering training due to the length of time taken to complete SARs and reviews. The subgroup has recognised the need to be more pro-active and forward thinking. Therefore, we are receiving regular reports regarding all SARs, DHRs, CSPRs and Rapid Reviews to identify early, potential themes and learning which can be explored to consider if there is sufficient existing training within all organisations, if agencies are able to share their training offer with other agencies or if training in this area needs to be commissioned.

In Quarter 4 of the year the subgroup members were consulted with on the new Performance Management and Quality Framework. The representatives expressed commitment to their organisations engaging in future identified audits and to engaging in this process to enable the effectiveness of action plans to be measured in relation to impact. The subgroup is aware that there will be future themed audits which are evidence led, and which will identify areas for learning, but also celebrate good practice.

A thorough Learning Needs Analysis will be conducted next year to inform future priorities and focus.

### Remaining challenges:

- Multi-agency training needs analysis to further inform the development of the training offer is required.
- Strengthen governance of subgroup i.e., secure police membership.
- Review Policy and Procedures in line with plan.
- Respond to learning from reviews identified early in the review process as well as final outcomes of reviews.
- Complete Training Needs Analysis to inform work-force development requirements.
- Increase the engagement with practitioners and the 4th partner to help the partnership to understand the impact of the training and learning across the safeguarding system on outcomes for children, young people and families.

## Section 13

### What scrutiny arrangements are in place and why have these been adopted? How successful have they been?

*The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This independent scrutiny will be part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections. (Working together 2018)*

The programme of independent scrutiny has existed through the appointment of an Independent Chair and Scrutineer Chairing and having oversight of the joint Performance and Quality Assurance (PQA) Subgroup and Operations and Scrutiny Subgroup. This was an active way for the Chair to gain insight and understanding into the quality of frontline practice.

Prior to the JTAI outcome in January 2023 the WSP Executive Group approved the recommendation from the Operations and Scrutiny Subgroup to strengthen the Partnerships governance arrangements and appoint an additional Independent Chair and Scrutineer so that there would be separate representation for the WSCP and WSAB into the Executive Group. This also supported the Executive Group to agreement review and restructure the WSP governance and subgroup arrangements. The intention was to provide focused attention to the improvement required for the children's and adult's agendas but also enabling more focussed deliberation on matters where service and practice are inextricably linked and required a joined-up approach for improvements to be effective.

The children and adults Independent Chair and Scrutineer (ICS) attended all meetings of the Safeguarding Executive Group and was provided the opportunity to report on issues emerging from the activity across the Partnerships subgroups. The ICS agreed with the plans to split the functions relating to the adults and children's agenda and the additional appointment of an ICS to create separate representation for adults and children's safeguarding matters.

WSP have worked with the ICS to provide clearer detail on the Scrutiny Plan for the Partnership. The appointment of the additional Chair was enacted in quarter 4 of the business year with a gradual introduction to the changes to the partnership's governance and subgroup arrangements. It is expected that in 2023-2024 there will be a continued and more focussed response to independent scrutiny across the Partnership's activity.





## Section 14

# How effective have our arrangements been?

### Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) November 2023

On the 7th November 2022 services were subject to a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). The inspection was carried out jointly by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

The inspection focused on the of the multi-agency response to the identification of initial need and risk.

Walsall Council along with West Midlands Police and Integrated Care Board (local NHS services) make up the Walsall Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. The inspection looked at areas where children at risk may become known to the authorities such as the Emergency Department at Walsall Hospital, the West Midlands Police Control Room and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

The Inspectors identified that work needed to be undertaken to improve information sharing across the health community. Health partners have been working hard to provide a timely introduction to the Health and Care Record in MASH which pulls together health information across numerous systems and will increase the effectiveness and timeliness of information sharing between partner agencies.

There is also identified areas for improvement in relation to supervision and management oversight, both West Midlands Police and Health colleagues, have respectively produced improvement plans to strengthen the areas of concern in their organisations.

Overall, Inspectors found that children who need help and protection in the Borough receive a coordinated and effective multi-agency response. They also stated that there was, 'strong and stable leadership across a range of partner organisations identified as enabling the right help to be provided to children and young people at the right time'. It further highlights that children in Walsall are supported by a comprehensive multi-agency Early Help offer which gives them access to a range of support and services, when they need it.

Inspectors also found that Social Workers like working for Walsall and say that they have opportunities for learning and development.

This was a positive outcome for Walsall partners and of course the children and families living in the Borough. WSP continue to work to improve its multi-agency arrangements and WSP has a specific JTAI Action Plan to further improve multi-agency arrangements and the safeguarding system.

## Section 15

### Conclusion - How safe are the children / adults of Walsall?

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership is committed to improving its Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for children and their families, and adults with care and support needs across the Borough. Our principal aim is to provide the right help at the right time at the right quality upon first contact in accordance with our vision and values, to prevent abuse and neglect. Where there is risk and harm, we want to be able to respond robustly in a timely manner, with effective support services to minimise impact and, ensure we learn and improve from our experiences.

The annual review of effectiveness has demonstrated that there are effective Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in place. We, however, are not complacent and will continue to review, streamline, and improve our processes and services to ensure these arrangements remain effective, now and into the future.

## Section 16

### Strategic Plan 2023-2025

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership has operated as a joint children and adults partnership model since 2019. The model has enabled the Executive Group to have a clearer understanding of the issues that impact on children and young people, adults with care and support needs, and their families. WSP have worked hard to make improvements to interfacing children and adult safeguarding practice and services, create efficiencies and minimise duplicity across the safeguarding system.

Each partner member contributed their views to areas of focus in the forthcoming year, the list below is not inclusive of all the activity taking place but does demonstrate the breadth of activity that contributes to safeguarding children and adults in Walsall.

The key priority areas identified for the WSCB in 2022 – 23 continue to be the main priority areas for further development and embedment for the Partnership in 2023/24.

- **Priority 1 - Neglect**
- **Priority 2 - Self Neglect and Hoarding**
- **Priority 3 – All aged Exploitation**
- **Priority 4 – Child Sexual Abuse**

Following a review of the WSP arrangements, the Business Unit has begun work with Partnership Chairs and Members to strengthen leadership and governance in all layers of the WSP sub-structure. This is to continue through 2023-2024.

A focus for 2023/24 is improving the communication between the Safeguarding Partnership and the other Boards/Partnerships to avoid duplication in terms of discussions at subgroup meetings and streamlining audit activity and expectations.

In addition, the Safeguarding Executive Group reached agreement that work to improve multi-agency oversight and management of child sexual abuse would be the 4th Priority. The review of the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy will consider any cross-cutting issues for the adult safeguarding agenda.

The Priorities will inform the production of the WSP Strategic Plan which will be reviewed annually to enable the Partnership to be responsive to emerging issues as they arise.

The summary plan below sets out WSP ambitions and strategic priority areas of focus for 2023-2025 alongside summary actions that will help the partnership subgroups to devise plans to oversee activity that helps to keep children, young people, and adults, be and feel safe and protected from abuse and neglect.

Ambition / Priority	Description	Reason	Impact
<p>1. Governance and Leadership - We want to, strengthen arrangements to learn from the Partnership's experiences, promote a culture of continuous multi-agency professional development and improve how we help and support children and adults in Walsall.</p>			
<p>a. Be led by a clear vision for the future for Walsall which creates an inclusive culture which is open to scrutiny and is accountable.</p>	<p>Review vision to ensure it is embedded in all layers of the multiagency safeguarding arrangements (MASA), commits to Equality Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Adopt jointly owned governance arrangements that allow for a co-ordinated approach to the partnerships safeguarding activity.</p> <p>Embedment of the WSP operating frameworks to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction of existing and new members.</li> <li>• Clarify expectations via Scheme of Delegation.</li> <li>• Improve data and intelligence via embedment of Performance and Quality Assurance Framework.</li> <li>• Strategic Challenge, Escalation and Resolution.</li> </ul> <p>Provide a common framework for all subgroups to operate in order to focus work on the right priorities/actions and ensuring consistent evidenced based reports are provided as assurance to the Partnership.</p> <p>To improve the communication between the WSP and other Boards or Partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes a culture of collaboration, and accountability for all aspects of the system and at all levels of the partnership.</li> <li>• To ensure we build on or established clear relationship and governance arrangements to support our partnership working.</li> <li>• Ensure that our partnership strategic improvement plans progress.</li> <li>• Want to ensure productive series of meetings that co-ordinate and drive forward key elements of the system. These meetings are all informed by the same end goal, adopt joint approaches for partnership practice.</li> <li>• Support partner member confidence and understanding in strategic safeguarding activity.</li> <li>• To improve consistency across WSP subgroups.</li> <li>• To reduce duplication of discussion and provide improved strategic coordination of identified issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved safeguarding arrangements for children and families in Walsall.</li> <li>• Improved strategic arrangements through quality subgroups that are consistently in expectations and delivery on their respective agendas.</li> <li>• Improved alignment and information sharing between subgroups.</li> <li>• Minimise risk of duplicity of activity across the safeguarding system and cross partnership.</li> <li>• Cross partnership alignment linking intelligence, evidence from data or quality activity to ensure effective collaborations plans and commissioning of services.</li> <li>• Drives improvement planning in key areas for improvement.</li> <li>• Improved outcomes in the areas where actions and measures are in place.</li> <li>• Greater clarity of ownership, responsibilities, and expectations. Streamlined and targeted safeguarding activity and support.</li> </ul>

Ambition / Priority	Description	Reason	Impact
1. Governance and Leadership - We want to, strengthen arrangements to learn from the Partnership's experiences, promote a culture of continuous multi-agency professional development and improve how we help and support children and adults in Walsall.	<p>b. To promote greater awareness and engagement of safeguarding within communities and across organisation including the private and voluntary sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and launch new WSP website.</li> <li>Integrate ask listen act approach and seek views on the lived experiences for 4th partners, practitioners, and managers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve accessibility to safeguarding information.</li> <li>To assess whether the safeguarding systems and arrangements are working effectively.</li> <li>Customer experience and expertise to actively inform improvements at all levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved opportunity to establish what difference is being made to the lives of children and their families.</li> <li>An improved confidence of children and families to engage with services and evidence of improved outcomes.</li> </ul>
c. To ensure WSAB and WSCP has assurance that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014/ Children and Social Work Act 2017 and are effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WSAB / WSCP to continue to meet its statutory responsibilities and review and build on sub-structure.</li> <li>Work with partners to strengthen WSAB preparedness for forthcoming CQC inspection.</li> <li>Continue to promote strong links between children and adults safeguarding and between the various strategic partnership boards that are required by law.</li> <li>To strengthen governance and reporting arrangements on interfacing safeguarding themes relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic abuse</li> <li>Person in a position of trust (PiPoT)</li> <li>Other strategic partnerships</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core business to demonstrate compliance and quality of services.</li> <li>Supports preparation for CQC inspection.</li> <li>Links between the various strategic partnership/ boards demonstrate members are clearer about how and what we contribute to issues that affect families and communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved safeguarding arrangements for adults with care and support needs and their friends and families in Walsall.</li> </ul>
d. WSP Business Unit Review to re-establish capacity within the Business Unit and further the children, young people and adult's safeguarding agenda.	Local Authority to undertake and implement findings of the Business Unit review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Review completed in 2020 – recommendations to be enacted.</li> <li>Reviewing arrangements provide effective challenge regarding resources and promote discussions regarding the priority and sustainability for services to the WSP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An effective and well-resourced Business Unit enables the WSP to perform and function effectively</li> </ul>

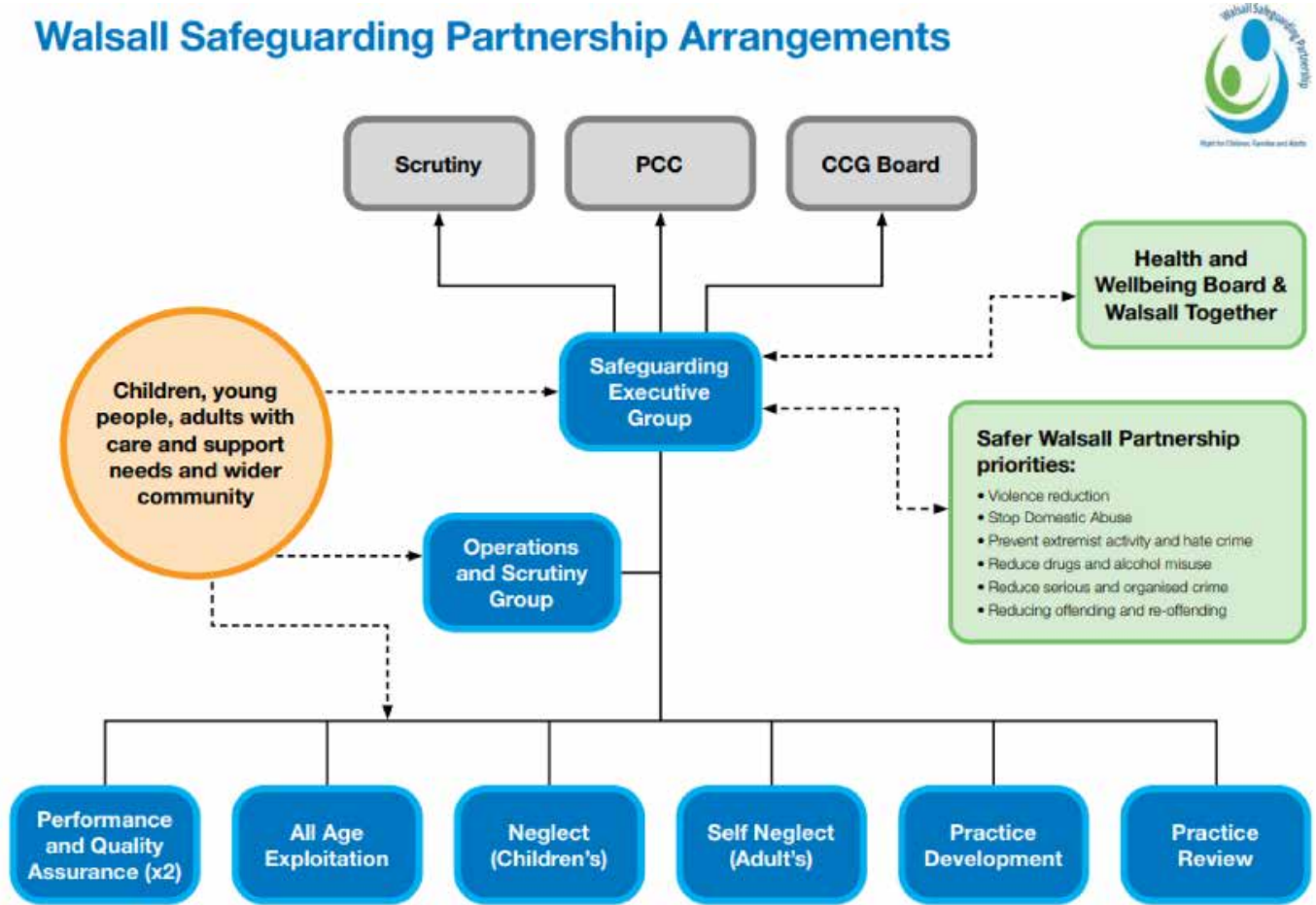
Ambition / Priority	Description	Reason	Impact
<p>1. Governance and Leadership - We want to, strengthen arrangements to learn from the partnerships experiences, promote a culture of continuous multi-agency professional development and improve how we help and support children and adults in Walsall.</p>			
<p>e.WSP Performance and Assurance to be intelligence and data led when planning developing and reviewing services for adults.</p> <p>To include S11 and Care Compliance Audits and Education Safeguarding Assurance Audits S175/157.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on score card/ dashboard and consistently provide data and intelligence to the PQA Adults Subgroup to inform future strategic planning.</li> <li>• To develop and agree a multi-agency action plan to improve the processes to assess multi-agency and single agency safeguarding activity using partnership data and assurance activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A unified performance and quality framework will allow senior leaders to assess system efficacy.</li> <li>• Sets standards for practice, leadership, and accountability.</li> <li>• To promote targeted approach to service and practice where required.</li> <li>• Better understand the impact of the specific work the WSAB carries out arising from reviews and audits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better planning and better quality evidence and data provided, with improved alignment to other subgroups and partnerships audiences.</li> <li>• Assured of consistent safeguarding practice across schools.</li> <li>• Improved communication between schools and other agencies.</li> <li>• Safeguarding practice is challenged and developed.</li> <li>• Improved knowledge for participating schools, again, improving outcomes for children and families.</li> </ul>
<p>f.WSP Practice, Learning and Development.</p> <p>Ensuring review (to include training needs analysis) and delivery of robust training programmes and competency framework, including learning from reviews.</p>	<p>Develop adult learning and development offer and the system to quality assurance learning and its impact on practice and outcomes on adult safeguarding.</p> <p>Learning to be informed by themes and local policy and procedures in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-neglect and hoarding.</li> <li>• Making safeguarding personal.</li> <li>• Assessing complex needs - Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).</li> <li>• Multi-agency safeguarding transitions for young people at risk.</li> <li>• Learning arising from audits, SARs and DHRs.</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults training offer is under-developed.</li> <li>• To improve confidence, awareness and response to specific themes arising from data, assurance activity and intelligence.</li> <li>• Needs to be informed by Training Needs Analysis.</li> <li>• To promote learning and a culture of safeguarding practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to drive forward quality safeguarding practice and interventions with targeted training needs analysis.</li> <li>• Safeguarding practice will reflect learning from experience of 4th partner.</li> </ul>

<p>g. Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR), Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance multi-agency learning and development from the themes arising from reviews locally, regionally and nationally.</li> <li>• Improving EDI in case review discussions and capturing data to assist identifying profiles and target intervention and support.</li> <li>• Development of the capability, confidence of the group</li> <li>• Capturing impact of actions taken is challenging and an area for focused improvement in 2023-2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core business with the Children's Act 2017 and Care Act 2014.</li> <li>• Understanding how learning from LCSPR, SAR, DHR, MAA drive improvements internally and across the partnership.</li> <li>• Improved and safer services.</li> <li>• Better outcomes for adults with care and support needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practitioners are confident in their practice, they will embrace learning from cases with openness, without judgement or criticism being the focus.</li> <li>• Multi-agency subgroups, managers and practitioners will be aware of their areas of strength and weaknesses in relation to multi-agency working and are motivated to take action where weaknesses and gaps are identified.</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 1: Neglect</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve multi-agency oversight and management of neglect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and hold a learning / launch events and materials with the purpose of raising awareness, embedding, and promoting a culture of safeguarding practice informed by local policy and procedures in relation to neglect.</li> <li>• Promote the sustained use and development of the application of GCP2 and trained trainers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neglect continues to be the highest category of abuse in Walsall.</li> <li>• Requiring a launch of new guidance and additional support and awareness.</li> <li>• Raise community awareness and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent multi-agency safeguarding practice to identify and respond to neglect.</li> <li>• Earlier support for families vulnerable to the risk of neglect.</li> <li>• Increasing numbers of the used of GCP2 assessment tool.</li> <li>• Children and families are identified earlier for intervention, therefore, children not exposed to neglectful circumstances longer than necessary and improving outcomes.</li> <li>• Reduced repeat cycle of involvement with agencies as parents take on board improved parenting practices and standards to keep their children safe.</li> </ul>

Priority 2: Self-Neglect and Hoarding			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve multi-agency oversight and management of adults with lived experience of self-neglect and hoarding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rethink of Self-Neglect and Hoarding Panel</li> <li>Improve practitioner recognition and response.</li> <li>Develop and hold a learning / launch event and materials with the purpose of raising awareness, embedding, and promoting a culture of safeguarding practice informed by local policy and procedures in relation to self-neglect and hoarding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low volume of referrals and use of multi-agency panel identified by frontline practitioners.</li> <li>Requiring a launch of new guidance and additional support and awareness.</li> <li>Increase identification and response.</li> <li>Reduce deaths from self-neglect and fires links to hoarding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved knowledge and understanding for all practitioners.</li> <li>Consistent multi-agency safeguarding practice to identify and respond to Self-neglect and Hoarding.</li> <li>Increase contacts and referrals and use of multi-agency panel.</li> <li>Improved outcomes for adults with care and support needs.</li> <li>Reduction in serious safeguarding incidents.</li> </ul>
Priority 3: All Aged Exploitation			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve multi-agency oversight and management of adults with lived experience of All-Age-Exploitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission of Strategic Needs Assessment for inform review of Strategy.</li> <li>Produce a Delivery Plan and associated score card to reassure partners and ensure monitoring of priorities is possible. This may require an interim plan whilst the needs assessment is produced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploitation does not stop on a person's 18th birthday.</li> <li>Apparent that services needed to recognise and respond to the risk of exploitation to young adults that require support and or protection after their 18th birthday.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved confidence, knowledge and understanding for all practitioners.</li> <li>Consistent multi-agency safeguarding practice to identify and respond to Exploitation.</li> <li>Transitional support is effective between adult and children service providers.</li> </ul>
Priority 4: Sexual Abuse			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve multi-agency oversight and management of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the Child Sexual Abuse Strategy to consider the improvement required and any interfacing themes to be addressed within adults safeguarding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulties in understanding the scale of offending and the number of victims and survivors due to under-reporting, under-identification and a lack of robust survey data has been identified.</li> <li>Several cross-cutting themes linked with sexual abuse which are also a priority in different partnerships including: neglect, violence against women and girls, modern slavery, serious youth violence and exploitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved confidence, knowledge and understanding for all practitioners.</li> <li>Consistent multi-agency safeguarding practice to identify and respond to CSA.</li> <li>Early identification and support to prevent harm and early intervention to break cycle of CSA across generation of families.</li> </ul>

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. WSP structure 2022-2023





## Appendix 2. Financial Summary

The work of WSP is supported by the WSP Business Unit and is funded by contributions from the respective statutory partner agencies.

A single funding arrangement is in place for WSP and the joint arrangements for the Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The contributions from partners for WSP for 2022/23 is set out below:

There was a reserve balance of £299.427 which was carried forward from 2021-2022.

### Income 2022-23

Organisation	Contribution £
WM Police	33,651.00
ICB	97,500.00
Probation	1,500.00
Walsall Council – Adults and Children	239,446.00
<b>Total Income WSAB and WSCP</b>	<b>369,597.00</b>

Expenditure 2022-23	Budget	Actual Expenditure
	£	£
<b>STAFFING</b>		
Employees (permanent)	213,123	121,626
Agency & Consultants	0	147,340
<b>TOTAL STAFFING</b>	<b>213,123</b>	<b>268,966</b>
<b>NON - STAFFING</b>		
Professional Services (Chair costs, consultancy etc.)	68,200	50,065
CSPR / SAR & Other scrutiny work	25,036	21,719
Development activities	10,000	5,794
Other service costs (website, memberships etc.)	28,785	29,723
<b>TOTAL NON-STAFFING</b>	<b>132,021</b>	<b>107,301</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Contributions from partners	(122,094)	(142,651)
Other income		(10,400)
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>(122,094)</b>	<b>(153,051)</b>
<b>NET POSITION</b>	<b>223,050</b>	<b>223,217</b>

There was a reserve balance of £299.427 which was carried forward from 2021-2022. Expenditure is broadly in line with the previous year, except for a slight increase in the staffing expenditure due the interim appointments mid-year to cover the vacant Business Manager post and the Partnerships commitment to redesign its website.

## Appendix 3 Glossary of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
AMPH	Approved Mental Health Professional
BIA	Best Interest Assessor
CA 2014	Care Act 2014
CCE and CSE	Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation
CE	Child Exploitation
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
CSPR	Child Safeguarding Practice Review
CYP	Children and Young People
DA	Domestic Abuse
DASH	Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and 'Honour' Based Violence
DAODS	Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
DO	Designated Officer (Managing Allegations)
DoLS	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EDI	Ethnicity, Diversity and Inclusion
EHCP	Education, Health, and Care Plan
ESG	Executive Safeguarding Group
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FOI	Freedom of Information
GCP	Graded Care Profile
HBV	Honour Based Violence
HMI/HMICFRS	His Majesty's Inspector/His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Service
HWBB	Health and Wellbeing Board
ICB	Integrated Care Board
IDVA	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor
IMCA	Independent Mental Capacity Advisor
JCRG	Joint Case Review Group
JTAI	Joint Targeted Area Inspection
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Analysis
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer (Managing Allegations)
LCSPR	Child Safeguarding Practice Review
MAA	Multi-Agency Audit
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MASA	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MDS	Modern Day Slavery
MDT	Multi Disciplinary Team
MCA	Mental Capacity Act
MSP	Making Safeguarding Personal
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
PiPOT	Person in a Position of Trust
PLD	Practice, Learning and Development
PRG	Practice Review Group
PQA	Performance and Quality Assurance
PQAIF	Performance Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
RHRT	Right Help Right Time
RR	Rapid Review
S.42	Section 42 Enquiry (Care act 2014)
S.47	Section 47 Enquiry (Children Act 1989)
SAR	Safeguarding Adult Review
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SLG	Safeguarding Leadership Group
SNH	Self-Neglect and Hoarding
SPB	Safeguarding Partnership Board
SWP	Safer Walsall Partnership
TAF	Team Around the Family
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child
WNB	Was not Brought
WSP	Walsall Safeguarding Partnership
WT 2018	Working Together 2018
YJS	Youth Justice Service





*Right for Children, Families and Adults*

**Walsall Safeguarding Children Partnership  
Annual Report 2022-23**

**December 2023**

**7.**

**Locality working and Family hubs**

**Ward(s):** All

**Portfolios:** Cllr Stacey Elson  
Portfolio Holder

**1. Aim**

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the progress to date and on-going planning for the delivery of locality working including co-location of Children's Social Care, Early Help and key locality partners within the North, West, Central South and East Locality.
- 1.2 To provide an overview on the alignment to the Family Hub model and overview of progress on implementation to date.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 For the direction of travel to date to be supported and any suggested recommendations to be provided.
- 2.2 To consider how overview and scrutiny committee can support in the further development and scrutiny of the locality model and the delivery of Family Hubs

**3. Report detail – know**

**Context – Locality working**

- 3.1 Walsall Right 4 Children (WR4C) transformation programme is driving the delivery of our children's vision, aimed at ensuring the right children are 'in the right place with the right support for as long as it's needed' so they are safe from harm, happy and learning well.

At the start of 2020 we set out our 5 key cross directorates priorities, driven by the evidence from our performance framework, Ofsted Improvement Plans and our 'Big Conversations' with children, young people and families. One of these priorities was to connect practitioners to communities by co-located teams across the 4 locality hubs. This community-based model of working aims to reduce the chances of poor outcomes for children, young people and their families by having a range of local services and support networks together, as well as building

community capacity and community resilience by having the right support available at a local level and accessible at the earliest opportunity.

Within the whole WR4C partnership there are shared concerns around poverty, domestic abuse, and other 'hidden harms,' the late presentation of need, a further widening of the education gap, as well as the impact of the pandemic on children's development and their mental and emotional health. Locality working enables an opportunity for practitioners to connect with their local community by building "community capacity" enabling professionals, community groups and members of the community, to provide support and assistance and generate solutions for locally prioritised issues.

Unfortunately, shortly after the agreement for the locality-based model was secured, we experienced the COVID 19 Pandemic, causing significant delay to the physical co-location of Social Workers, Early Help Practitioners and key partners.

- 3.2 In January 2023 we provided a progress report on our locality working to Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Since then all 4 localities Hubs are now open and all, except North locality, have co-location of following services: Midwives, Health Visitors, School Nurses, Speech & Language Early Help, Children's Social Care, DWP Housing and Police.

In respect of the North Locality, it was not possible to accommodate the physical co-location of Social Workers and early help practitioners, so it was agreed to have a two centred approach within the North, utilising the existing Family Hub where Early Help and partners had been co-located previously to deliver bespoke and targeted support to children, young people and their families whilst having a co-located office environment for Social Workers, Early Help Practitioners and key partners, colleagues worked together and were co-located in the office building of 275 Blakenall Heath in August 2022.

There then followed a series of disturbances and anti-social behaviour in the Blakenall area. The locality office where practitioners were based is on a row of shops that were being targeted by local youths. The increase in tension in the area predated the arrival of the co-located model and was thought by local community workers to be an impact of the closures of schools and youth provision during Covid 19 pandemic. Due to risks to the safety of staff the office was vacated.

A 'Multi-agency North Locality Working Group' was set up, including Children's Social Care, Early Help, the Violence Reduction Partnership, the Police, Walsall Housing Group and Community Safety, where there is a joined-up approach to working with the local community in regard to anti-social behaviour. Significant progress has been made and there has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour alongside a decrease in referrals to the North Locality in regard to anti-social behaviour.

A risk assessment concluded it was not feasible for Children Services practitioners to return to office building of 275 Blakenall Heath and as a result we have been working with property services to identify alternative solutions. No viable solutions have been identified to date and therefore the North locality Social Work Team remains based at Essington Lodge. The Duty and Family Safeguarding Teams had previously been based at this office, and it is geographically within a reasonable travel distance to the North locality. They are also able to 'drop-in' to the Family

Hub at the former Children's Centre, and to coordinate direct work with children and families, and working with partners from this Hub. This enables the service to maintain a focus on relationship-based, restorative practice in line with the WR4C vision, and means that from a day-to-day operational perspective the impact of returning to Essington can be mitigated.

This presents significant longer-term challenges however, as with Early Help remaining based in the Family Hub, and the needs of the Family Hub model, means this building is already stretched to capacity. Whilst the current working arrangement is manageable on an interim basis, this impacts on how much work the Duty and Family Safeguarding Teams can do from this building to use it as a true locality hub. The social work teams can travel from Essington to the north locality area in a reasonable amount of time, but this can also act as a barrier for families to engage with their services.

### Family Hubs

- 3.3 In February 2023 the DfE confirmed that Walsall was successful in their application as one of the 75 Local Authorities who would receive the Family Hubs Start for Life funding of £3,869m from 2022-2025.
- 3.4 This provided an opportunity to build on the strong foundations of our locality model to develop our Walsall Family Hub programme. Our 4 locality hubs were transformed into Walsall's 4 Locality Family Hub, launched in July 2023. They aim to provide a welcoming space where children, young people aged 0-19 and up to 25 for those young people with additional needs and their families can go to get advice and support when they need it. Our Family Hubs are in the heart of vulnerable local communities where services have come together providing one 'front door' access to get help and to talk to someone in a safe space about sensitive things that maybe worrying them. Our Family Hubs are currently working towards becoming [UNICEF Baby Friendly](#). Together with the Walsall Infant Feeding team, we continue to support families with their feeding journey in Walsall.

#### Services that form part of our Family Hubs and spokes are:



- 3.5 In addition to our 4 Locality family Hubs we deliver wider community-based support and services through 10 'Community Spokes' provided through our voluntary and community sector partners. Our 10 spokes will offer advice on a range of local community activities for families, children and young people, provide a space for local families to come together, for services to deliver group work or meet on a 121 basis with families, to provide sessions such as play and stay, baby weighing clinics, digital support services as well as providing foodbanks.



- 3.6 We are also integrating Family hub sign-posting as part of the 28 Walsall Connected sights. Ensuring consistent information and advice is provided. The family Hub team have also a regular presence at the Walsall Manor Hospital team to maximise opportunities to link parents with the Family hub programme.
- 3.7 In addition to physical spaces significant work has been done to develop our digital offer. We have launched our Walsall Family Hub website [www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk](http://www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk) which will provide one front door for advice and information including a service directory of all services available to parents who have children aged 0-19.

We have also commissioned a number of apps to help families to get the right support around giving their children the best start in life:

- Easy Peasy App (EasyPeasy is a smartphone app for parents of preschool aged children. It is designed to improve early child development through increasing positive parent-child interactions and learning at home. The app sends regular game ideas to parents that they can play with their children, combined with information on child development. The design of the app applies behavioural insights to help seed positive habits of play and interaction at home by sending tailored prompts, encouragement, and reminders to parents)
- Baby Buddy App (Best Beginnings' free, advert free multi-award-winning, interactive pregnancy and parenting app, Baby Buddy, has been created to support parents, co-parents and caregivers, and to augment and enrich the work



of frontline practitioners. Baby Buddy provides trusted, evidence-based information and self-care tools, based on the latest research and is endorsed by eight royal colleges, including the Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Baby Buddy is the first parenting app to provide daily content for fathers and other non-birthing parents)

- DadPad (Dadpad is commissioned by Walsall Public Health Services and produced as an app and also written information aimed at engaging and supporting new fathers as they make the transition to parenthood. Through a supply of guides (DadPad) and digital application (DadPad app) new and prospective dads will understand how to access local support as well as be provided with national information specifically aimed at fathers eg safe sleep, how to cope if their baby cries, building a relationship with their baby. This supports perinatal services in engaging and upskilling new fathers in readiness for the postnatal period, and build familial relationships to help new babies thrive and co-parental relationships develop with their babies needs in mind. In Walsall it will be taken forward mainly through the Health in Pregnancy Service who aim to reach 15,000 men over 4 years)

We are in the process of developing a service directory and have mapped out and secured the sign up of over 79 local organisations who would like to be included in our best start in life directory and our 0-19 directory. **52** of the 79 local organisations offer services to families with children 0-5 in Walsall.

### **Co-production with families**

- 3.8 We have set up parent carer panels in each of our localities and are regularly engaging parents in evaluations and feedback. To date 100 parents and carers have engaged in parent carer panels and we have gained feedback through face to face in groups and via Microsoft forms which have been sent out post activity.
- 3.9 Parents and Carers have said they would like us to develop (more of) following activities and services from family hubs:
- Mental health first aid
  - Health and safety awareness
  - Road safety
  - Car seat Safety
  - More courses relevant to families
  - Information on the EYFS framework
  - Programmes and events to develop themselves and their communities
  - Baby sensory groups
  - 0- 1 baby groups
  - Intro to solids workshops / maybe online also so they can do whenever suits.
  - More Breastfeeding peer support groups in Walsall
  - Further stay and play sessions.
  - Weekday activities
  - Family activities and events
  - Speech and Language advice

We have recruited 29 volunteers who support the delivery of peer support to families including peer led parenting, support to fathers, SEND support, healthy eating, breast feeding, etc.

We are also undertaking a targeted programme of activities in partnership with Open Lense media to listen to families who don't take up universal provision. The aim is to understand the barriers and co-produce an offer which will meet their needs and enable them to engage with a focus to close the gap on inequalities.

### **Communication and marketing**

The team produces a termly newsletter (see attachment X) as well as regularly promoting activities in social media.

We are promoting messages through social media, GP's. Maternity, Health visitors, WHG, Community Spokes and Voluntary organisations, education through Childcare and schools, through our communications teams (press releases, inside Walsall etc). This includes securing key information in all GP's rolling screen time in waiting areas



We are now co-producing with all key identified services to create a best start in life booklet with will be distributed to all families. This will be an information booklet that will enable parents with the information they need to understand there parenting journey.

### **What's going well?**

- The locality model has enabled us to create a stable, skilled, and well-connected workforce. The workforce understands their communities well and the resources that are there to help them to connect families to sustainable support when targeted or statutory support services have stepped away.
- Our relationships with partners is growing stronger within the localities enabling partners to work together more effectively to provide children and families effective, consistent information and the right help when needed. This includes our partnership with schools.
- Time to Talk has become embedded in 3 of our 4 localities, with Central/South is now being focused on. This platform offers an opportunity for partners to come together in each locality to understand the issues faced and resources available to share information, connect local partners and consider the local offer and needs further
- We are developing a unified language and approached including restorative, trauma informed practice. In addition we are also exploring ways in which we can upscale Family Safeguarding across locality working including the use of clinical supervision and group supervision to ensure effective multi agency practice, while looking after our workforce emotional wellbeing.
- The introduction of Family Hubs is enabling us to be creative at removing barriers and destigmatising help and support including the offer of social care interventions. We have extended the opening times to weekends and evenings to allow greater engagement with working families including fathers.

- We are currently piloting enhanced business support in the North locality to ensure practitioners are enabled to spend as much time with families as possible.

### **What we are focussing on next to continuing to develop and improve?**

- Due to the growing partnership working in localities and the activities as a result of this capacity in our hubs is becoming an increasing issues. We are currently in the process of undertaking a review of our Locality Family Hub. It is envisaged that more space, access to WIFI will be required and solutions will need to be sought through our capital and asset board and partnership groups.
- The additional funding from the DfE has focussed on developing additional services for children aged 0-5, however there is a growing demand around support for adolescents and therefore there is a need to grow our offer for this target group along our 'best start in life' focus.
- In addition to our adolescent offer we will also need a focus to growing our emotional well being and mental health support across all localities.
- Data and information sharing remains an ongoing challenge – this is continuing to provides barriers to enable multi agency proactive, coordinated planning and response.
- The government published their response to the review 'Stable homes, Build on love' in February 2023 setting out its plans to transform early help and children's social care. We believe our locality model sets strong foundations to enable the transformation we anticipate in the final national guidance, but the scale of change will still be significant and we will need to ensure we have the capacity to be able to respond to this. We have already started to think about what this change would mean. As a result we have applied to be a wave 2 pathfinder for the Family First programme.

## **4. Financial information**

- 4.1 Government confirmed a funding package for Walsall between £3.774M and £3.937M over the next three financial years (till 24/25) to deliver the programme. The guidance sets out clearly the expected allocation of funding per programme strands. There has been a modest revision of the percentage allocations that have previously been demonstrated.
- 4.2 The Local Authority is the key accountable body for the grant, but there is a clear expectation the programme is developed and delivered in collaboration with partners with Health, Voluntary Sector and Education system. In Walsall we have secured a strong engagement in the development and delivery of Family Hubs from organisations across the Borough including Walsall Council Childrens Services, Public Health, Walsall Together, Community mental health, 0-19 Healthy Child programme (health visiting and school health), paediatric Service, LA Early Years team, Resilient Communities, Walsall Health Care Trust, Housing, Black Country Mental Health; Police and ICS This commitment demonstrates the future success that we all anticipate as being a part of this National work.
- 4.3 Due to the success of our locality working we are having increasing request from partners to be part of the collocated team or deliver activities and interventions from our Family hubs and Spoke for the benefit of children and families. There are growing challenges around access to space and facilities and as a result we are

undertaking a the review of Family Hub locality buildings. We know that this review will highlight the need for capital investment.

## 5. **Reducing Inequalities**

- 5.1 The move to localities is an integral aspect of our transformation journey and enables a greater sense of connectivity between workers and the community with who they engage. By building “community capacity” – the ability of people to provide support and assistance for each other and generate solutions for locally prioritized issues. Communities with high community capacity have extensive networks of relationships through which reciprocity can flow and foster the kind of actions to influence whole systems.

There is emerging examples of good partnership practices that can be shared across the system.

The benefits and evidence of delivering a community-based model of working reduces the chances of poor outcomes for children, young people and their families by having a range of local services and support networks together as well as building community capacity and community resilience by having the right support available at a local level and accessible at the earliest opportunity.

## 6. **Decide**

- 6.1 Our Walsall locality Family Hub Model continues to be developed and will further strengthen the partnership and the offer for children and families, whilst there is no decision for scrutiny to be made around the programmes, scrutiny are asked to support the direction of travel and endorse the achievements made so far.

## Background papers



105360 Family Hub  
Leaflets and Posters (



Family Hub



Early Help School

Timetables - UniversaReady Newsletter Oct

## Authors

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# 0-5 Newsletter

## Welcome

Welcome to the ninth edition of our termly School Ready Newsletter for parents/carers across the Walsall Borough.

Within our newsletter, you will find information of groups and events local to you as well as fun enriching activities to do at home.

The Early Help / Family Hub team also provide a host of online and virtual resources that can be accessed via our website here: [https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children\\_and\\_young\\_people/early\\_help](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children_and_young_people/early_help)

Keep up to date with what's going on by following our Facebook Page @Walsallfamiliesintheknow



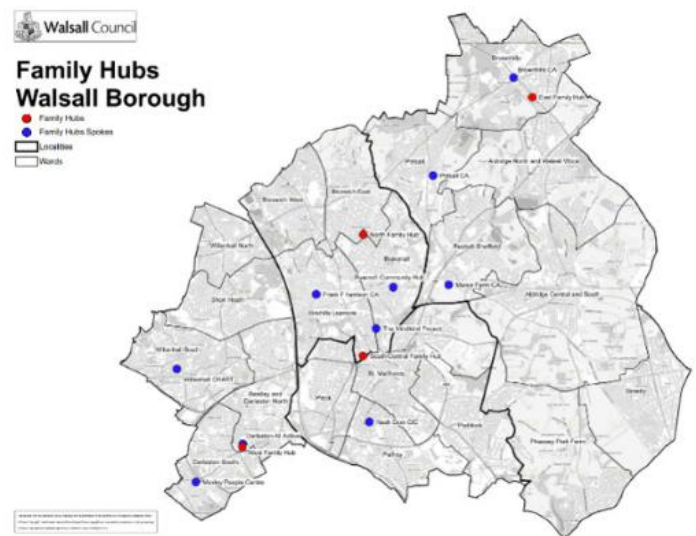
## Walsall Family Hubs and spokes

Walsall 4 Locality hubs provide a welcoming space where children, young people ages 0-19 and up to 25 for those young people with additional needs and their can go to get advice and support when they need it, our Family Hubs are in the heart of local communities where services have come together providing one 'front door' access to get help and to talk to someone in a safe space about sensitive things that maybe worrying them.

Services who have come together such as Midwives, Health Visitors, School Nurses, Speech & Language, Early Help, Childrens Social Care, DWP Housing and Police.

Our 4 family's hubs are:

- North Locality Hub, 275 Blakenall Lane, Blakenall, Walsall WS3 1HJ
- South & Central Locality Hub, Birchills Street, Walsall, WS2 8NG
- West Locality Hub, Ilmington House, Crescent Road, Wednesbury, WS10 8AE
- East Locality, 13 Silver Court, Brownhills WS8 6HA



# What's on this term in your local area?

## North Locality

“Hi, my name is Jo, I'm the school ready engagement officer for the North locality, which covers the areas of Birchills, Leamore, Blakenall, Bloxwich East & Bloxwich West. If you have any questions for your area you can contact me on [Joanne.Simpson@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Joanne.Simpson@walsall.gov.uk) or call on **07778 459296**”

**\*\*Always contact groups before attending in case of any changes.**

<b>Bloxwich Library - 01922 655900</b>
Lego Club is restarting monthly <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Which will be held on the last Saturday of the month.</li><li>• 10.30-11.30am</li><li>• Please book:</li></ul>
<b>Frank.F Harrison Community Association- 01922 746967</b>
Have a parent & toddler group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tuesday 9.30-11.30 Dudley Fields Youth Centre, Sneyd Hall Road, Dudley Fields, Walsall, WS3 2NN</li><li>• Wednesdays 9.30-11.30 Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre, Stephenson Square, Beechdale, Walsall, WS2 7DY</li><li>• Wednesdays 10-12 The Hive Community Hub, The Square, Lichfield Road, New Invention, Willenhall, WV12 5EA</li><li>• £1 per child Term-time</li><li>• 0-3 years</li></ul>
<b>Dudley Fields Youth Centre- Sneyd Hall Road WS3 2NN. 01922 746967</b>
Have stay & play groups on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays 9.30-11.30, £1 per child. Term-time</li></ul>
<b>Bloxwich Library Toddler Time</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 -11. Free.</li><li>• Term time.</li></ul>
<b>St Johns Church, Blowich Play Group- Victoria Ave, Walsall WS3 3HS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thursday</li><li>• 9-12 mid day</li><li>• Toddler Group</li></ul>
<b>Birchills Baby &amp; pre-school group- Talbot House, Bentley Lane WS2 8SP. 07505 202722</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tuesday 9.30-11am</li><li>• £1 per session</li><li>• Term time only</li></ul>
<b>Manor Farm Community Association - Baby Sensory- Rushall Community Centre, 10 Springfields, Rushall, Walsall WS4 1JX</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Booking only - specific dates</li><li>• 10:30 - 12:30</li><li>• Sensory Baby Group</li><li>• FREE</li></ul>
<b>St Peters – Baby &amp; Toddler Group – Hamilton Street Bloxwich</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fridays (Term time only)</li><li>• 10-11.30</li><li>• £2 per session</li></ul>

## East Locality

East locality, which covers the wards of, Pelsall, Shelfield, Rushall, Brownhills, Walsall Wood, Streetly & Pheasey. If you have any questions for your area you can contact:

Joanne Simpson on 07778 459296 / Atika Smedley on 07785 998545 / Kamlesh Khutan on 07927581396

**\*\*Always contact groups before attending in case of any changes.**

<b>Pelsall Village Centre- WS3 4LX</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diddi dance: Tuesday, 1.45-2.30pm (From 18 months) Thursday, 9.30-10.45am ( From 18 months) This is a dancing and music class. For more information please go to <a href="https://booking.months-18 months">https://booking.months-18 months</a>)</li> <li>• Tiny treasures (birth to 6 months)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jo Jingles: Wednesday, 1.15-2.15pm- Little explores (15 months - 5 years) Friday, 10am (Mixed ages) Friday, 11am (for 3 months to walking). This is a music class. For more information, please go to: <a href="https://www.jojingles.com/suttoncoldfield">https://</a> Please contact Mandy on 07581791049 for more <a href="http://www.jojingles.com/suttoncoldfield">www.jojingles.com/suttoncoldfield</a>. £5 each</li> <li>• Creation station: Monday, 9.30 10.30am- Little explores (15 months- 5 years) Wednesday, 11.45-12.30pm- Baby discover (6 information, <a href="http://diddidance.com/">diddidance.com/</a> class. £5 each.</li> </ul>
<b>5 Senses Group, Navy Cadets- WS9 9AL</b>	
<p>Play and stay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday 10-11 all ages, 11.15-12.15 all ages, 12.45-1.45, all ages.</li> <li>• Sensory sessions: 0-12 months – Thursday 10-11, 0-12mths, 11.15-12.15</li> </ul>	
<b>Aldridge Church Centre- WS9 8NH</b>	
<p>Social tots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesday 9.30-10.10- walkers-2yrs 6mths,</li> <li>• Wednesday 10.30-11.10, crawlers &amp; early walkers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesday 11.30- 12.10 discovery tots 2mths- crawling</li> <li>• Wednesday 12.30 newborn-6 months For more information call 07701 299817</li> </ul>
<b>St Thomas Church- WS9 8SL</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toddlers group/ footprints: Wednesday 12.30-2pm. Preschool and nursery children. £2 each.</li> <li>• Contact <a href="mailto:hsnnshevans@stthomasaldridge.org.uk">hsnnshevans@stthomasaldridge.org.uk</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Tynings Lane Church WS9 0AS – Baby &amp; Toddler Group</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mondays 12.30-2 pm</li> <li>• £2.50</li> </ul>	
<b>Tots Play - Aldridge Community Centre, WS9 8AN. Brownhills Community Centre WS8 7JS. St Mark's Church, Shelfield WS4 1RN.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.totsplay.co.uk/walsall">www.totsplay.co.uk/walsall</a></li> <li>• 0-4yrs</li> <li>• Tuesday &amp; Wednesday mornings</li> </ul>	
<b>Creation Station – Pelsall Village Centre</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiny Treasures Birth- 12months – 9.30-11, Monthly</li> <li>• Baby Discover 6- 18 months – 11.45-12.30 - Wednesdays (Term time only)</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.thecreationstation.co.uk">www.thecreationstation.co.uk</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Rhyme Time – Variety of locations</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.rhythmtime.net/cannock-and-pelsall">www.rhythmtime.net/cannock-and-pelsall</a></li> <li>• Monday-Friday 9.30-10.30</li> </ul>	
<b>Bump &amp; Baby Ark - Aldridge Church Centre, 14 The Green, Aldridge, Walsall WS9 8NH</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesdays 1.30-3.30</li> <li>• Free ( donations accepted)</li> </ul>	

## West Locality

“Hi, my names Kamlesh, I’m the school ready engagement officer for the West locality which covers the wards of , Willenhall North & South, Bentley & Darlaston North, Darlaston South. If you have any questions for your area you can contact me on **Kamlesh.Khutan@walsall.gov.uk** or call on **07927581396**”

**\*\*Always contact groups before attending in case of any changes.**

<b>Little Puzzlers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Playgroup, Tues 9am – 10am,</li><li>• Parents need to register at: <a href="mailto:littlepuzzlers@invention-i.walsall.sch.uk">littlepuzzlers@invention-i.walsall.sch.uk</a>.</li><li>• <b>01922 710871</b></li></ul>
<b>Baby Rhyme Time</b> - Willenhall Library, Walsall Street, Willenhall, WV13 2EX
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Friday: 10:00-11:15</li><li>• Children 0-1 year</li><li>• <b>01922 650771</b></li></ul>
<b>Story Tots</b> - Willenhall Library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thursday 10am – 11am , Ages 18 months – 4 years</li><li>• <b>01922 650771</b></li><li>• <a href="mailto:willenhalllibrary@walsall.gov.uk">willenhalllibrary@walsall.gov.uk</a></li></ul>
<b>Willenhall Library</b> - Story Tots (18mths to 3yrs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 Walsall Street, Willenhall, WV13 2EX</li><li>• Thursday - Term Time only 10-11 sessions are free</li><li>• Contact 01922 650771 for more info.</li></ul>
<b>Church On The Corner Stay &amp; Play</b> - 1 King Charles Avenue, Walsall, WS2 0DL, Telephone: 01922 420100
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tuesday: 09:30-11:30 and Thursday: 09:30-11:30</li><li>• Children 0-5 years £1 per session</li></ul>
<b>The Hive Community Centre</b> - Parents and Tots Group, 0 - 4yrs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 28 The Square, Lichfield Road, Walsall, West Midlands, WV12 5EA</li><li>• Wednesdays 10-12 sessions are £1</li><li>• Contact 01922 276464 for more info.</li></ul>
<b>Dizzy Kids</b> - Unit 4, Arrow Industrial Estate, Straight Road, Willenhall, WV12 5AE, Telephone: 01922 491743
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monday-Friday 10-3pm £3.70 per session Children 8 months- 4 years</li><li>• 2 siblings on 1 ticket. Before 11.30am 1 adult gets toast and hot drink, child gets squash and toast. After 11.30am toast is replaced by biscuits.</li></ul>
<b>Funky Tots</b> - 1 King Charles Avenue, Walsall, WS2 0DL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Telephone: <b>01922 420100</b></li><li>• Friday 10-12</li></ul>
<b>Messy Giraffes</b> - King Charles school bentley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Term time-Wednesdays 10.15-11.15</li><li>• Children up to 3 years</li><li>• £3 per session</li></ul>
<b>Willenhall Chart Centre</b> - Baby & Toddler Group - 19 Gomer Street, WV13 2NS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Under 5's</li><li>• Tuesdays 12.30-2.30 p.m</li><li>• £2 per child</li></ul>
<b>The Salvation Army</b> – Baby & Toddler Group - The Leys, Darlaston, WS10 8DP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9.15-11.15 a.m (Term Time Only)</li><li>• 0-4 years</li><li>• Adult 90p, child 70p per session</li></ul>



## Central and South

“Hi, my name is Atika I’m the school ready engagement officer for the South & Central locality, which covers the wards of, Palfrey, Pleck Caldmore, Chuckery and Paddock & St Matthews. If you have any questions for your area you can contact me on **Atika.Smedley@walsall.gov.uk** or call on **07785 998545**”

**\*\*Always contact groups before attending in case of any changes.**

<p><b>Aaina Community Hub</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekend Activities Ages: 5 – 11. 11:00am -3:00pm</li> <li>HAF Ages: 5 – 11 Date: 31st July to 3rd August and 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> August 11:00am - 3:00pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls Youth Club age 8 - 16 Starts on 16th June 2023 4:00pm - 6:00pm £1:00 per session. Contact: 01922 644006 / Mobile: 07799142805 Email: info@aainahub.com</li> </ul>
<p><b>Girls Youth Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age 11-14</li> <li>Every Wednesday 4-6pm.</li> <li>Seed Hut Palfrey Park. £1 per session, Sports, art and craft and more. <b>01922 644006</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Nippers stay and play-</b> Delves Baptist Community Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bell lane, Walsall, WS5 4PU</li> <li>Thursdays (term Time only) 9:30 – 11:30am (£2per family for parents, cares, Grandparents, with children age from 0-4 years)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Buggy Walk</b> Walsall Arboretum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every Monday 1-2 pm. Meet at the visitors centre @ 12.45 pm</li> <li>For more details contact the Health in pregnancy team on 01922 423252</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Happy Families -</b>Parenting discussion group – St. Matthews Church Centre St. Matthews Close, Walsall, WS1 3DG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mondays term time 1-2.30. £2.00 for parent and child + £1.00 for an add Child.</li> <li>£15 for all 11 sessions</li> <li>Contact Pricilla 07984 626637 for more details</li> </ul>	
<p><b>St Matthews Stay and Play -</b> St. Matthews Church Centre St. Matthews Close, Walsall, WS1 3DG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursdays-term time only. 9.30-11am. £2 per session</li> <li>Contact 01922 626039 for more info.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Me and My Baby:</b> Sensory Play for Babies -St. Matthews Church Centre St. Matthews Close, Walsall, WS1 3DG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursdays 12.30-2pm. £30.00 for 5 weeks</li> <li>To book contact Pricilla 07984 626637</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Blue Coat Bears-</b> Blue Coat Church Of England Aided Infant School, Hanch Place, Walsall, WS1 3AF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wednesday: 09:00-11:00</li> <li>£1.50 per session</li> <li>Children 0-4 years</li> <li>Please contact the school office for further details on <b>01922 720740</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>St Martin’s Church Toddler Group -</b> 1 St. Martins Church Daffodil Road, Walsall, WS5 3DQ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday - Term time only, 9.30-11.30 £2.00 - £3.50</li> <li>Call 01922 277695 for more info</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Parent &amp; Toddler group-</b> St Lukes Church, 30 Selborne Street, Walsall, WS1 2JN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wednesday: 13:30-15:00</li> <li>Cost per session: £0.50</li> <li>Children 0-4 years</li> <li>Telephone: 01922 644005</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Baby &amp; Me-</b> The New Art Gallery, Gallery Square, Walsall, WS2 8LG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wednesday: 10:30 - 12:00-12:30 - 14:00. £2 per session</li> <li>Children 0-1 year</li> <li>Multi-sensory sessions for parents, careres and their babies</li> <li>Please book in advance on 01922 654400</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Frankie &amp; Lolas – Soft PLayer -</b> George Street Walsall WS1 1RS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mon-Fri 10-6</li> <li>Sundays 10.30-5 pm</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Caldmore Tots - Caldmore Community Centre -</b> 12 Carless Street, Walsall, WS1 3RH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursday 10.30-12 pm, Free</li> </ul>	

# What's on offer in your Local Family Hub?

## Saturday Stay and Plays

### Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September



**Join us in the East Family Hub 10.30-11.30 for Activities on a budget**

Here we will share low cost activities to keep the children busy . Activities you can try again at home using everyday items.

We will be playing with spaghetti, make a paper plate dinosaur, you can even make your own bowling game and more.

**Address: Silver Court, Brownhills, WS8 6HA**

### Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October



**We will be at the South & Central Family Hub 10.30-11.30 a.m for a Sensory session**

Come and explore activities using all of your senses

Explore with sensory bags, what smells do you recognise in the play dough. Get messy with shaving foam and have fun in the jelly play and more

**Address: Birchills Street, WS2 8NG**

### Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November



**Join us at the West Family Hub, 10.30-11.30 a.m for Activities on a budget**

Low cost activities to keep the children busy and, try again at home using everyday items.

Make a necklace from pasta, what can we make with cornflour?, learn how to make your own playdough and more

**Address: Illmington House, Crescent Road, WS10 8AE**

### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December



**Join us at the North FamilyHub, 10.30-11.30 a.m for Activities on a budget**

Come and explore activities using all of your senses

Explore with sensory bags, what smells do you recognise in the play dough. Relax in the sensory tent or have fun in the jelly play and more

**Address: 275 Blakenall Lane, WS3 1HJ**

To book a place please call – North Locality 01922 654589

- East Locality: 01922 658300

- West Locality: 01922 652959

- South & Central Locality: 01922 654545

## **Fathers stay and play for children ages 0-5years**

Come along to our fathers stay and play, spend time with your children to enable you to share with your journey with other fathers.

The group will enable you to spend quality time with your child through play and enable you to get access to information in respect of services and support networks.

- **30.09.2023 11-1 pm at the West Family hub, at Darlaston. Illmington house, crescent road, darlaston, WS10 8AE.**
- **21.10.23 11-1pm at the East Family Hub, Silver Court, Brownhills, Walsall WS8 6HA.**

The stay & play is being run in partnership with mindkind, who run a dad's peer support group. If you require any other information, please feel free to contact Ed Barnett on [edward.Barnett@walsall.Gov.Uk](mailto:edward.Barnett@walsall.Gov.Uk)

## **Workshop for parents/carers with children aged 0 – 5 years old**

Emotion, anxiety and send workshop: Do you need support with managing your child's emotion, anxiety and send needs

- **Saturday 30 September at East Family Hub, Silver Court, Brownhills, WS8 6HA (10.00 – 13.00)**
- **Saturday 18th November at West Family Hub, Illmington House, Crescent Road, WS10 8AE (12:00 15:00)**

To book your place please email: Early Help Parenting Team [EarlyHelpParentingTeam@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:EarlyHelpParentingTeam@walsall.gov.uk) with your name, postcode and email.

## **Fathers Workshop**

Come along to our fathers workshop for an opportunity to meet other dads, share your journey and spend time with your child/children. The Group will allow an open, safe and fun space for you to talk to others dads, access information, training and further support networks.

- **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November at South and Family Hub, Birchills Street, WS2 8NG (10.00-13.00)**
- **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December at West Family Hub, Illmington House, Crescent Road, WS10 8AE (10.30-11.30am)**

To book your place please email: Early Help Parenting Team [EarlyHelpParentingTeam@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:EarlyHelpParentingTeam@walsall.gov.uk) with your name, postcode and email.



# Special dates for the diary & activities to do at home with your children

## October

### Black History Month - 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> October

Black History Month is a month-long observance throughout October, devoted to education about the history of Black people and the celebration of their contributions to history.

If you would like to explore more Black History Heroes with your child you may find the link below useful.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_hlgFwzQbrs&t=49s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hlgFwzQbrs&t=49s)

### Stoptober

Stoptober is a major annual event to encourage smokers to quit for 28 days in October, with the aim of stopping smoking permanently - Quit smoking - Better Health - NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

### School Half Term week- From 30th October

Take a look at some fun activities to do you're your children.

[https://www.eparenting.co.uk/activities\\_for\\_kids/things\\_to\\_do\\_in\\_october\\_half\\_term.php](https://www.eparenting.co.uk/activities_for_kids/things_to_do_in_october_half_term.php)

## Halloween- 31<sup>st</sup> October

### Goey Halloween Potion

You will need;

- 1 pumpkin
- ½ cup pva glue
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup cornflour
- 1 spoon of orange (optional)
- 1 sharp knife (for adult use)
- Spoon
- Bowl
- Plastic spiders or other objects to find



### Method

- Ask an adult to cut the top off the pumpkin.
- Next have fun seeing how the inside of the pumpkin looks, feels, and smells, put the seeds and pulp into a separate bowl.
- Into the bowl add the water, glue and cornflour and paint if using.
- Give everything a good mix, it should be nice and goey. If you want the mix thicker you can add more cornflour or glue, to make it runny, add more water.
- Next take your spiders and drop them in to the bottom of the pumpkin.
- Now pour your potion on top, give it a good stir.
- Can you dig in and find the spiders hiding, how many can you find?
- You could set this out with extra bowls and spoons, extra pieces such as rice or herbs, the children can carry on mixing their own potions.

## November

### Bonfire night- 5<sup>th</sup> November

Bonfire night can be fun, **remember to keep safe** when around bonfires and fireworks.

Why not try this activity together

Firework picture

You will need:

- Empty kitchen roll
- Various coloured paints
- A tray to put paint in
- Glitter (optional)
- Black paper

This is what to do:

(Adult supervision required)

- Cut the kitchen roll in half. Cut little snips at the end of the tube.
- Lets get printing. Dip your tube into your favourite paints onto the black paper. Keep printing with lots of different colours.



- Sprinkle some glitter if you want to add a little extra sparkle to your firework picture.

# Remembrance Sunday

12<sup>th</sup> November

The day when we remember those members of the armed forces who gave their lives in conflict.

The date was chosen to commemorate the end of hostilities of the First World War on

11 November 1918 [https://www.eparenting.co.uk/colouringpages/remembrance\\_day\\_poppy\\_colouring\\_pictures.php](https://www.eparenting.co.uk/colouringpages/remembrance_day_poppy_colouring_pictures.php)

## Poppy wreath

You will need:

- Paper
- Red paint
- Green paint
- Paint brush
- Scissors
- Glue or sellotape
- Black paint or felt tip



Method:

- Paint the palm of your hand red and your middle fingers green, push down on to the paper
- Repeat this until you have enough to make a wreath shape.
- Leave to dry
- Cut out your prints (this may need adult help)
- Add glue to the edge of each print and place them together to form a circle
- Leave to dry
- If you wish to hang you can add string/ribbon by tying around the top



# Diwali

12<sup>th</sup> November

Diwali is the Hindu and Sikh festival of Lights, which is celebrated with fireworks, decoration and feasting.  
<https://www.eparenting.co.uk/celebrations/diwali.php>

How about making a delicious mango lassi to celebrate

## Mango Lassi

You will need:

- 255 millimeters of plain yoghurt
- 130 millimeters of semi-skimmed milk
- 3 ripe fresh mangoes
- 4 teaspoons of caster sugar
- Chopping board, Knife, Blender and Glasses



This is what to do:

(Adult supervision required)

- Adult to help cut the mango in half. The knife should slide past the stone inside the mango.
- Score along the length of the mango into the flesh, taking care not to cut through the skin
- Turn the mango 90 degrees and score along the flesh again to make a criss cross pattern
- Turn the mango over and push the skin to pop the flesh.
- Cut the mango flesh away from the skin and place in the blender with the yoghurt, milk and sugar Blend the ingredients until completely smooth
- Pour into individual glasses and serve

# Odd socks week

13<sup>th</sup> November

Odd Socks Day marks the beginning of Anti-Bullying Week. Wear odd socks to school or work.

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week/odd-socks-day>

**What colour socks will you wear today?**



# Xmas Jumper Day

8<sup>th</sup> December

Save the Children's annual event, which raises money for children in the UK and across the world. Every December, millions of people across the united kingdom (and beyond!) put on a festive outfit at their workplace, school, or with friends and make a donation to help give children the magical future they deserve.

**Would you like to colour your own Christmas jumper?**



# Christmas

## Christmas Tree Decoration

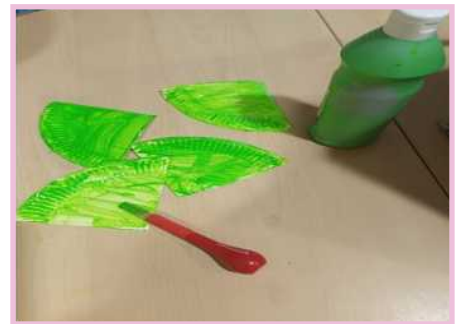
You will need:

- A paper plate
- Green paint
- Colourful card or paper
- Craft decorations
- (Optional) Ribbon
- Scissors

This is what to do:

(Adult supervision required)

- Split the paper plate into quarters. Fold your paper plate in half. Now fold that half in half. Press down the fold lines, to leave a line you can cut along next. Unfold to see your four quarters.
- Cut along the fold lines you created. Be careful when using scissors. Ask adult to help
- Take three of the quarters and paint them green. After painting, leave to dry.
- Once dried, take your three quarters and place them into a christmas tree shape. The section at the bottom of the tree should be under the middle section.
- Use collage bits to add decoration to your christmas tree. Add a star and a tree stump to the top and bottom of your christmas tree decoration.
- If you would like to hang your christmas tree decoration, add a loop of ribbon to the top of the christmas Tree.





# Early Help Volunteers



## WE'RE RECRUITING! EARLY HELP VOLUNTEERS

**Do you want to use your free time to make a difference for others?**

**Do you want to support families in your neighbourhood?**

**Are you passionate about empowering Children, Young People and Families across Walsall?**

We would like to welcome volunteers who can:

- Support parents in becoming a new parent or having a new baby and coping with the changes.
- Support parents in parenting a child so they are ready for school by age 5.
- Run volunteer-led parenting support groups from your local faith groups and community bases.
- Support a family who has a child with a new or existing Disability diagnosis or Special Education Need (SEND).
- Help families to live more healthy lifestyles; healthy cooking and healthy eating

**\*FULL TRAINING AND SUPPORT IS PROVIDED\***

**Our volunteers say...**

"The team  
have been very  
supportive"

"It's really nice to  
feel like i'm helping  
others to get through  
their challenges"

"I have learned  
a lot since  
volunteering with  
Walsall Council"

"I get to  
utilise my skills  
and help my local  
community"

"I have been  
able to gain a lot  
of experience"

For more information and an application form,  
email: [earlyhelpvolunteers@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpvolunteers@walsall.gov.uk)

Or scan our QR code to go straight to the website.



Walsall Council



Here is the link with the downloadable application from:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-parents/volunteering-make-difference>

## Coffee & Chat

### **Calling all parents/carers with children aged 0-5years**

Are you a parent or carer of an under 5 in Walsall or an expecting parent?

Come along to our coffee mornings in each locality to;

- Meet other parents
- Find out what your Family Hub can offer you
- Have your say on how Family Hubs can help you Free tea, coffee and toast.

### **East Family Hub dates and times:**

- Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023  
09:30-11:00
- Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
09:30-11:00
- Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023  
09:30-11:00

### **North Family Hub dates and times:**

- Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
09:30-11:00
- Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023  
09:30-11:00
- Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023  
09:30-11:00

### **Are you interested in volunteering?**



# Services available for families in Walsall

## Easypeasy App

Have you heard of the new easypeasy app? The app helps you support your child's development by offering tips and activity ideas personalised to you and your 0-5 year old. You can download in the app store or google play store. For any enquires please email [familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk)

## Parenting Support

We have lots of parenting information available on our website take a look at [Parenting support | Walsall Council](#) As a parent, carer or grandparent you can access free online parenting programmes.

## Free online parenting courses

No child is born with a handbook, sometimes as parents, we want to know if there is more we can do to understand our pregnancy, baby, child or teenager. If you are a Walsall resident, check out our free, online parenting support courses. Visit <https://inourplace.co.uk> and use the Access code HIPPO.

## Infant feeding support



Family Hubs are working towards becoming UNICEF Baby Friendly. We will continue to work with Walsall Infant Feeding Team to support families with their feeding journey in Walsall. We are excited to launch a Breastfeeding peer support group at the North Family hub from October 2023.

For infant feeding information and handy tips, follow Walsall Welcomes Breastfeeding on Facebook and Instagram. You can also contact the Walsall Infant Feeding Team on 01922 605248 or 07794 117247 (Monday-Friday between 9am and 5pm).



## Healthy Start

Are you pregnant or have children under the age of four? You could qualify for the Healthy Start scheme to help you buy food, milk and get free Healthy Start vitamins.

Find out if you're eligible here: <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/>



## Childcare & Funding

Do you know what childcare funding/financial support you might be eligible for? If you are unsure, please visit [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) and use the childcare calculator.

If you want to know how 2-year funding works in Walsall, please visit:

<https://www.mywalsall.org/fis/>

OR call Sharon Walker on **01922 655509 / 07876 818762**

## Walsall Holiday Activity & Food programme (HAF) #HAF2023

HAF is a free programme for children and young people. It runs over Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. The Department for Education (DfE) funds the HAF programme Your child is eligible if they are:

- aged 5 to 16
- eligible for benefit-related free school meals

The HAF team work with providers to develop an exciting and enriching programme of activities. These include schools, local voluntary and community groups, childcare providers and local businesses.

Visit the HAF website for more information [Holiday Activities Programm \(HAF\) | Walsall Council](#)

# Useful websites for families in Walsall

## Pregnancy

Here is a list of websites that parents may find useful before their baby is born.

All you need to know about trying for a baby, pregnancy, labour and birth:

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/>

Depression in Pregnancy:

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/depression/>

Parental Education:

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/parent-education/>

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-professionals/parenting-support/online-parenting>

Walsall Maternity services:

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/>

Teenage Pregnancy:

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/teenage-pregnancy/>

Birth Options:

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/birth-options/>

Health in Pregnancy:

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/health-in-pregnancy-service-hips/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy/>

Work and Pregnancy:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/pregnancy-birth>

Vaccinations in pregnancy:

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/vaccinations/>

## Birth

Here is a list of websites to help you care for your baby, keep yourself well and register your baby's birth.

What happens in labour and birth:

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth/what-happens/>

Birth options:

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/birth-options/>

Everything you need to know about caring for a baby:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/>

The best start in life for your baby:

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby/>

How to keep well after having a baby and where to get support:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/>

Multiple Births:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/newborn-twins-and-multiples/>

Registering your baby's birth:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/births-marriages-and-deaths/births/register-a-birth->

Short online parenting course:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-professionals/parenting-support/online-parenting>

## External Resources

Birth to Five Booklet: contains help and support on becoming a parent, and taking care of yourself and your child:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2020-05/Birth%20to%20five%202020%20-%20172%20pages.pdf>

## Tips for your birth partner

Whoever your birth partner is (the baby's parent, a close friend, partner or a relative) there are many practical things they can do to support you:

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth/what-happens/tips-for-your-birth-partner/>

The NHS pregnancy planner helps you to think through your pregnancy, labour and the birth of your child:

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/>

## Feeding and Weaning

These websites give advice for new parents on feeding your baby and then when to move on to weaning

Walsall infant Feeding:

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/infant-feeding/>

Feeding your baby:

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby/feeding-your-baby/>

Food allergies in babies:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/food-allergies-in-babies-and-young-children/>

How to bottle feed:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/bottle-feeding/>

How to Breastfeed:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding/>

Reflux:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/reflux-in-babies/>

Colic:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/colic/>

Weaning:

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

Weaning Recipes:

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/recipes-and-meal-ideas/>

Vitamins:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/vitamins-for-children/>

## **Baby Health and development**

Useful websites to help keep your baby healthy and information to help you with your baby's development.

Baby development:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/>

Baby Health:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/health/>

Parenting support:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-parents/parenting-support>

Ways to play with your baby:

<https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/baby-moves/>

Look, Say, Sing, Play:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/look-say-sing-play/>

Your babies height and weight:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/height-weight-and-reviews/>

Walsall Health visiting Team:

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/health-visiting/>

Potty Training:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/potty-training-and-bedwetting/>

Vaccinations:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>

Health for under 5's:

[www.healthforunder5s.co.uk](http://www.healthforunder5s.co.uk)

## **Early Learning and Education**

Useful websites to support parents with children's early learning and help to apply for nursery and schools

Bookstart:

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/bookstart>

Look, Say, Sing, Play:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/look-say-sing-play/>

Free Early Learning for 2 year olds:

<https://www.mywalsall.org/fis/Free-for-2-parents/>

Free Early Learning for 3 and 4 year olds:

<https://www.mywalsall.org/fis/free-early-years-places-for-3-and-4-year-olds/>

Walsall Family Hubs:

<https://www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk/>

Search for childcare in Walsall:

<https://www.mywalsall.org/fis/search-for-childcare-in-walsall/>

Walsall Libraries:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-libraries>

School admissions:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-in-walsall/school-admissions>

Send (Special Education need and disability):

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/send-local-offer>

Parent support:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-parents>

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/infant-feeding/>

# Social media highlights

Find out what is happening at your local library using the link below

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsalllibraries/Walsall-libraries/Our-Libraries>

If you are not already a member of the library and would like to visit and borrow book, you can join online by using the link below:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsalllibraries/Walsall-libraries/Joining>

Help improve your child's literacy through the Black Country Reads Campaign, read more with the link below:

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/communities/black-country/>



## Early Help Support Team

Zone 2G, 2nd Floor,  
Civic Centre  
Darwall Street  
WS1 1DG

 @Walsallfamiliesintheknow



# Walsall Family Hubs

Supporting families to live happier lives



**Walsall's four Family Hubs are based in the heart of our local communities. They provide a welcoming space, offering help and support for a range of children's services. This includes face-to-face support, a virtual offer and outreach services. The services and support are aimed at children aged 0-19 (0 to 24 for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities), their parents and carers.**

We also have an additional 10 'community spokes' based in voluntary and community buildings across the borough. These offer a range of local community activities and services for families, children and young people.

## Services that form part of our Family Hubs and spokes are:



Benefits & Financial support



Child Development



Early Help & Children's Social Care



Employment & Training



Housing



Infant Feeding support



Midwives & Health Visiting



Speech & Language



Stay & Plays



Parenting support



Police



Volunteering opportunities

## For more information:

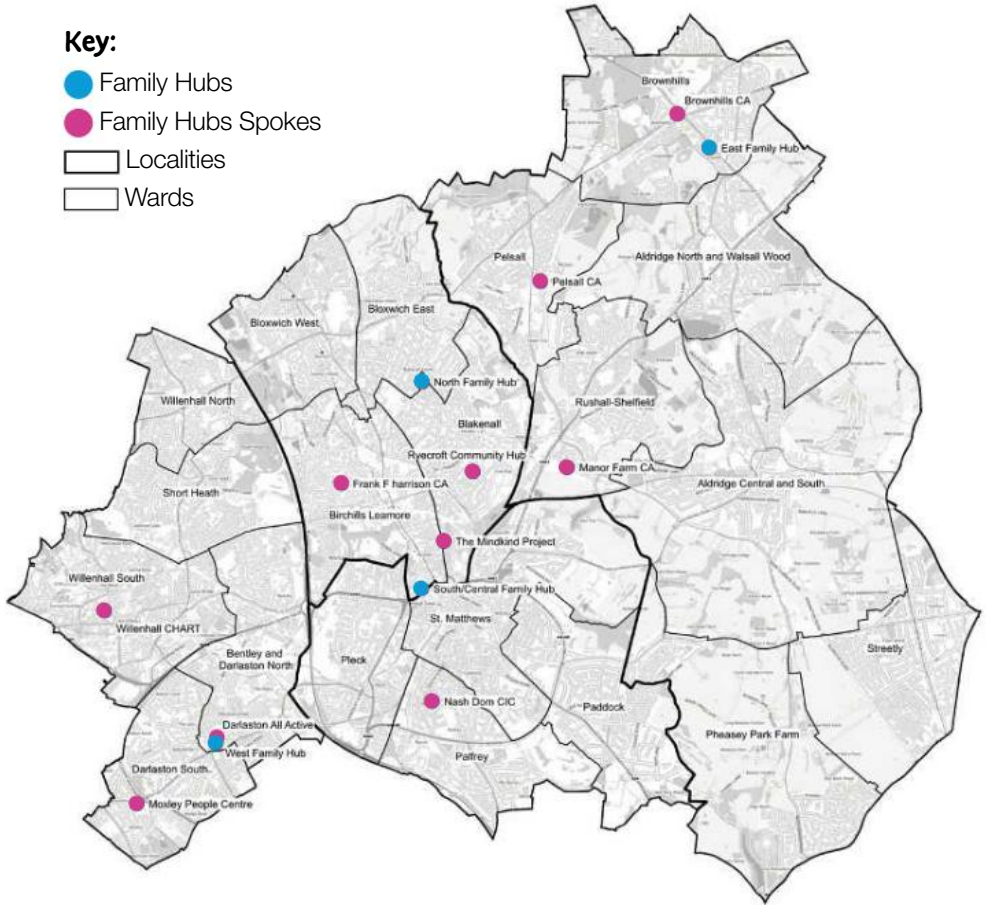
Visit Walsall Family Hubs or scan the QR code. Follow us on Facebook @walsallfamiliesintheknow for updates or email us [familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk)



# Family Hubs Walsall Borough

## Key:

-  Family Hubs
-  Family Hubs Spokes
-  Localities
-  Wards




## For more information:

Visit Walsall Family Hubs or scan the QR code. Follow us on Facebook

 @walsallfamiliesintheknow for updates or email us [familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk)



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Walsall  
**Family Hubs**

Supporting families to live happier lives

## North Activity Timetable

Serving; Birchills, Leamore, Blakenall, Bloxwich East & Bloxwich West

November – December 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>11.30 - 1pm Toddler Splash @</b> Bloxwich Active Living Centre, High St, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 2DA - £5.50 per adult and child, Call 01922652900 to book your place</p>	<p><b>11.30 - 1pm Toddler Splash @</b> Bloxwich Active Living Centre, High St, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 2DA - £5.50 per adult and child, Call 01922652900 to book your place</p>	<p><b>11.30 - 1pm Toddler Splash @</b> Bloxwich Active Living Centre, High St, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 2DA - £5.50 per adult and child, Call 01922652900 to book your place</p> <p><b>9.30-11.30am Frankie's Parents and Tots @</b> Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre, Stephenson Square, Walsall, WS2 7DY - £1 per child, No booking required</p> <p><b>22 November 12:30- 2:30pm North Family Hub Walsall SENDIASS</b> drop in , No booking required</p>	<p><b>11.30 - 1pm Toddler Splash @</b> Bloxwich Active Living Centre, High St, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 2DA - £5.50 per adult and child, Call 01922652900 to book your place</p>	<p><b>10.30 - 1.30pm Splash and Play @</b> Bloxwich Active Living Centre, High St, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 2DA - £6 per adult and child, Call 01922652900 to book your place</p> <p><b>10-12.30pm Breast Feeding peer Support Group -</b> North Family Hub, Blakenall Lane, weekly no booking required</p> <p><b>10 – 11.30pm St Peters Baby and Toddler @</b> St Peters Parish Hall, Harrison Stret, Bloxwich, WS3 3LG - £2 per session , contact Ann to book your place on 07788910467</p>	<p><b>2.30-3.30pm Floats Fun session@</b> Bloxwich Active Living Centre, High St, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 2DA - £5 per person / Under 5 £3, Call 01922652900 to book your place</p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> December 10.30-11.30am Sensory Stay &amp; Play</b> <b>North Family Hub, Blakenall Lane</b> please call 01922476698 to book your place</p>

\*\* Always contact groups before attending in case of any changes





Walsall  
**Family Hubs**

Supporting families to live happier lives

## South and Central Activity Timetable

Serving Palfrey, Pleck , Caldmore, Chuckery and Paddock & St Matthews

November - December 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>12 – 1.30pm Toddler Splash @ Walsall Gala Baths, Tower St, Walsall WS1 1DH - £5.50 per adult and child, Call 01922653150 to book your place</b></p>	<p><b>2 – 3pm Toddler Splash @ Walsall Gala Baths, Tower St, Walsall WS1 1DH - £5.50 per adult and child, Call 01922653150 to book your place</b></p>		<p><b>12 – 1.30pm Toddler Splash @ Walsall Gala Baths, Tower St, Walsall WS1 1DH - £5.50 per adult and child, Call 01922653150 to book your place</b></p> <p><b>9.30 – 11am Stay and Play 0-5yrs @ St Matthew's Church Centre, St Matthew's Close, Walsall WS1 3DG - £2 per child – No booking required</b></p> <p><b>12.30-2pm Sensory play for babies 0-12mths @ St Matthew's Church Centre, St Matthew's Close, Walsall WS1 3DG - £2 per session - Contact Priscilla on 07984 626637 to book your place</b></p> <p><b>10.30 – 12pm Caldmore Tots 0-5 yrs @ Caldmore Community Garden, 12 Carless Street, Walsall, WS1 3RH – No booking required</b></p>	<p><b>2.30 – 3.30pm Toddler Splash @ Walsall Gala Baths, Tower St, Walsall WS1 1DH - £5.50 per adult and child, Call 01922653150 to book your place</b></p> <p><b>1pm Nature Makers @Walsall Arboretum, Broadway N, Walsall WS1 2QB. Visit <a href="https://www.nature-makers.co.uk/walsall-and-sandwell">https://www.nature-makers.co.uk/walsall-and-sandwell</a> to book your place.</b></p>	<p><b>25<sup>th</sup> November 10.00-1.00pm Dads Group @ South and Central Hub, Birchills Street, WS2 8NG - To book your place email:EarlyHelpParentingTeam@walsall.gov.uk with your name, postcode and email</b></p> <p><b>09.00 - 10.30am Performing Arts for 3-6 Yrs @ Breakout Performing Arts, Blue Coat Church of England Academy, Birmingham Street, Walsall, WS1 2ND – Visit <a href="https://www.breakoutschool.co.uk/">https://www.breakoutschool.co.uk/</a> to book your place</b></p>

\*\* Always contact groups before attending in case of any changes





# Walsall Family Hubs

Supporting families to live happier lives

## East Activity Timetable

Serving; Pelsall, Shelfield, Rushall, Brownhills, Walsall Wood, Streetly & Pheasey.

November - December 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>9 – 10.30am Toddler Splash</b> @ Oak Park Living Centre, Coppice Rd, Walsall Wood, Walsall WS9 9BH- £5.50 per adult and child, Call 01922652266 to book your place</p> <p><b>11.45 – 12.30 Little Explorers</b> @ Pelsall Village Centre, High St, Pelsall, Walsall WS3 4LX - £8.50 per session visit <a href="http://www.thecreationstation.co.uk/finder">www.thecreationstation.co.uk/finder</a> to book your place (18mth – 5yrs)</p> <p><b>11.15 – 11.45 Rhythm Time</b> @ Pelsall Community Centre, Station Road, Pelsall, Walsall WS3 4BQ - Visit <a href="http://www.rhythmtime.net/cannock-and-pelsall">www.rhythmtime.net/cannock-and-pelsall</a> to book your place (0-13 mths)</p> <p><b>12.30 – 2pm Seedlings Praise</b> @ Tynings Lane Church, 2 Tynings Ln, Walsall WS9 0AS - £2.50 donation, No booking required (0-5 yrs)</p> <p><b>27 November 10.10-11.30am Adult and child First Aid awareness training</b> @ East Family Hub, 13 Silver Court, Brownhills, WS86HA – To book your place please email <a href="mailto:familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk">familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk</a> with your name and session date.</p>	<p><b>6 - 8pm Floats Fun session</b> @ Oak Park Living Centre, Coppice Rd, Walsall Wood, Walsall WS9 9BH - £5 per person / Under 5 £3, Call 01922652266 to book your place</p> <p><b>09.30 – 10.15 Action Tots</b> @ Brownhills Community Centre, Chester Rd N, Brownhills, Walsall WS8 7JS, Brownhills, Walsall WS8 7JW - £26 per month (2-4yrs)</p> <p><b>10.30 – 11.10 Social Tots</b> @ Brownhills Community Centre, Chester Rd N, Brownhills, Walsall WS8 7JS, Brownhills, Walsall, WS8 7JW - £24 per month (8mths-3yrs)</p> <p><b>10.30 – 11.10 Discovery Tots</b> @ Brownhills Community Centre, Chester Rd N, Brownhills, Walsall WS8 7JS, Brownhills, Walsall, WS8 7JW - £24 per month (2-9months)</p> <p><b>9.30 – 11pm Seedlings Praise</b> @ Tynings Lane Church, 2 Tynings Ln, Walsall WS9 0AS - £2.50 donation, No booking required (0-5 yrs)</p>	<p><b>1.30 – 3pm Bump &amp; Baby Ark</b> @ Aldridge Church Centre, 14 The Green, Aldridge, Walsall WS9 8NH – Free (donations accepted) No booking required</p> <p><b>11.45 – 12.30 Baby Discover</b> @ Pelsall Village Centre, High St, Pelsall, Walsall WS3 4LX - £8 per session visit <a href="http://www.thecreationstation.co.uk/finder">www.thecreationstation.co.uk/finder</a> to book your place (6 – 18 months)</p> <p><b>10-11.30am Toms Toddlers</b> @ St Thomas Church, St Thomas’ Close, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 8SL - £2 per family, No booking required (0 – 2.5yrs)</p> <p><b>10-11.30am Footprints</b> @ St Thomas Church, St Thomas’ Close, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 8SL - £2 per family, No booking required (2.5 – 4yrs)</p> <p><b>9.45 – 10.25 Social Tots</b> @ Aldridge Community Centre, Middlemore Ln, Aldridge, Walsall WS9 8AN - £24 per month (12mths-3yrs – confident walkers)</p> <p><b>10.45 – 11.25 Social Tots</b> @ Aldridge Community Centre, Middlemore Ln, Aldridge, Walsall WS9 8AN - £24 per month (9-18mths – early walkers)</p> <p><b>11.45 – 12.25 Discovery Tots</b> @ Aldridge Community Centre, Middlemore Ln, Aldridge, Walsall WS9 8AN - £24 per month (2-9 mnths)</p>	<p><b>9 - 1pm Splash and Play</b> @ Oak Park Living Centre, Coppice Rd, Walsall Wood, Walsall WS9 9BH - £6 per adult and child, Call 01922652266 to book your place</p> <p><b>6 – 7.30pm Floats Fun session</b> @ Oak Park Living Centre, Coppice Rd, Walsall Wood, Walsall WS9 9BH - £5 per person / Under 5 £3, Call 01922652266 to book your place</p> <p><b>14 December 11:00 – 1:00pm East Family Hub, Walsall SENDIASS</b> @ East Family Hub, Silver Court No booking required you can drop in</p>		<p><b>2 – 3pm Floats Fun session</b> @ Oak Park Living Centre, Coppice Rd, Walsall Wood, Walsall WS9 9BH - £5 per person / Under 5 £3, Call 01922652266 to book your place</p>



Funded by UK Government

\*\* Always contact groups before attending in case of any changes



Walsall  
**Family Hubs**

Supporting families to live happier lives

## West Activity Timetable

Serving; Willenhall North & Willenhall South, Bentley & Darlaston North, Darlaston South.

November – December 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>9.15 – 11.15am Baby &amp; Toddler Group</b> @ The Salvation Army, The Leys, Darlaston, WS10 8DP - 90p for adults / 70p children per session , No booking required (0-4 yrs)</p>	<p><b>9.15 – 11.15am Baby &amp; Toddler Group</b> @ The Salvation Army, The Leys, Darlaston, WS10 8DP - 90p for adults / 70p children per session, No booking required (0-4 yrs)</p> <p><b>12.30 – 2.30pm Baby &amp; Toddler group</b> @ Willenhall Chart Centre, Gomer Street, Willenhall, WV13 2NS - £2 per child, No booking required (0-4yrs)</p>	<p><b>9.15 – 11.15am Baby &amp; Toddler Group</b> @ The Salvation Army, The Leys, Darlaston, WS10 8DP - 90p for adults / 70p children per session, No booking required (0-4 yrs)</p> <p><b>9.30-11.30am Frankie's Parents and Tots</b> @ The Hive Community Hub, The Square, Lichfield Road, New Invention, Willenhall, WV12 5EA- £1 per child, No booking required (0-3 years)</p> <p><b>10am Storytime &amp; Craft</b> @ Willenhall Library, 1 Walsall St, Willenhall WV13 2EX – Free, please call 01922 650771 to book your place.</p>	<p><b>10am Storytots</b> @ Willenhall Library, 1 Walsall St, Willenhall WV13 2EX – Free, No booking required</p> <p><b>14 December 1-3pm Introduction to Solid Food workshop</b> @ West Family Hub, Illmington House, Crescent Road, WS10 8AE – email <a href="mailto:familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk">familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk</a> to book your place</p>		<p><b>Saturday 18 November 10:30 – 11:30 @ West Family Hub Stay &amp; Play Session</b></p> <p><b>Saturday 18 November 10.30-11.30am Emotion, Anxiety and SEND Workshop</b> @ West Family Hub, Illmington House, Crescent Road, WS10 8AE – To book on you can email: Amy at <a href="mailto:EarlyHelpParentingTeam@walsall.gov.uk">EarlyHelpParentingTeam@walsall.gov.uk</a> with your name, postcode and email.</p> <p><b>9 December 10.00-1.00pm Dads Group</b> @ West Family Hub, Illmington House, Crescent Road, WS10 8AE . To book your place email: Early Help Parenting Team <a href="mailto:EarlyHelpParentingTeam@walsall.gov.uk">EarlyHelpParentingTeam@walsall.gov.uk</a> with your name, postcode and email</p>

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**8**

**Early Help Strategy**

**Ward(s):** All

**Portfolios:** Cllr. Stacie Elson. Children’s

**1. Aim**

- To provide an update on the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Supporting Families programme 2022 and Beyond, the Walsall’s Early Help Partnership and the Walsall’s Early Help Strategy 2021- 2024.
- To provide an overview of the focus between now and March 2025.

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 locality and more importantly the local families and are best to who work with children, families and carers to build on their strengths and tackle problems as soon as possible.

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

<b>3</b>	<b>Report detail – know</b>
	<p><u>National framework:</u> The Department for Levelling Up, Housing &amp; Communities (DLUHC) national’s framework sets out how all local strategic partnerships have to work as part of the Early Help System <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107222/Supporting-Families-Early-Help-System-guide-2022.pdf">Supporting Families: Early Help System guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>.</p> <p>This framework sets out the expectations around the network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people, and their families at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p><u>Early Help System Guide:</u> In March 2022 the DLUHC refreshed the guide outlining the national vision and descriptors for a mature Early Help System, the guide also provides a self-assessment tool to support discussion, reflections and action planning against key areas that influence the effectiveness of Early Help.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Families Voice &amp; experience</li> <li>2. Workforce</li> <li>3. Leaders</li> <li>4. Communities</li> <li>5. Data</li> </ol>
	<p><u>Early Help Strategy 2021-2024 an overview:</u> since the launch of the Early Help Strategy in 2021 the partnership via the multi-agency steering group has focused on 4 overarching priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Priority One:</u> Culture &amp; 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.</li> <li>• <u>Priority Two:</u> Smart use of data – Share local data to understand the needs of our children, young people and their family.</li> <li>• <u>Priority Three:</u> Resilient Communities: Use local resources in the most effective way.</li> <li>• <u>Priority Four:</u> Voice: Children, Young People, Parents &amp; Carers are heard.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>The DLUHC Supporting Families programme 2022 and beyond:</u> the Early Help Partnership is responsible for delivering the Supporting Families programme, launched in March 2021 and builds further on the previous Troubled Families programme which commenced in 2015.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Supporting Families programme has 10 areas of priority need categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education</li> <li>2. Early Years</li> <li>3. Health</li> <li>4. Drugs &amp; Alcohol</li> <li>5. Family Relationships</li> <li>6. Abuse &amp; Exploitation</li> <li>7. Crime Prevention and Tackling Crime</li> <li>8. Domestic Abuse</li> <li>9. Secure Housing</li> <li>10. Financial Stability</li> </ol>
3.1	<b>What has been done?</b>
	<p><u>Early Help System Guide:</u> the local Strategic Early Help Partnership is expected to complete an annual maturity self-assessment indicating how mature the partnership feels it is against a set criterion of measures. To support the self-assessment this year Walsall Early Help Partnership joined Sandwell Council and Children’s Trust to complete a peer review to help inform the self-assessment.</p> <p>The feedback from Sandwell Council &amp; Children’s Trust delivered to the ADCS West Midlands Network was extremely positive, they felt Walsall had a mature system that is well established, they saw strong evidence that developments are having an impact where needed and that there is a commitment to continuous development. The overall score they gave to the partnership was 5 out of 5.</p>

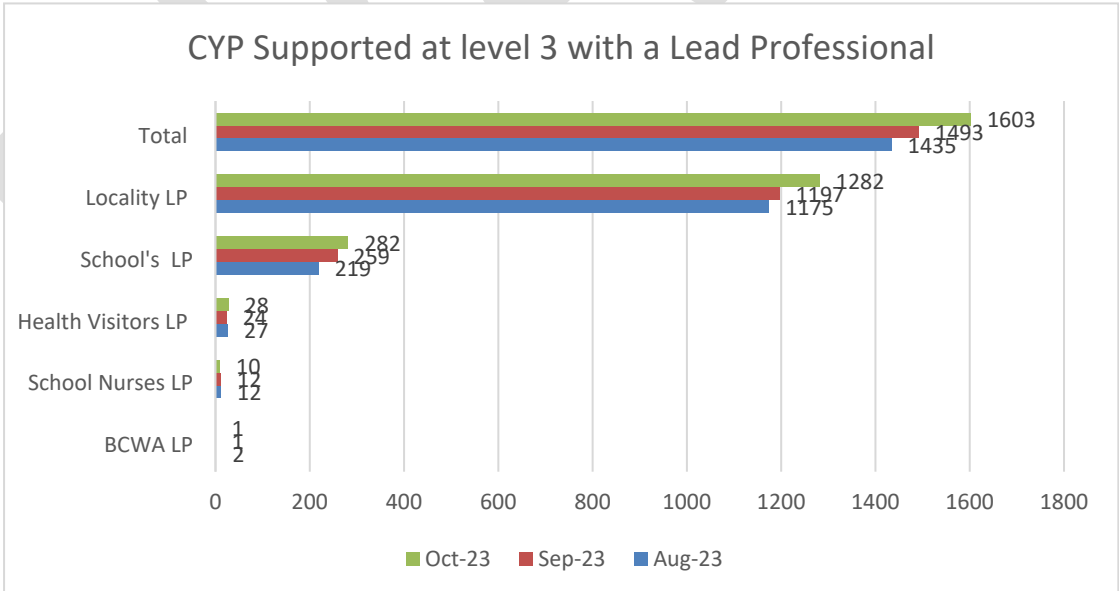
	<p>This provided the partnership with time to reflect on how far it had travelled over the past 3 years. The annual maturity self-assessment was completed, and the partnership gave itself an overall score of 4 out of 5, recognising that there is still work to be done and outcomes to be achieved.</p> <p>The partnership recognised the strengths specifically around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families voice and experience, having an established mechanisms to gather feedback from parents/carers, children and young people and that families could see the feedback was listened to and acted on, families also report that they were part of decision making and felt confident in sustaining the positive changes made, but also knew where to get help in the future should they need it, they felt more connected to their local community and what it offers.</li> <li>• Workforce, partners see themselves as part of the Early Help system and report how this has strengthened over the past 12 months.</li> <li>• Communities, the partnership includes and respects the voluntary and community sector and capacity in communities is building.</li> <li>• Leaders, there is a strong well established Early Help Steering Group, a practice model across the system and partners work well together.</li> </ul> <p>The partnership also recognised however there is more needed to do to ensure the mature model is reached, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders, work is needed to ensure the system is balanced and that support is provided to children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity, avoiding unnecessary or costly statutory interventions, including level 3 Early Help</li> <li>• Leaders &amp; Data, work is needed to have an agreed shared set of measures at family, cohort, demand, and population level.</li> <li>• Data, work is needed to ensure we have a regular set of data measures and feeds from all parts of the partnership to support whole family working.</li> <li>• Data, case management systems allow partners to securely access all relevant records and whole family assessments.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Early Help Strategy:</u> The strategy and associated action plans are ambitious, designed to transform the ways of working and the provision of early support to families in Walsall and in doing so, improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people reducing the need for acute or specialist services. The partnership monitors the action plans and hold annual reviews of direction travelled.</p>
	<p>The strategy is due for review; however, the focus is very dependent on key strategic changes to the national and local landscape for Early Help, including the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josh McAlister <a href="http://www.gov.uk">Independent review of children's social care: final report - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> and the</li> <li>• <a href="http://publishing.service.gov.uk">Children's social care stable homes built on love consultation (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Given the potential changing landscape the Early Help Partnership have suggested that a 12-month interim strategy is developed whilst we further understand the impact of change. The focus of which will be around:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Data – to ensure case management systems are accessible to all partners working with families and that all partnership data allows us to quantify all</li> </ol>

- issues affecting the family and report on all issues and outcomes/impact in a quantifiable way.
- 2) Communities – to ensure we are building capacity in communities and harnessing the talents of parents, carers and young peoples lived experiences to help and support each other.
  - 3) Workforce – we continue to invest in our wider workforce, embed our shared practice framework and improve practice through quality assurance methods.
  - 4) Family Voice – to ensure families are better connected to their local community and have their own support network at a local level.
  - 5) Leaders – to work specifically with secondary schools, to strengthen relationships, have an agreed quality of practice measure and that secondary schools become part of and represent the Early Help Partnership and system.

The DLUHC Supporting Families programme 2022 and beyond: launched the refreshed priorities and outcome framework in October 2022. The Early Help Partnership produced a practitioner’s priority and outcome framework guide and held 4 separate training and awareness days where in excess 400 partners attended, learnt about the new priorities, worked through case studies, and were provided an information package and relevant guidance, some partners also agreed to join a workgroup to take forward some practice review, including the need to refresh to early help assessment, plan and review.

**3.2 Who is getting support through Early Help: Performance data as of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.**

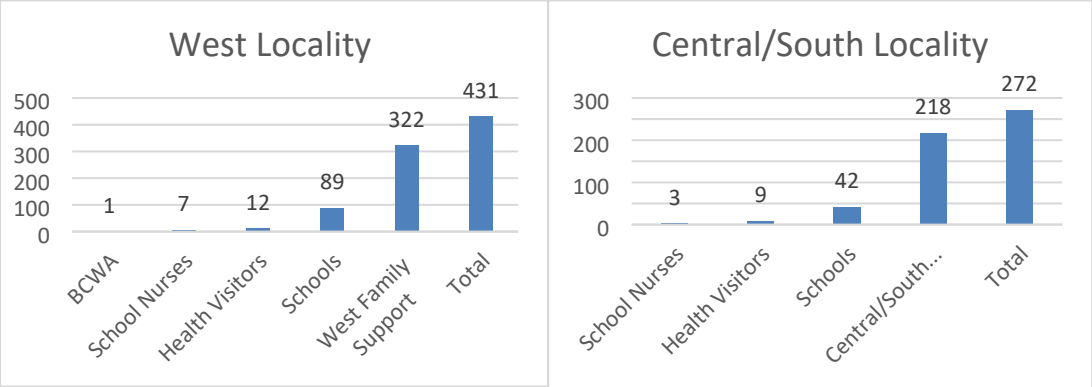
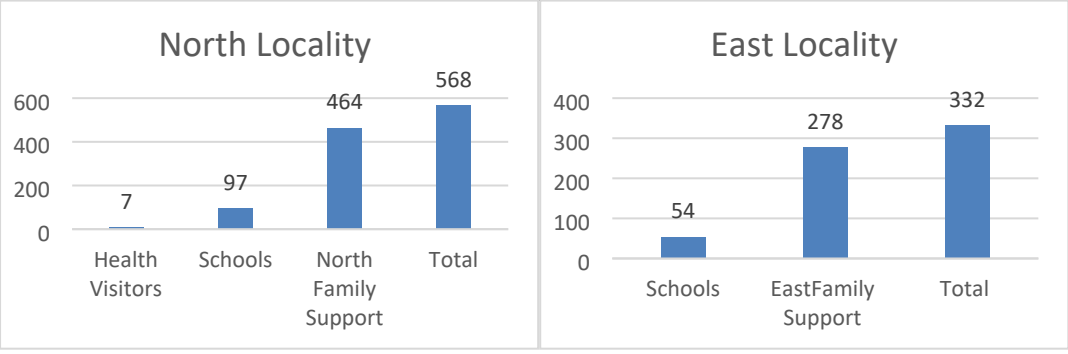
As you can see in the graph below the number of children and young people being support through Early Help (local authority and partnership) is increasing month on month.



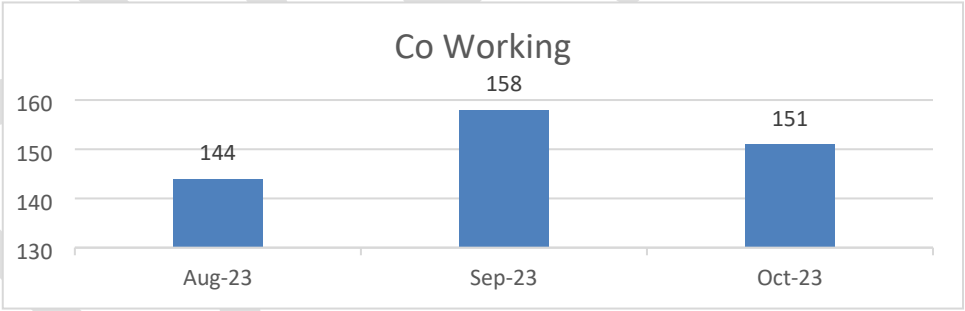
Whilst Childrens Services Early Help Family Practitioner remain the main lead professional it is reassuring to see that partners are increasing their roles and responsibilities as part of the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) statutory guidance.

The charts below show the demand at a locality level:





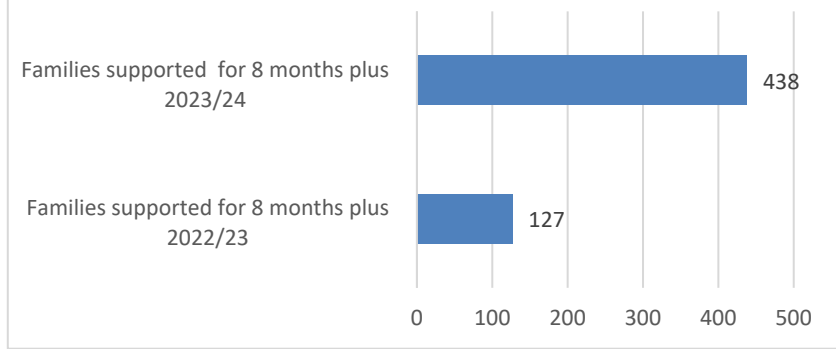
Early Help Family Support Practitioners in addition to their lead professional role also 'co-work' with other Lead Professional's or Social Workers where a child, young person and/or family require a specific intervention. The graph below shows the number over the past 3 months of children and young people being 'co-worked'.



The request for 'co-working' is currently being analysed to further understand the needs of families and barriers of partners unable to deliver the interventions directly.

Since the introduction of the new Supporting People Outcome Framework which details the outcomes to be achieved for families, we are seeing a significant increase in the length of time families are being supported, we are also seeing an increasing complexity of needs for families.

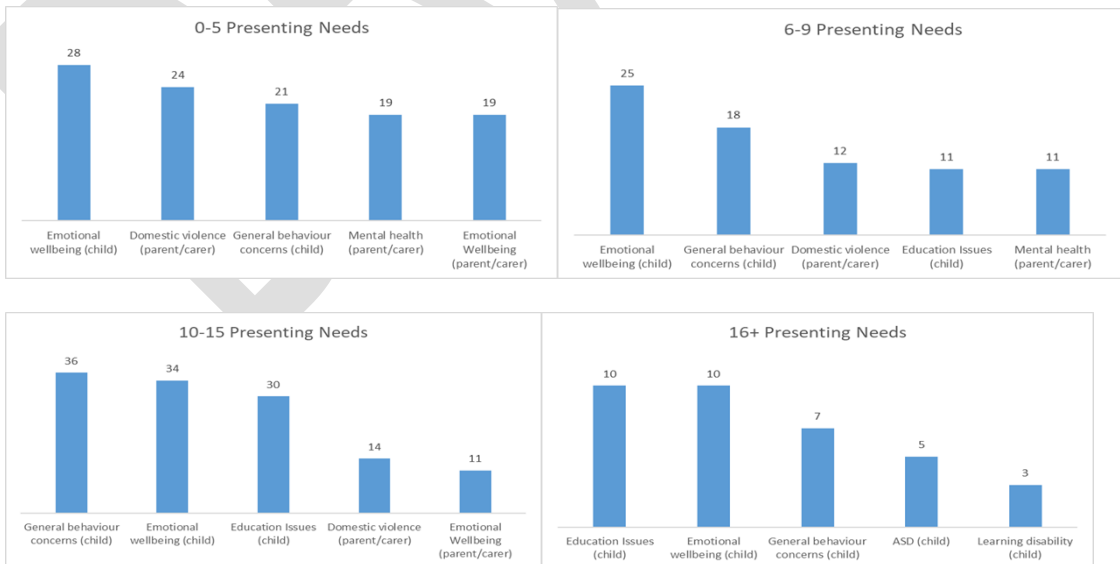
### CYP Supported



Top 5 Presenting Needs October 2023	Top 5 Presenting Needs October 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Emotional wellbeing (child)</li> <li>2) General behaviour concerns (child)</li> <li>3) Education concerns (child)</li> <li>4) Domestic abuse (parent/carer)</li> <li>5) Emotional wellbeing (parent/carer)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Emotional wellbeing (child)</li> <li>2) Domestic abuse (parent/carer)</li> <li>3) Emotional wellbeing (parent/carer)</li> <li>4) General behaviour concerns (child)</li> <li>5) Education concerns (child)</li> <li>6)</li> </ol>

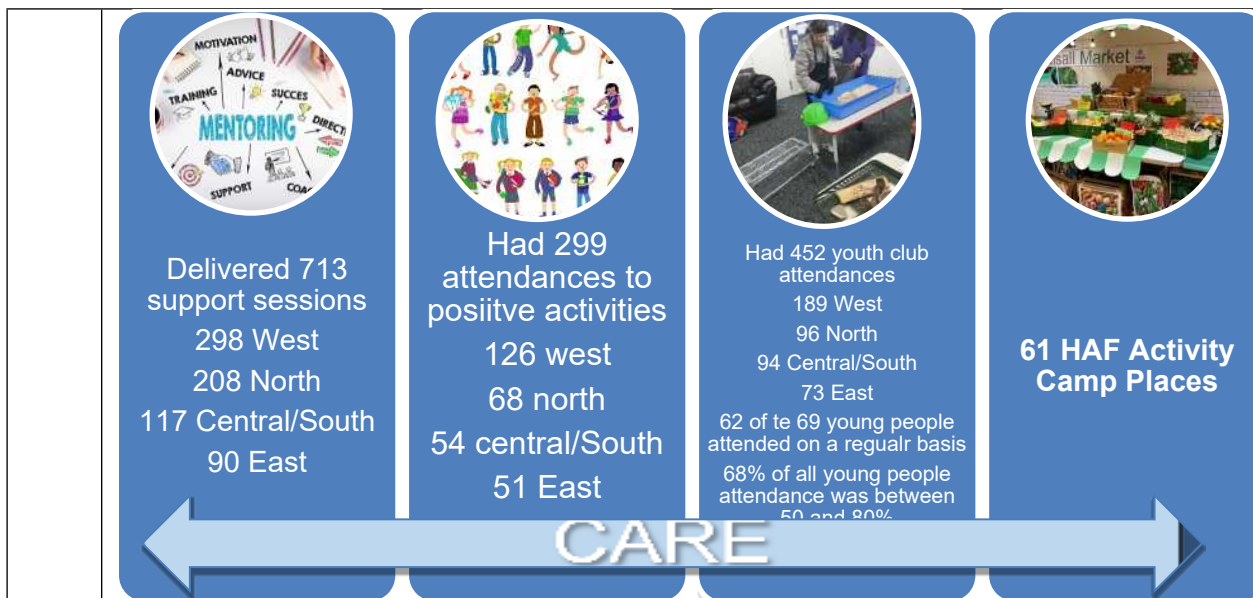
Whilst the top 5 needs remain the same compared to October 2022, the order of the priority of needs have changed slightly.

To monitor the needs of children and young people the Early Help scorecard for 2023/24 now monitors the ages and needs of children, to enable the offer to be consider across the partnership:



The data information above and the Early Help scorecard provides a good overview of need, however, it is recognised that further work is required to help the partnership measure and understand needs across the system, outcomes, and impact. This is a priority for the next 12 months, and will be a focus within the refreshed interim

	strategy, the data and KPI's also forms part of the peer review currently being supported by Lincolnshire local authority, detailed below.
3.3	<b>How well are we doing, how do we know?</b>
	<p><u>Early Help Strategy</u>: achievements to date have been significant, the work completed by the Early Help Partnership includes the development and implementation of new ways of working, additional support for families, based on family's feedback and continues to strengthen the partnership.</p> <p>Please see appendix A for a full update on priorities, action to date, impact, and next actions.</p>
	<p><u>Meeting the needs of children, young people, and families</u>: Since the refresh and relaunch in November 2022 of the new priority needs and outcome framework the Early Help Partnership has seen a significant increase in both families being referred, the complexity of families requiring help and support along with the length of time families need support to make positive and sustainable change, however the partnership continues to strengthen and together it continues to be creative within the resources to pilot a range of interventions in order to meet the growing needs of children, young people, and their families. Over the past 12 months we have piloted several new approaches including:</p> <p><u>Community Activities Reducing Exploitation (CARE) Pilot</u> - in 2022/23 Early Help secured £965,744 a 12-month funding from the Department of Education (DfE) Better Integrated Care Fund, also known as the Respite Innovation Programme following a successful bid by the Early Help Partnership, with Walsall being 1 of 7 local authorities who successfully secured the grant.</p> <p>The CARE project was designed around a specification to deliver an innovative short-break model for young people aged 10 plus in academic school year 6 and above with SEND (diagnosed or undiagnosed) who were showing early signs of potential vulnerabilities to exploitation but who were below Children's Social Care or EHCP threshold, whilst also supporting young people through difficult transition time from primary to secondary education, who at the time often lacked support due to no EHCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been a successful pilot, supporting 69 young people who have participated in weekly and weekend term time youth clubs, provided by The Inspire Group and Street Team, who were bot commissioned to provide this service.</li> <li>• the holiday food club activities (HAF)</li> <li>• 1 to 1 mentoring support.</li> </ul> <p>A summary of activities include:</p>



A full evaluation report is available with an on-line summary report.

The pilot has been so successful the partnership has been able to continue to deliver the programme this financial year, with lessons learnt from the original pilot we have been able to reduce significantly the cost associated without reducing the support to the young people and their family, having incorporated it into the Early Help model of delivery. We are currently supporting and working with both Street Teams and Inspire to ensure the provision is available to young people in 2024/25.

Transition Pilot: In 2022/23 the partnership became concerned about the number of young people in year 7 who were at risk of being excluded from school and wanted to work together to see how, with early intervention this could be avoided. We all know the move from primary to secondary education can be stressful for any young person however for those young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), those with social, emotional, or mental health difficulties it is especially difficult and causes additional worries and anxiety, we also know if the transition between primary school and secondary school is not well-managed, children end up feeling isolated and vulnerable. Their emotional health suffers and so does their academic performance, behaviours escalate and often these young people are at risk of being suspended or having a 'managed move'.

Therefore, we worked with 10 'feeder primary schools' and 2 secondary schools to develop a team around the child model of support.

A well-planned transition between primary and secondary phases will help remove any barriers to learning and enable young people to reach their full academic potential as well as feeling less isolated, transition is also not just a focus for the first term, the support should last well into year 8 and beyond.

The partnership in 2023 was recognised by the LGC and were successful in getting to the final of the LGC 2023 awards for the Children's Services category, whilst we did not win the feedback from the judges recognised the work the partnership have done, the feedback received:

*"Competition this year was extremely tough, you should be proud that your council reached the list of finalists at the most prestigious award in local government, specifically in the **Children's Services** category. The judges commented on the*

	<p><i>tenacity and sheer excellence demonstrated throughout the entire shortlist, subsequently, you should feel immensely proud. The partnership approach was strong and far reaching. Well Done !”.</i></p>
	<p><u>The local authorities Early Help Family Support:</u> Early Help service based within the locality Family Hubs are critical to the whole family delivery and have three main aims:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver - a core and pro-actively targeted Early Help offer.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Co- ordinate – harness the power of communities to develop a comprehensive offer around place</li> </ul>
	<p>Support to staff: it is recognised that family practitioners are seeing their work load increase, as well as the need to support families for longer, to support their wellbeing and to ensure feedback is obtained by the teams an annual staff survey is completed which helps us to focus on actions required within the service, team plans and interventions for the year ahead, as well as supporting staff’s emotional health &amp; wellbeing etc.</p> <p>In 2022 Early Help staff set some key message/focus for us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the Partnership – this will improve significantly with the introduction of the Family Hub Model.</li> <li>• Face to Face opportunities – so training being delivered, whole service away day planned January 2023.</li> <li>• Early Help Process – new launch, stops duplication, gets help to families sooner and holds partners accountable.</li> <li>• Supervisions – refreshed policy, working group and implementation plan.</li> </ul> <p>We were able to go back this year and celebrate the achievements together to address their key messages/focus.</p>

## Reflect from 2022 - What Have We Done?

We have been busy over the last year and have all worked hard to support our families, we have also :

- Finally re-opened all 4 localities and have a range of key partners co-located with us
- Agreed access to 10 community spokes to deliver 121 work/intervention, meet families etc
- Secured 2 dedicated Early Help Police Officers
- Secured dedicated Early Help Health Visitors (increasing the LP role already)
- Obtained approval for partner Lead Professionals to have access to mosaic
- Developed a clear outcome framework for early help
- Secured a Young Carers Practitioner to support and lead on this area of work
- Delivered attachment & trauma training
- Trained YP to carry out quality assurance visits for HAF
- Redesigned the EHA, TAF etc, reviewed and updated 6 months later in collaboration with teams
- Worked with partners to develop and launch Family Hubs
- Held Service Away Days – time to reflect, set the scene for the next academic year, as well as meeting up and having fun
- Held a workforce focus group and consultation activity which changed mosaic to have clearer, more streamlined worker input process, started to shape the supervision policy
- Piloted a new supervision and APC approach which will now be rolled out
- Launched new early help mosaic workflows and forms to capture other areas of activity
- Increased our parenting offer and team- and reviewed all our virtual parenting programmes to be attachment and trauma informed
- Moved further forward with our parental relationship enquiry and RPC offer with the help of a new RPC Lead
- Developed the volunteers offer and extended the offer and support even further
- Piloted a range of interventions i.e. Transition Project, Secured funding for CYP & delivered the CARE
- Got through to the LGC Finalist awards, recognised for the work we do, the creativity of our teams
- Introduced a parent/carer form 'In Our Hands' to start and collaborate and co-produce
- Extended T2T Platform – well received by partners at a local level
- Supported partners, predominately primary schools to take the LP role – this has increased by over 300%
- Secured a volunteer's programme and successfully recruited 25 volunteers (and seen 2 secure permanent employment)
- Secured dedicated Domestic Abuse Practitioners to be co-located in Family Hubs
- Delivered successful HAF and increased the partners delivering

The 2023 survey recently completed children's services staff told us:

### Key Reasons why you stay with Walsall Children's Services

- Making a difference
- Direct work with children and families
- Career progression
- My team/the culture in the team
- Enjoying my job
- Feel invested in Walsall
- Home/life balance
- Close to home

### What can be improved?

- Career pathways
- Diversity at manager level
- Capacity (paperwork and complexity)
- Better support to help managing work – ref to clinical supervision
- Admin support
- Communication

Our Early Help staff have told us:

### Positives

- Improved communication
- Partners taking LP role
- Partnership Officers - help with developing links
- Access to partners in localities – integrated as part of hubs
- Improved relationship with education/schools/WHG
- Better info on need in each locality

### Areas of improvement

- Duplication
- Communication between partners
- Referral pathways – easier + better understanding
- Better understanding of the offer

There were also some key messages from staff that came through the survey/health check:

## What staff have told us and What we need to do?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource toolkits</li> <li>• Admin support</li> <li>• Paperwork &amp; duplication</li> <li>• Complexities of families</li> <li>• Workload v covering other peers v time spent with CYP</li> <li>• Connectivity/pathways with key partners – easier and better understanding</li> <li>• Wellbeing &amp; time to reflect</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Power BI &amp; performance information</li> <li>• Better understanding of 'the partnership offer'</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop our 2023/24 academic year service and team plans</li> <li>• Work commenced to pull together a comprehensive toolkit &amp; resource pack</li> <li>• Pilot with North locality around a dedicated admin support</li> <li>• Recently updated the EHA. TAF etc in collaboration with practitioners, review in 6 months</li> <li>• Agreed average workload of between 18 – 20, looked at demands, needs of families, staffing ratios within localities and agreed a whole service review and way of working to meet demands, i.e., Central &amp; South require support from Family Practitioners</li> <li>• We will work with key partners to have clear pathways, inc health visitors, school nurses, CAMHS</li> <li>• Work with you to consider a wellbeing policy for Early Help, inc. Considering protected reflection time each month</li> <li>• Develop our 2023/24 training plan including domestic abuse</li> <li>• Work with BI Hub to amend our Early help scorecard, ensure Power BI is available for all</li> <li>• Update our website, focused on the practitioner's section, have the Early Help Partnership offer clear with pathways, information, advice, useful resources</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

Through a recent review of the needs of children and young people and the demand for each locality we have reprofiled the staffing structure and completed a skills matrix to provide further training and support required to meet the needs of families and to provide all staff with the opportunity to further their knowledge and career prospects.

### 3.4 Continuous Learning Opportunities

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement and to challenge ourselves on the impact of Early Help, we have approached the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to seek further support from Lincolnshire, an outstanding local authority. This has been approved and we are currently working with Lincolnshire to complete another peer review, where an independent review of the Early Help offer, the strength of the partnership, the gaps and barriers can be identified to help us improve in specific areas.

The focus of support we have specifically requested is around:

- the development of the adolescent offer
- engagement with secondary school
- overall impact of Early Help
- the supporting family's payment by results claims

An initial meeting has been held with Lincolnshire and 5 future days have been agreed between now and the end of January 2024 to complete the peer review.

	<p><u>Early Help Partnership Practice Week:</u> In February 2024 the partnership will be holding their first multi-agency practice month, this provides an opportunity for practitioners and managers to ‘zoom in’ and have a ‘wide lens’ view to observe practice, observe direct work with children, young people and their families, attend meetings, team meetings across the partnership and to get an understanding of how services run on a day to day basis, a real opportunity to spend time with all practitioners and teams within their respective service areas.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Financial information</b></p> <p>The DLUHC 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.</p> <p>For a successful claim to be made the local authority must 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.</p> <p>Walsall have predicted a claim ratio of</p> <p>2023/24 85% (643 families) 2024/25 100% (936 families)</p> <p>As discussed in this report, families are being supported for a longer period since the new priorities and outcome framework has been introduced, this is putting pressure on the number of families that can be claimed.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Reducing Inequalities</b></p> <p>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.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Decide</b></p> <p>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 is asked to support the direction of travel and endorse the achievements made so far.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Respond</b></p>



	<p>The Early Help partnership is responding to the needs of local families and to the Governments Department for Levelling Up, Housing &amp; 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.</p> <p>Achieving and evidencing the outcomes secured for families and in turn meeting the payment by results target continues is a significant focus and one that is critical to the Early Help service.</p> <p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023/24 at 757 families</li> <li>• 2024/25 at 936 families</li> </ul> <p>For the first 2 quarters for 2023/24 we have been able to successfully claim total of 186 (98 in Quarter 1, 88 in Quarter 2) 25% of our overall target.</p> <p>We are currently auditing approximately 200 in preparation for Quarter 3 claims.</p> <p>A senior management performance group has been developed to have oversight of the claims, we have also employed a dedicated officer who ‘audits’ the closure process to ensure evidence of need, support and outcomes achieved are clear and measurable to support the claims and to ensure we meet the criteria set, a new ‘end of intervention’ process has also been introduced. This process is having a positive impact however claims are still down and there remains a financial risk given the length of time families are being supported by the Early Help Partnership.</p> <p>As part of the PBR process we can include Children’s Social Care, whilst this has been a smaller percentage that has been claimed previously the same process is being adopted as for Early Help, it is envisaged this will help to add further to the potential claims for quarter 3 and 4 for the current financial year and will be monitored monthly.</p> <p>In addition, a new process has recently been introduced for the Young Carer Assessments in preparation for 2024/25 claims.</p>
	<p><b>Review</b></p> <p>A review report to scrutiny can be scheduled for 12 months, detailing the achievements, barriers, the changes to the early help process and payment by results.</p>

**Background papers**

Early Help Strategy 2021- 2024

Josh McAlister [Independent review of children's social care: final report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/independent-review-of-childrens-social-care-final-report-2021-2024.pdf)

[Children's social care stable homes built on love consultation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/independent-review-of-childrens-social-care-final-report-2021-2024.pdf)  
[Supporting Families: Early Help System guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/independent-review-of-childrens-social-care-final-report-2021-2024.pdf)

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## Appendix A : Update on the Early Help Strategy and associated Action Plan 2021- 2024

### Priority One :

We set out to	We have achieved	Impact	What we still need to prioritise
<p>Redesign the Early Help Assessment, Plan &amp; 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.</p>	<p>In collaboration with families and partners we have completed this and relaunched in November 2022 the new early help assessment and team around the family support approach.</p> <p>In 2023 we have completed a review, made some amends to the documentation.</p>	<p>A strength-based approach to assessment, the team around the family support and outcomes achieved are clear and measurable.</p> <p>Families are at the heart of the support they feel is required.</p>	<p>Refresh the Early Help Practice Guidance and tool kit available for all lead professionals (or Family co-ordinators as they will be known from April 2024).</p> <p>We are looking to commission a provider to support the re-write of the practice guidance to ensure a common language, reflective, relationship and trauma model is embedded.</p>
<p>Refresh the Supporting Families Outcome Framework to enable outcomes and impact to be measured across the partnership.</p>	<p>The new framework has been launched, with clear priorities and expected outcomes to be achieved. These are now being monitored as part of the Early Help performance scorecard and reported to the steering group on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>Partners are clear on the priority needs and outcomes to be achieved with families.</p> <p>Partners are clear on their roles and responsibilities within the delivery of Early Help.</p>	<p>Review the outcome framework between January 2024- March 2024.</p>
<p>Extend further the 'Time to Talk: Partnership, Practice &amp; 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</p>	<p>The locality 'Time 2 Talk' framework is now well embedded and held every 8 weeks, they are well attended, the partnership agrees themes to be discussed, sharing of information and it is evident the partnership working is improving.</p>	<p>40 plus partners in each locality meet termly to understand family's needs in the local area, consider gaps in provision, share good practice, knowledge and look at commissioning opportunities.</p> <p>The themes of discussions so far include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January – Finances 'Cost Of Living Crisis' speed dating with DWP, Money Home Job, WHG, Walsave, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners.</li> <li>• Feb – East Locality - Working with Fathers - Presentation with Claire Jervis.</li> </ul>	<p>To work with the BI Hub key locality data, aligned to priority 2 to fully understand the needs of localities. Data from the whole partnership to help inform further the local offer, planned focus work to be included in the interim strategy 2024-2025.</p>

<p>guidance across the partnership.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May – Adolescent Drop in, networking session.</li> <li>• June – Neglect, presentation with Becky Warren, Kellyanne Perry, Morag Manson, Malcolm Moore.</li> <li>• October – West and South internal Mini time to talks, speed dating to get to know our partners better for locality staff.</li> <li>• October – Primary and Early Years Drop in, networking session.</li> </ul> <p>Their approach has supported the commissioning of the CARE (community activities reducing exploitation) project.</p>	
<p>Further strengthen the support to partners to influence and co-ordinate partnership capacity and capability.</p>	<p>The partnership within the localities has and continues to strengthen.</p> <p>The capacity for taking the lead on Early Help roles and responsibilities has significantly improved, specifically with primary schools and we are building on the health visitor roles.</p>	<p>Introduction of Early Help Partnership Officers within each locality to support the wider partnership, this has supported primary schools, predominately to increase their lead professional role by 526%, Health Visitors by 56%</p> <p>New dedicated co-located Early Help Police Officers.</p> <p>Recommissioned in partnership the Domestic Abuse Locality model, where we now have Early Help Practitioners co-located supporting families at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Other co-located partners include, DWP Officers, Housing Officers, School Nurses and The Beacon.</p> <p>The VCS partnership are now a key stakeholder.</p>	<p>Strengthen the partnership with secondary schools and offer to adolescents.</p> <p>Introduce a comprehensive induction programme for all lead professionals.</p>
<p>Review the Right Help, Right Time and lead professional training - to ensure all key elements of early identification and</p>	<p>RHRT guidance refreshed, in consultation with Early Help Steering Group and MASH Management Group,</p>	<p>Lead Professional Training and ACTION (aware, care think – don't – ignore or – do- nothing)</p> <p>Training delivered to over 200 partners, including:</p>	

<p>intervention is understood, and link to other priorities such as neglect.</p>	<p>due to be launch January 2024.</p>	<p>Action training for all front-line police staff in all units, including neighbourhood and serious crime unit.</p>  <p>Wolverhampton Uni Action training – for 4 Early Years classes, future sessions requested.</p> <p>Pool Hayes Academy – Hybrid Lead Professional and RHRT for 20 members of staff on their training day.</p> <p>WHG trades and neighbourhood practitioners.</p>	
<p>Scope out the potential of a bespoke Early Help training programme.</p>	<p>Each year the Early Help Steering Group agrees the focus of training based on the needs of families.</p>	<p>2021-22 Restorative Practice, we trained 60 plus partners, including schools.  2022-23 Attachment and Trauma, we trained 88 Early Help Staff, 19 schools and 9 health staff.  2023-24 Continue with Attachment &amp; Trauma.</p> <p>Feedback from the training has been overwhelmingly positive, with it being rated 100% for quality and effectiveness.</p> <p>Early Years First Words Together – we have worked with the National Literacy Trust to develop a bespoke 121 programme to support attachment and communication delivered to parents /carers in their home over a 5-week period. The First Words Together is an evidenced based model set for delivery on group work, we have been able to show</p>	<p>We have a skills matrix for the Early Help Partnership that is due to be signed off at the Steering Group January 2024, to be introduced April 2024.</p> <p>Training already identified by practitioner for 2024/25 includes Play Therapy, Working with Domestic Abuse Perpetrators, Domestic Abuse awareness, Reducing Parental Conflict, Crime Prevention &amp; SEND Training (all currently being scoped out)</p>

		the need in Walsall for an alternative approach which is in year 1 of its pilot.	
Improve knowledge and self-help opportunities – to provide information, advice and self-learning.	New Early Help website updated	Self-help tips, advice, videos and on-line parenting programmes available.	Website to be updated in line with Family Hubs and the Family Information Service by March 2024.

## **Priority Two**

<b>We set out to</b>	<b>We have achieved</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>What we still need to prioritise</b>
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.	Agreed the implementation of a new database 'Sentinel' allows data gathering and sharing.		
Agree and introduce a standard partnership data set for sharing at a strategic level as part of the Early Help Steering Group performance measures.	Refresh of the Early Help scorecard		Agree KPIs to evident demand, needs and impact.
Agree a partnership auditing framework and opportunities for learning from practice.	<p>Child Journey audits and dip samples are completed on an agreed cycle. Partners and families are included in the audits. Audit findings are shared with the steering group and lessons learnt; barriers considered.</p> <p>Completed a self-assessment against the</p>	<p>Early Years audits have help secured a dedicated Health Visitor model.</p> <p>Multi-agency audits completed as part of Safeguarding Board.</p> <p>Dip samples have helped reduce inappropriate referrals to MASH.</p> <p>Practice has been improved, training needs identified as part of audits and dip-samples completed.</p>	<p>Agree a formal mechanism for quality assurance and audit framework to be launch in April 2024 as part of interim strategy 2024-2025.</p> <p>Mechanisms to share data across partnership are variable with inconsistent use of existing legislative gateways and data sharing arrangements for specific projects.</p> <p>Gradual movement / recognition between agencies of need to share data and finding practical ways of overcoming the issues. The Business Insights team</p>

	Early Help system guide to help focus further work required.	Young people trained to completed quality assurance visits within HAF.	will provide a consistent base to build on and sharing of expertise.
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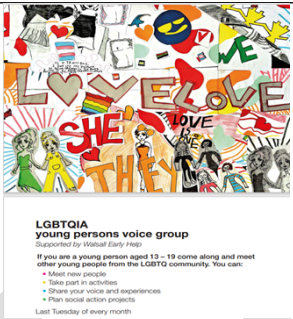
### **Priority 3**

<b>We set out to</b>	<b>We have achieved</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>What we still need to prioritise</b>
Improve our knowledge base of local resources.	Time 2 Talk locality platform enable local knowledge to be developed and shared	Improved partnership working and support to families.	To be clear of the available resources and early help offer across the system. To have this published and available for all to access.
Utilise and include local communities.	As above		Link into the Family Hub delivery plan and resources to build on resilient communities.
Develop an Early Help Volunteers programme to support families at a local level, supporting the use of local resources and the 'community scaffolding'.	EH Volunteer service implemented.	Two Early Help Volunteer Co-ordinators recruited along with 29 volunteers, including fathers supporting families on a range of issues across the borough.  Celebration event planned December 2023.  2 Volunteers have secured permanent employment, one with Early Help and one in Education.	
Further develop our co-location model with key voluntary and community partners.			
Introduce the Early Help ACTION Campaign, an awareness and training campaign across ALL practitioners in Walsall who work with, support or come		Action training refreshed and is being delivered to a wide range of partners, including police, midwives, schools, housing providers, GP's etc.	

into contact with children, young people and families, including contractors, housing officers, clean & green practitioners, private companies.			
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#### **Priority Four**

<b>We set out to</b>	<b>We have achieved</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>What we still need to prioritise</b>
Work with children and young people to develop a meaningful 'feedback' questionnaire.	Questionnaire agreed and built within mosaic system	Feedback captured and reviewed as part of monthly performance.	Children and young people's forum
Utilise the feedback to help shape services and improve practice across the partnership.	<p>We have consulted with Young Carers , young people and parents.</p> <p>We have a 'In our Hands' Parent/carer forum that meets 4 times a year to consult, collaborate and co-produce with parents/carers.</p> <p>Collate feedback from families that we share across the partnership on a 'feedback wall' platform that considers practice improvement, shares good practice.</p> <p>Collate case studies to improve and inform practice.</p>	<p>A bespoke Young Carers Support Service. A Young Carers Multi-agency Action Group.</p> <p>Raised awareness of young carers across the partnership.</p> <p>Re-developed the SEND Local Offer</p> <p>Designed and secured CARE (community activities reducing exploitation) pilot.</p> <p>LGBTQ bespoke group introduced who have designed a postcard/poster to raise awareness.</p>	

		 <p><b>LGBTQIA young persons voice group</b> Supported by Wakefield Early Help If you are a young person aged 13 - 19 come along and meet other young people from the LGBTQIA community. You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet new people</li> <li>• Take part in activities</li> <li>• Share your voice and experiences</li> <li>• Plan social action projects</li> </ul> <p>Last Tuesday of every month</p>	
Work with parents and carers to develop a meaningful 'feedback' questionnaire.	We have a refreshed questionnaire for parents, carers , children and young people to complete at the end of Early Help support	<p>The feedback is collated monthly and shared as part of the performance board and steering group.</p> <p>Parents have joined the 'In our hands' forum from the feedback.</p> <p>Young people have been recruited and trained a 'HAF quality assurance visitors as part of the feedback.</p>	All Early Help partners/lead professionals to have access to the questionnaires.
Develop, together, a Children & Young Peoples Early Help forum and a Parent/Carer forum.	'In our Hands' parents/carers forum introduced.	As above	Children and young people's forum
Introduce a 'daily conversation programme' where we will consult with children and young people on specific topics.	We have held an annual conversation where we have obtained feedback from children and young people.	The feedback has helped to improve practice, it formed the basis of the Early Help Strategy 2021-2024.	Next annual conversation due December 2023.



Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recommendation Tracker 2023/24

Committee Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action/Recommendation	Officer responsible	Status	Target Completion Date	Notes
27 June 2023	Areas of Focus	A work programme for the municipal year be produced and be circulated to members of the Committee.	Clerk	Complete	28th September 2023	A work programme for the municipal year be produced and be agreed by the Committee at the next meeting.
26 September 2023	Youth Justice	An agenda item on violence (youth justice) be scheduled for a future committee, with an invitation extended to partners	Phil Rutherford	In progress	April 2024	Scheduled for 11 March 2023.
26 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	Areas of Focus	The following items be added to the Committee work programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children with disabilities.</li> <li>• An update on children's services</li> </ul>	Clerk	In progress	April 2024	Added to the areas of focus.
2 November 2023	Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28	Feedback from the CS OSC on the draft revenue budget and draft capital programme be provided to Cabinet on 13 <sup>th</sup> December.	Clerk/Chair	In progress	December 2023	Report drafted.

## Children's Services OSC Areas of Focus 2023/24

Committee date	26 September	2 November	7 December	29 January	11 March	16 April
Report Deadline	15 September	24 October	28 November	18 January	29 February	5 April
Budget setting process		X				
Q2 financial monitoring		X				
Family/Locality Hubs			X			
Early Help Strategy			X			
Social Worker recruitment and retention				X		
Private Fostering				X		
Youth Justice priorities and disproportionately	X					
Youth Justice Partnership – reduction of Youth violence (partnership invite)					X	
Children at Risk Exploitation						X
Safeguarding Annual Report 2022/23			X			
Intra familial abuse strategy						X
Young Carers				X		
Children with disabilities					x	



## **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

**Council House,  
Lichfield Street,  
Walsall, WS1 1TW**  
[www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk)

**6 NOVEMBER 2023**

## FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan sets out decisions that are termed as “key decisions” at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken by the Executive (Cabinet). Also included on the plan are other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet (“non-key decisions”). Preparation of the forward plan helps the Council to programme its work. The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice and an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The plan is updated each month with the period of the plan being rolled forward by one month and republished. Copies of the plan can be obtained from Democratic Services, Walsall MBC, Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW [craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk) and can also be accessed from the Council’s website at [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://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](mailto:craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk)).

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

- (1) A key decision is:
  - (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or
  - (ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.
- (2) The threshold for “significant” expenditure/savings is £500,000.

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

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS  
DECEMBER 2023 TO MARCH 2024 (06.11.2023)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
37/23 (7.8.23)	<p><b>Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 – Update:</b></p> <p>To provide an updated medium term financial outlook, draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, including update to savings proposals, impact of Autumn Statement, and progress on budget consultation to date including feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft revenue and capital budget.</p>	Cabinet  Non-key Decision	Vicky Buckley  <a href="mailto:Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk">Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations.  Internal services	Cllr Bird	13 December 2023
55/23 (6.11.23)	<p><b>Walsall Borough Local Plan - Call for Sites:</b></p> <p>To agree authorisation for the Council to publicise and implement a Call for</p>	Cabinet  Key Decision	David Holloway  <a href="mailto:David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk">David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	13 December 2023

	Sites exercise for the Walsall Borough Local Plan.					
56/23 (6.11.23)	<b>Walsall Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2022-2025:</b>  To note and forward to Council for approval the Walsall Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2022-2025.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Phil Rutherford  <a href="mailto:Philip.Rutherford@walsall.gov.uk">Philip.Rutherford@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services  YJS Partnership Board	Cllr Elson	13 December 2023
38/23 (7.8.23)	<b>Treasury Management Mid Year Position Statement 2023/24:</b>  To note and forward to Council, for consideration and noting (and in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017), the mid year report for treasury management activities 2023/24 including prudential and local indicators.	Council  Non-key Decision	Treasury Management Code of Practice.  Richard Walley  <a href="mailto:Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk">Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services	Cllr Ferguson	13 December 2023
39/23 (7.8.23)	<b>Strategic Leisure Review:</b>  To update on the performance and impact of the four leisure facilities. To approve recommendations around the current and future facility stock.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Stuart Webb  <a href="mailto:Stuart.Webb@walsall.gov.uk">Stuart.Webb@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023
36/23 (7.8.23)	<b>Healthy Eating for Children and Young People Programme:</b>  To seek approval to procure a new healthy eating and weight	Cabinet  Key Decision	Esther Higdon  <a href="mailto:Esther.Higdon@walsall.gov.uk">Esther.Higdon@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services  Walsall Healthcare Trust	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023

	management programme for children and young people in Walsall.					
61/23 (6.11.23)	<b>Walsall Tobacco Control Plan 2023-2027:</b> To approve the Tobacco Control Plan	Cabinet Non-key decision	Joe Holding <a href="mailto:Joe.Holding@walsall.gov.uk">Joe.Holding@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services SWPB	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023
60/23 (6.11.23)	<b>Community Grant – Bloxwich Community Partnership:</b> To agree funding and leasing arrangements in relation to Palace Play, Shop and Eat Blakenall Row, Walsall WS3 1LW	Cabinet Key Decision	Sarah Oakley <a href="mailto:Sarah.Oakley@walsall.gov.uk">Sarah.Oakley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Bloxwich Community Partnership	Cllr Perry	13 December 2023
62/23 (06.11.23)	<b>Adult Social Care Contributions Policy</b> To approve the continuation of an Adult Social Care Contributions Policy rather than a Charging Policy which encompasses a number of charging areas under the Care Act. The Contributions Policy will detail the framework as to how customers will be assessed for their adult social care contributions. The policy will however cover both residential and community assessments. The current policy is community assessments only.	Cabinet Key Decision	Kerrie Allward <a href="mailto:Kerrie.Allward@walsall.gov.uk">Kerrie.Allward@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Pedley	13 December 2023
14/23 (6.2.23)	<b>Growth Funding for Schools:</b> To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom <a href="mailto:Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk">Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services, Schools Forum	Cllr M. Statham	13 December 2023

	secondary school places, through the adoption of a policy for the application of revenue funding for school growth.					
46/23 (4.9.23)	<b>SEN Place Requirement:</b>  To approve finance for additional special educational needs school places.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Alex Groom  <a href="mailto:Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk">Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services	Cllr M. Statham	13 December 2023
50/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24:</b>  To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2023.	Cabinet  Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley  <a href="mailto:Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk">Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Corporate Management Team and Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
51/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Corporate Budget Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2024/25:</b>  To recommend the final budget and council tax for approval by Council.	Cabinet  Council  Key decision	Vicky Buckley  <a href="mailto:Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk">Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations,  Corporate Management Team and Internal Services	Cllr Bird	Cabinet 7 February 2024  Council 22 February 2024
52/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Council Plan 2022/25 – Q2 23/24:</b>  To note the Quarter 2 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25.	Cabinet  Non-key decision	Elizabeth Connolly  <a href="mailto:elizabeth.connolly@walsall.gov.uk">elizabeth.connolly@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
57/23 (6.11.23)	<b>Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Climate Strategy:</b>	Cabinet	Katie Moreton	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	7 February 2023



	To approve the Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Strategy.	Key Decision	<a href="mailto:Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk">Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk</a>			
54/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2023 – 2026:</b>  To approve an interim commissioning strategy.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Nigel Imber – <a href="mailto:Nigel.Imber@Walsall.Gov.uk">Nigel.Imber@Walsall.Gov.uk</a>	Internal consultees  Local and regional partners	Cllr Pedley	7 February 2024
53/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Determination of the Scheme for coordinated admissions, and the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for the 2025/26 academic year:</b>  To determine the scheme of admissions and admission arrangements for community and voluntary-controlled primary schools for 2025-26.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Alex Groom  <a href="mailto:Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk">Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal consultees  Public  Local Authorities  Schools  Faith Groups	Cllr M. Statham	7 February 2024
58/23 (6.11.23)	<b>High Needs Funding Formula 2024/25:</b>  To approve changes to the High Needs Funding Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used for the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant	Cabinet  Key Decision	Richard Walley  <a href="mailto:Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk">Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Schools Forum  Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 2024

	– High Needs Block to schools in Walsall for the 2024/25 financial year.					
59/23 (6.11.23)	<p><b>Early Years Funding Formula 2024/25:</b></p> <p>To Cabinet approve the Early Years Funding Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used as the allocation of funding to early years providers in Walsall.</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Richard Walley <a href="mailto:Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk">Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Schools Forum Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 2024

**Black Country Executive Joint Committee**  
**Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

**Published up to February 2024**

Date Created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main consultee	Date of meeting
	<b>Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance</b>			
04/09/2023	<p><b>Change Control and Delegated Authority</b></p> <p>Approval of BCJC Delegated Authority to the Single Accountable Body Section 151 Officer (SAB s151 officer) and approval of the revised Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) Assurance Framework Change Control and Delegated Authority delegations, as detailed in the attachment of the report (BCLEP Assurance Framework Appendix 23).</p>	<p>David Moore  <a href="mailto:david.moore@walsall.gov.uk">david.moore@walsall.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Mark Lavender  <a href="mailto:mark.lavender@walsall.gov.uk">mark.lavender@walsall.gov.uk</a></p>	Walsall Council	01/11/2023



# West Midlands Combined Authority

## Forward Plan

## Forthcoming key decisions

Title of key decision:	Decision to be taken by and date:	Open or Exempt:	Portfolio Lead	Employee to contact:
<b>Regional Activity &amp; Delivery Update</b> To provide an update on recent activity of the WMCA.	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Laura Shoaf Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority
<b>WMCA Financial Monitoring Report - November 2023</b> to provide an update on the latest financial position	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleight Finance Portfolio Lead	Beverly Sullivan, Sally Truman Financial Planning and Coordination Manager, Lead Financial Planning Accountant
<b>Investment Zone and Levelling Up Zone Governance</b> To consider governance arrangements supporting the region's Investment Zone and Levelling Up Zone proposals.	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Stephen Simkins Economy & Innovation Portfolio Lead	Jonathan Gibson Head of Policy & Public Affairs
<b>Air Quality Framework</b> To approve the draft framework that reviews all of the measures possible to accelerate improvements to regional air quality, following public consultation and consideration by the Environment & Energy Board.	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor John Cotton Environment, Energy & HS2 Portfolio Lead	Jacqueline Homan Head of Environment

<p><b>WMCA Homelessness Taskforce: Update and Key Priorities</b> The purpose of this paper is to update and engage WMCA Board members on the current work programme and priorities of the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Kerrie Carmichael Inclusive Communities Portfolio Lead	Neelam Sunder Senior Programme Manager - Homelessness
<p><b>HS2 / 'Network North' Update and Implications</b> To consider further details on the economic implications of HS2 not going to Manchester, the package of proposed alternative transport projects and funding governance arrangements.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Anne Shaw Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands
<p><b>Birmingham Eastside Extension</b> position paper on scheme and next steps</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Marilyn Grazette Programme Sponsor
<p><b>New Stations Package 1 Update</b> Paper to update the Board on the impacts of the novation to a new contractor for the Package 1 New Stations contract.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Liz Baker Strategic Sponsor
<p><b>State of the Region</b> State of the Region for the West Midlands in 2024</p>	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Si Chun Lam Head of Research, Intelligence and Inclusive Growth
<p><b>Health of the Region</b> To consider an update report reviewing the health of the region.</p>	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Councillor Izzi Seccombe Wellbeing Portfolio Lead	Julia Cleary, Mubasshir Ajaz Head of Corporate Support & Governance, Head of Health and Communities • Strategy, Integration and Net Zero

<b>Draft WMCA 2024/25 Budget</b> To consider the draft WMCA budget for 2024/25.	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Deputy Mayor	
<b>Skills Funding</b> To consider the latest position regarding skills funding.	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor George Duggins Skills & Productivity Portfolio Lead	Dr. Fiona Aldridge Head of Insight & Intelligence
<b>WMCA's Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee - Progress Update</b> To provide a quarterly summary of the activity of work of the WMCA's overview and scrutiny function, as required by the Deeper Devolution Deal.	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Lyndsey Roberts Scrutiny Officer

## **The Forward Plan**

This document sets out known 'key decisions' that will be taken by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) over the coming months.

Forthcoming key decisions are published online to meet the statutory 28 day notification rule for each meeting where a key decision will be taken. Where it has not been possible to meet the 28 day rule for publication of notice of a key decision or an intention to meet in private, the relevant notices will be published as required by legislation as soon as possible.

### **What is a key decision?**

A 'key decision' means a decision of the Mayor, WMCA or officer which is likely:

- (a) to result in the WMCA incurring expenditure, making savings or generating income amounting to £1m or more; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the WMCA

The report relating to a decision, together with any other documents being considered, will be available five clear working days before the decision is to be taken (unless the documentation contains exempt information).

The forward plan also provides notice of when the WMCA may decide to exclude the press and public during consideration of a particular matter due to the potential for disclosure of confidential or exempt



information. The grounds upon which local authorities can exclude the press and public are specified by law and details of the exempt categories are available on request from the Governance Services team ([governance.services@wmca.org.uk](mailto:governance.services@wmca.org.uk)).

Councillors or members of the public wishing to:

- make a representation about why a matter should be heard in public, or
- submit information to the decision-making body about an item in the forward plan, or
- request details of relevant documents, or
- seek advice about the WMCA's decision-making arrangements,

should contact the Governance Services team: [governance.services@wmca.org.uk](mailto:governance.services@wmca.org.uk)