

# Agenda

## Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 18 March 2025**

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Time: **2.00 pm**

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Place: **Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough  
Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE**

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Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Simon Cann, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 260667 or e-mail [simon.cann@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:simon.cann@herefordshire.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting.

# **Agenda for the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

## **Membership**

**Chairperson**                      **Councillor Toni Fagan**

**Vice-chairperson**              **Councillor Liz Harvey**

**Councillor Frank Cornthwaite**

**Councillor Clare Davies**

**Councillor Dave Davies**

**Councillor Robert Highfield**

**Councillor Ben Proctor**

**Co-opted  
members**

Jan Frances  
Stuart Mitchell

**(Families' Representative)**  
**(Parent Governor Secondary)**

## Agenda

	Pages
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive apologies for absence.	
<b>2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES</b> To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.	
<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive declarations of interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.	
<b>4. MINUTES</b> To receive the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 January 2025.	9 - 20
<b>HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS</b>	
The deadline for the submission of questions for this meeting is 5pm on Wednesday 12 March 2025.	
Questions must be submitted to <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a> .	
Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.	
Accepted questions and the responses will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at <a href="http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved">www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</a>	
<b>5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b> To receive any written questions from members of the public.	
<b>6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</b> To receive any written questions from members of the council.	
<b>7. FINDINGS OF THE OFSTED AND CARE QUALITY COMMISSION AREA SEND INSPECTION</b> To share the feedback report from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) following the area SEND inspection of Herefordshire conducted in December 2024.	21 - 42
<b>8. SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS</b> For the committee to consider the support offered to children with additional needs and their families.	43 - 52
<b>9. RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE</b> An update to the committee on responses to its recommendations made in 2024.	53 - 64
<b>10. WORK PROGRAMME</b>	65 - 90

To consider the work programme for the committee.

**11. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 27 May 2025, 2pm



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We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions.

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- Inspect minutes of the council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the cabinet or individual cabinet members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting (a list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. The council's constitution is available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution)
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The location of the office and details of city bus services can be viewed at:  
[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services-](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services-)

**The seven principles of public life  
(Nolan Principles)**

**1. Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**2. Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**3. Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**4. Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**5. Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**6. Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

**7. Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.





## **Minutes of the meeting of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held at Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Tuesday 21 January 2025 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor Toni Fagan (chairperson)  
Councillor Liz Harvey (vice-chairperson)

**Councillors:** Frank Cornthwaite, Dave Davies, Robert Highfield and Ben Proctor

**In attendance:** Councillors Ivan Powell (Cabinet Member Children and Young People)

**Officers:** Simon Cann (Committee Clerk), Ruth Coals (QA Lead for Implementation of Working Together 24), Kathryn Cobain (Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Quality H&W ICB), Kevin Crompton (Independent Scrutineer), Anne-Marie Kemp (Safeguarding Partnerships Business Manager), Heather Manning (Head of Safeguarding & Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Adults, Children and Children Looked After), Alfie Rees-Glinos (Democratic Services Support Assistant), Tina Russell (Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People), Superintendent Helen Wain (Chair of Community Safety Partnership/West Mercia Police), Christine Wellington (Head of MASH and Assessment), Danial Webb (Statutory Scrutiny Officer)

### **42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Jan Frances (Co-opted member families' representative).

### **43. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

No named substitutes had been received.

### **44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **45. MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

### **46. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A document containing questions received from members of the public and the responses provided was published as a supplement to the agenda on the Herefordshire Council website. Supplementary questions and responses given, are attached at Appendix 1 to the minutes of this meeting.

**47. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

No questions had been received from members of the council.

**48. HEREFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP - YEARLY REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS REPORT 2023-24**

The Independent Scrutineer introduced and provided an overview of the report focusing on the progress, challenges and future actions of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).

It was explained that the report covered the period from April 2023 to March 2024 and evaluated governance, data management and multi-agency collaboration in safeguarding children. It was noted that the partnership structure had undergone revisions to align it with the 'Working Together 2023' national guidance.

**Progress and key achievements**

It was pointed out that multi-agency governance processes were clearer and more structured, which had led to an improvement in accountability.

The partnership had developed a multi-agency data set to track safeguarding issues across services. More effective data sharing had helped partners to identify risks faster, and the use of audits, performance reviews and case studies had increased insight into the service effectiveness.

The improved response to child exploitation was noted and the 'Get Safe' team was highlighted as an example of effective multi-agency collaboration. Police intelligence had been used to identify hotspots for exploitation risks and there had been stronger information sharing between agencies, which had led to more timely interventions.

There had been increased training for social workers and police officers to recognise and address safeguarding concerns. New policies and procedures had been introduced for case audits and performance management.

The role of independent scrutiny had been strengthened to ensure objective evaluation of the partnership's performance and the lead safeguarding partners had approved a new scrutiny plan, which aligned with national expectations.

**Challenges Identified**

The Independent Scrutineer explained that embedding the Working Together 2023 guidance had required policy updates, training and procedural changes and that full implementation was still in progress.

It was noted that whilst data sharing had improved, analysis across agencies still needed refinement. Each agency collected separate data, making it difficult to form a unified picture of child safeguarding issues, but the quality and effectiveness group had been working on integrating and analysing multi-agency data more effectively.

Staff turnover in social work and key safeguarding roles remained a challenge, but the partnership was focusing on retention strategies and improving supervision quality.

Regarding case file quality and documentation issues it had been noted that some care plans and assessments lacked child-centred language, which made it hard to track

meaningful interventions. It had been pointed out that social workers needed to improve recording and documentation especially for children with complex needs. It was also stated that managers needed to ensure better oversight of case work to prevent delays in interventions.

### **Future Actions and Next Steps**

The Independent Scrutineer outlined the next steps for the partnership. There would be a need to strengthen and enhance governance measures to hold agencies accountable for safeguarding performance, along with regular multi-agency reviews to ensure ongoing progress.

The multi-agency data system would need to be refined to provide clearer insights on child safety trends and ensure better coordination between the police, social care and health sectors.

Additional training needed to be provided for frontline workers to enhance risk assessment and case management skills and there was a need to increase awareness of Working Together 2023 guidance across all safeguarding agencies.

There would be a drive to expand early help services to prevent children from entering the child protection system, along with greater engagement with families to support at-risk children before serious intervention was needed.

The Independent Scrutineer praised the overall progress made by the partnership in relation to governance and child exploitation response, but pointed out that further improvement and refinement was required in data usage. The partnership also needed to continue embedding national safeguarding guidance effectively.

1. The committee welcomed the progress that had been made, but enquired whether the list of safeguarding concerns was too focused on national issues that weren't relevant to Herefordshire and that local risks were being missed or not adequately addressed.
  - The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People pointed out that the list addressed everything on the national agenda. All items were dealt with proportionally and there was a risk of developing a false sense of security by focusing too heavily on certain areas and not highlighting and being aware of everything on the national agenda.
  - The Superintendent West Mercia Police highlighted the risk of associating and linking certain issues to certain ethnic groups.
  - An assurance was given that safeguarding policies were regularly updated based on evolving risks and that local risk assessments ensured safeguarding efforts reflected Herefordshire-specific concerns and were applied proportionally.
2. The committee asked what 'good' would look like and where the partnership expected to be in a number of years.
  - The Head of MASH and Assessment stated that 'good' would involve partners working well together, talking with families and ensuring consent from families was sought. It was also important that, where

appropriate, people were signposted to early help rather than the heavy end of child protection.

- It was pointed out that timeliness in responding to risk had improved and almost 97% of all information was being assessed with a decision made within 24 hours, and that this would continue in the coming years.
  - The Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Quality Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board explained that partners were actively challenging each other and that ability to safeguard was no longer a red-rated risk.
  - The Head of Safeguarding & Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Adults, Children and Children Looked After highlighted the connections being built and grown regarding leaders within providers, whereby organisations were linking in with children's services, education and other areas to formulate plans around the table for children and families. It was anticipated that in the future this kind of activity would be strengthened through hub working.
3. The committee enquired about the impact of leadership changes within the partnerships and if the structure in place was robust enough to ensure stability.
- The Independent Scrutineer explained that changes to leadership within children's services had been well managed and had had a positive impact, although it was noted the situation was slightly more complicated within adult's services.
4. The committee welcomed the inclusion of recommendations at the end of the report, but suggested that given the report was had been released some time ago it might have been useful to include an appendix containing the implementation plan with associated partnership lead information and timescales for implementing recommendations.
5. The committee enquired about what assurance was sought that the learning from case audits had been successfully embedded in the various aspects of the partnership's working.
- The Independent Scrutineer explained that the joint case review group used a spreadsheet of actions to monitor progress and there were challenges from partners when action was not happening. Where it was identified that action wasn't happening there would be a review and as part of the audit process partners would be required to demonstrate how they were complying with safeguarding duties, they would also be required to demonstrate that learning from case reviews had been embedded within the organisation.
6. The committee enquired about the ability of agencies to analyse and act on multi-agency data. It was asked if data use had improved since the previous report and whether it had moved from not being used at all, to being used to look back and to the future as a predictive tool.
- The Independent Scrutineer explained that the partnership was now actively collecting and analysing multi-agency data and was looking to collaborate with Worcestershire's safeguarding Partnership to form a joint data group that would share learning.

- There was a still a reactive element to data use, which meant it was being used to assess past performance rather than predict future trends. The plan was to move away from historical analysis to predictive modelling. In future safeguarding strategies additional data analysis expertise would be sought to improve forecasting capabilities.
7. The committee enquired as to how quickly Working Together 2023 was being implemented, especially in relation to the 'Think Family' approach.
- The Independent Scrutineer state that implementing the Working Together 2023 statutory guidance had been challenging, but engagement was improving and plans were in place to finalise the integration of multi-agency data for a shared data set. Multi-agency audits with a stronger focus on cross-agency collaboration would be taking place and improved training for agencies was being put in place to assist them in meeting Working Together 2023 requirements.
  - It had been a priority to embed the Think Family approach to ensure that all agencies worked collaboratively with families. The current partnership pledge lacked explicit reference to working with parents/carers, but plans were underway to update the pledge and embed the Think Family model into all safeguarding policies and training. Practitioner checklists were being put in place to ensure family engagement and restorative practice initiatives would further strengthen collaboration with families.
8. The committee asked for an update regarding education and multi-agency collaboration.
- The Independent Scrutineer explained that there had been improved education sector engagement, with designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) participating in discussions and networking events to ensure information was being shared with schools.
  - There had been greater education and voluntary sector involvement in decision making although more work was needed in this area. It was noted that there was a stronger challenge culture among partners and that cross-agency training sessions would maintain consistent safeguarding standards.
9. The committee asked what was being done to ensure case reviews and learning implementation was being embedded with a view to improving child protection outcomes.
- The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People explained case review processes had been tightened to ensure learning was effectively embedded. A joint case review group actively monitored whether learning from past reviews was being incorporated into practice. Actions from serious case reviews were now tracked to ensure that agencies implemented improvements.
10. The committee asked if further updates on case management improvements could be provided in future meetings.

11. The committee raised concerns about care leavers under the age of 25 falling into a gap between the children and adult safeguarding partnerships and whether the children's safeguarding framework should extend to care leavers.
  - The Independent Scrutineer explained that a joint triage process existed, but lacked formal integration with children's safeguarding reviews and there was no clear mechanism in place to ensure care leavers continued to receive safeguarding oversight.
12. The committee felt that formally including care leavers in the Children's Safeguarding Partnership framework and ensuring multi-agency reviews included past care leavers, when relevant, would be useful.
  - The Independent Scrutineer explained that there was a potential need to advocate for national policy changes to strengthen care leaver safeguarding.
13. The Committee asked about the status of continued funding for the partnership.
  - The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People stated that the budget for the partnership remained secure for the coming year and that future funding discussions would allow for alignment with West Mercia Police and other local safeguarding boards.
14. The committee requested that next year's report be added to the committee work programme with a view to bringing it to the committee as early as possible.
  - The Statutory Scrutiny Officer confirmed that a next year's report had been added to the committee's work programme.
15. The committee sought an explanation and guidance for elected members of the council in the context of their duties as corporate parents, especially in relation to care leavers under the age of 25.
16. The committee expressed frustration around not having access to information on children that they were corporate parents of, which limited their ability to support and assist the children.
  - The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People explained that the role of the corporate parent was defined within legislation, but suggested that guidance and clarity on the responsibilities of corporate parents could potentially be provided by children's services and director of governance and law.
17. The committee enquired about historic comment made by the Department of Education that the speed of the roll out of multi-agency restorative practice training was not keeping pace with that of children's social care.
  - The Independent Scrutineer explained that this situation had been addressed over the last year and that partners present in the room would be able to confirm that.
  - The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People stated that single agency training for education, health and other partners had been delivered and that the focus had moved to delivering joint training sessions.

- The Safeguarding Partnerships Business Manager explained that 20 joint training sessions had been scheduled to take place between January and March 2025.
- The Head of Safeguarding & Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Adults, Children and Children Looked After stated that single and joint training sessions in health were fully booked.

18. The committee asked how many practitioners had been trained and how many needed to be trained.

- The Safeguarding Partnerships Business Manager explained that a review would take place at the end of March 2025 to establish the need for further training.

At the conclusion of the debate, the committee discussed potential recommendations and the following resolutions were agreed.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- 1. The partnership ensures that recommendations from the 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness onwards have an identified partnership lead and an indicative timeframe for completion;**
- 2. The partnership appends an implementation plan for the recommendations in its 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness; and**
- 3. Herefordshire Council's director of children's services and director of governance and law provide guidance to elected members on their corporate parent responsibilities in the event of a significant incident, or death, concerning a care leaver under the age of 25.**

#### **49. MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK**

The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People introduced and gave an overview of the report, which focused on the summary letter following the Ofsted monitoring visit that had reviewed Herefordshire Council and its partners' efforts in protecting vulnerable children from extra-familial risk, particularly child exploitation. An overview of the directorate's responses to the Ofsted findings was also provided. The key points covered are detailed below:

The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People explained that the purpose of the Ofsted monitoring visit had been to assess the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding, with a primary focus on how Herefordshire's children's services, police, and partners protected children from exploitation and extra-familial risks (such as gang involvement, criminal/sexual exploitation, and abuse outside the home). The visit was part of an ongoing review following previous criticisms of Herefordshire's child protection services.

#### **Areas of Improvement**

The Multi-Agency Working and "Get Safe" Specialist Team was praised as an effective multi-disciplinary hub focused on identifying and addressing child exploitation risks. The team worked across various agencies, including police, education, health services, and children's social care. Information-sharing between agencies had significantly improved, making interventions more timely and targeted.

Early Help and Risk Identification was being used effectively to screen cases quickly and provide intervention at the right time. The front door services (referral and assessment processes) enabled timely risk assessments, helping children access appropriate support before risks escalated.

There was evidence of proactive intervention regarding disruption and prevention work. The police had identified and disrupted exploitation hotspot and multi-agency teams had been working together to prevent exploitation. Schools, social workers, and police were engaging in awareness campaigns and intervention efforts.

Ofsted had noted an improved quality of risk assessments and had noted that social workers had a clear understanding of risks and that case assessments were detailed and comprehensive. Risk assessments were leading to effective protective actions for children.

Social workers and frontline staff had expressed confidence in leadership, stating that senior managers were visible, supportive, and committed to improvements. A strong culture of improvement and accountability had also been noted among staff.

### **Areas for Improvement**

The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People noted that Ofsted had described some child protection plans as "formulaic" rather than being tailored to individual children's needs. While social workers had been able to verbally describe bespoke plans, written records had sometimes lacked specific, child-focused language.

The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People explained that with regard to parental engagement and initial meetings, the findings noted that parents and young people were not always involved early enough in risk assessment meetings. Ofsted suggested securing parental consent and engagement earlier to improve the effectiveness of initial safeguarding interventions.

The findings indicated that some vulnerable children with complex needs were experiencing multiple placement moves, increasing their risk of exploitation. Ofsted had flagged concerns about teenagers in care struggling with placement stability, making them more vulnerable to extra-familial risks.

Ofsted had noted that supervision was taking place regularly, but it was not always driving effective case progression. Some cases had shown signs of drift and delay, particularly those involving high-risk adolescents.

Return home interviews for missing children were generally timely and effective, but not enough children were engaging in them. Approximately 60% of children offered an interview accepted it, but Ofsted suggested increasing participation rates.

The Superintendent West Mercia Police explained that the 'Get Safe' model had strengthened police involvement in safeguarding. Police were focusing on disrupting exploitation hotspots and ensuring better intelligence-sharing with social services.

A new "Voice of the Child" initiative was underway to train officers to better identify signs of exploitation.



The Superintendent West Mercia Police acknowledged that more work was needed to fully integrate the 'Think Family' approach, ensuring families were actively involved in prevention efforts.

The Chair invited debate on the report from the committee members:

1. The committee welcomed the progress noted in the Ofsted report, particularly improvements in multi-agency cooperation and risk assessment.
2. The committee asked how quickly changes were being embedded into practice.
  - The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People explained that actions had been agreed and were being implemented in response to the findings and Ofsted was expected to conduct another follow-up visit in the coming months. A progress update would be scheduled for a future committee meeting.
3. The committee enquired as to whether all social workers were receiving adequate training in writing child-centred care plans.
  - The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People gave an assurance that moving forward all social workers would use child-centred language in care plans and would be provided with additional training and would be instructed to improve record-keeping by ensuring that children's voices and individual circumstances were clearly reflected in case notes.
4. The committee stressed the need for a more structured approach to engaging families in safeguarding discussions.
  - The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People explained the service was committed to reviewing its approach to parental involvement to ensure that families were included and engaged with earlier in the risk assessment process. The service would explore and consider ways in which safeguarding meetings could be made more inclusive for families.
5. The committee asked what could be done to boost participation in missing child Interviews.
  - The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People stated that multiple follow-up attempts would be made to engage children in these interviews and make sure that they felt safe to share their experiences.
6. The committee raised concerns about ensuring vulnerable teenagers received stable, long-term placements.
  - The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People described how a critical review of approximately 20 unstable cases had been launched - led by senior management - to explore ways to provide greater stability and potentially reunify some young people with their families. The service was working towards reducing placement moves for vulnerable young people.

- Social workers were instructed to include a summary of the previous three months' supervision notes in each report, ensuring better case continuity and accountability.
7. The committee asked whether there were enough experienced social workers to manage complex cases.
- The Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People confirmed that while agency workers were still being used, the council was prioritizing recruitment and retention of permanent staff. Case allocation was being carefully managed to ensure experienced workers handled the most complex cases.
8. The committee noted that the Ofsted monitoring visit had highlighted significant progress in safeguarding vulnerable children. The committee acknowledged the improvements but stressed the need for continued oversight to ensure long-term change.
- The Cabinet Member Children and Young People noted that the Ofsted report had been strong and that hopefully this would be reflected across other areas of work.
  - The Cabinet Member stressed the importance of acknowledging that this had to be a multi-partnership effort to ensure that not only professional agencies, but also communities were aware of the risks and were able to elevate concerns when they had them. It was challenging and complex work that needed to be carried out right to protect children and families who were vulnerable.

At the conclusion of the debate the committee discussed potential recommendations and the following resolutions were agreed.

**Resolved:**

1. That the committee note the report.

**50. WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee agreed to hold a work programme meeting at an unspecified date.

**51. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 18 March 2025, 2pm

**52. APPENDIX 1 - PUBLIC SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

**Supplementary questions from members of the public – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, 21 January 2025**

Question Number	Questioner	Supplementary Question	Question to
SPQ 1	Mr James McGeown	council's constitution references 'statutory' co-opted members.	Children and

	Weobley	<p>You have no Churchmen:</p> <p>"I won't be recommending a replacement from the Diocese until I am satisfied that there is any point,"</p> <p>Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001 and constitution require Herefordshire Council to recruit three: There is but one!</p> <p>4.5.7 of the constitution require "teaching sector" and "families" Representatives: There is but one!</p> <p>Can you provide reassurance that should this committee continuing its 2025 work program it wouldn't be operating against the The Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012, The Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001, and Herefordshire Council's constitution?</p>	Young People Scrutiny Committee
<p><b>Response:</b> <i>Section 4.5.7 of Herefordshire Council's constitution allows for the appointment of co-opted statutory education representatives to its Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, one representative as nominated by the diocese of Hereford and one representative as nominated by the archdiocese of Cardiff. It also allows for the appointment of three parent governors as elected from the school sector. However, although we require these positions to be filled, this is not required for the committee to continue to operate. It may still lawfully meet and carry out its work with vacancies to its membership.</i></p> <p><i>Herefordshire Council continues to seek nominations to the co-opted statutory representative positions on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.</i></p>			

Question Number	Questioner	Supplementary Question	Question to
SPQ 2	Mr Eddy Parkinson Leintwardine	<p>An internet search shows this council in 2016 placed a child with a sex offender in Bradford. The child told BBC news "My whole time up there was torture, every day was a struggle, not having my parents there," adding he had suffered physical and verbal abuse while living there, but not sexual.'</p> <p>I have met professionals concerned about current failures of duty of care by this council.</p> <p>Children may be being placed into the care of</p>	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

		<p>persons deemed such a risk to children that police have made referrals based on legitimate concerns that could lead to prosecution.</p> <p>Will the council undertake a full forensic review of cases past and present to be sure that no children are in placements with registered sex offenders or those flagged by police as a potential danger.</p>	
<p><b>Response:</b>  <i>We are keen to give further assurances in this matter. Therefore, the Director of Children's Services (DCS) with support from appropriate service directors, will carry out a review of all current placements to provide additional senior management overview in each case. We will review for each Disclosure and Barring Service DBS and police information pertaining to the individual carers to at the time of the suitability assessment, alongside a review of the fostering approval panel minutes. We will review any cases where any new allegations of sexual offences have been made post placement and will ensure the risk assessment and outcome decision in relation to each case is appropriate, basing our review on the starting position that no child should be placed with any person convicted of sexual offences against a child. We will cross reference all Police registered Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) level 2 and level 3 offenders against our list of registered carers to ensure if any child is placed with any MAPPA individual a risk assessment of suitability has been completed. We will also share communications with all staff on this review to reiterate our position on this matter. We will complete this work by 31<sup>st</sup> March 25.</i></p>			

The meeting ended at 16:56

**Chairperson**



# Title of report: Area SEND Inspection

**Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date: 18 March 2025**

**Report by: Cabinet member children and young people;**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

To share the feedback report from Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) following the area SEND inspection of Herefordshire conducted in December 2024.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) **Scrutiny receive and note the feedback from the published Ofsted report (Appendix A).**
- b) **The committee to make any recommendations, or suggested actions, in connection to the content and findings set out in Appendix A of this report.**

## **Alternative options**

1. There are no alternative options. The local area partnership's arrangements have been judged as leading to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements. The next full area SEND inspection will be within approximately three years.

## **Key considerations**

2. Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Liz Farr, Tel: 01432 260897, email: [liz.farr@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:liz.farr@herefordshire.gov.uk)

3. Herefordshire's local area SEND inspection took place on 2 to 6 December 2024. Ofsted and CQC findings in full can be found in appendix one.
4. The summary of findings is set out below with partner/service response where appropriate.
5. Ofsted and CQC found that, *'Families of children and young people with SEND have varying opinions about their experiences in Herefordshire... Key leaders across the partnership know the variable experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND across Herefordshire.'*

### **Partnership and Leadership**

6. The report notes that leadership of the local area partnership has strengthened, both at strategic and operational level. Investment in workforce development and capacity is identified as a strength. The partnership has been highly responsive to adjusting the capacity of some teams to manage with increase in demand across services, such as in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), the School's Well-Being and Emotional Support teams (WEST) and the health service therapists' teams.
7. Inspectors notes that investment in additional staffing and training across all partners has been effective in improving the identification, assessment and meeting of children and young people's needs.
8. Staff across the whole partnership are referenced strongly for building positive relationships with children and young people and listening to their views. The report notes, *Professionals know children and young people well.'*
9. A strong feature throughout the report is how well the local area partnership supports children and young people to prepare successfully for their next steps, including adulthood.
10. The report highlights the need for the local area to promote more widely how families can secure the help and support they need, including communicating the *'comprehensive short breaks offer'* more widely and *'...raising awareness of pathways to access assessment and support services.'*

### **Co Production**

11. Co-Production across the local area partnership is described as *'strong.'* Inspectors cited the recent development of the Youth Employment Hub as, *'Already making a significant difference for the young people who access the service.'*
12. Our partnership is proud of its coordinated work with our Parent Carer Voice (PCV), children and young people and families. Inspectors noted, *'The development of the 'Herefordshire Helpers' has raised the profile of children and young people at the highest levels. Parent carer voice Herefordshire told inspectors that they feel heard and that their views are acted on by the partnership.'*

### **Education**

13. The full complement of educational settings across Herefordshire are referred to positively throughout the report. Affirmative remarks about early years, schools, specialist settings, alternative providers and residential special schools, including those located out-of-area, are referenced throughout the report.
14. It is pleasing that vulnerable groups are noted as well supported by our alternative providers, including Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service (HPRS). The report notes, *'For children and young people with SEND who might have faced exclusion, absence, or medical needs, the*

*pupil referral unit (PRU), and other AP, provide timely intervention to reintegrate them into long-term, successful education, training and employment.* It is important to note that the number of available places at HPRS is insufficient for the current level of demand and the buildings are in a poor state of repair. A business case to relocate the two HPRS centres on to one site in improved facilities, and to increase capacity is well underway.

15. The range of additional activities available to children and young people, beyond school and college was reported as a strength. Inspectors reported that early help services play a key role in directing and supporting families. The report notes, *'Children and young people with SEND spoken to during the inspection valued these opportunities to socialise with other children and young people with similar needs.'* The additional needs service notes that publicising the local offer more widely is a helpful next step.
16. Children and young people reported that they felt well supported and listened to by their school and college staff. The report notes that access to high-quality provision, including alternative provision, is preparing children and young people well for the next stage of education. Our specialist settings are praised for being, *'innovative in finding appropriate solutions for meeting the most complex learning and health needs.'*
17. Ofsted found that, *'Across education, health and social care, there is variability in the timeliness of identification and assessment of SEND and issuing of EHC plans in the majority of cases.'* The additional needs service notes that the issuing of EHC plans is within statutory timescales in most cases. Herefordshire's performance against this measure is significantly above that seen nationally.
18. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) network is praised for its joint work between schools, social care and health providers.

### **Social Care**

19. It is pleasing that inspectors found *'children and young people with SEND known to early help services access swift support from education, health and social care teams where appropriate. This is in line with ensuring that we understand the needs of children and their families, and that they have the right help at the right time.'*
20. The report identifies some real strengths in our social care teams including the quality of assessments that lead to appropriate support for children and young people. Inspectors commented, *'Disabled children and young people who receive a service from social care are well supported into adulthood.'*
21. The report recognises the strengths and continued commitment to children in care to ensure they understand their story. *'Some older children and young people with SEND in care are sensitively involved in developing their life stories, which aids their understanding and recollection of events and people that are important to them.'*
22. Inspectors describe effective and appropriate support for disabled young people who are leaving care. This includes receiving, *'Appropriate support to develop their independence skills for when they reach adulthood, and they are involved in preparing their pathway plan.'*
23. The Children with Disabilities Team is referenced as a strength in the partnership. Inspectors comment, *'Workers within the children with disabilities team understand children's needs. They are regularly visited; most disabled children establish strong relationships with their workers. Assessments are detailed and give a clear understanding of the child's world and the family context.'*

24. The inspectors identified that, *'Most disabled children and young people known to social care have plans that fully identify their needs. Plans are reviewed through regular multi-agency meetings, ensuring that most children and young people's plans progress and their needs are met. However, for some children and young people with SEND subject to child protection plans, changes in social workers can lead to them experiencing delays in having their needs met because records are not transferred effectively enough.'* The local authority is conscious and committed to the need for a permanent and stable workforce for children and families, and this is an ever-improving picture.
25. The inspectors highlighted the *'Comprehensive offer for short breaks, and currently, there is no waiting list for specialist short breaks for those children with the most complex learning and health needs. Much work has also been completed recently to increase the range of providers for short breaks. However, this offer is not consistently well communicated to children, young people and their families'*. The partnership is committed to making sure that children and families know about the services and how to access services.

## **Health**

26. *'There are no extended waits for the core child and adolescent mental health services (CAHMS) team, meaning that children and young people are seen quickly. This is a timely and supportive service in identifying and supporting mental health.'*
27. The inspectorate recognised the positive impact of new ways of working, including drop-in clinics for speech and language therapy and physiotherapy and access to early years 'while you wait' groups.
28. Inspectors reported *'... variability with access to health services in Herefordshire depending on age and need.'*
29. It was reported that there are comprehensive services for young children with a diagnosis of autism but limited for older children.
30. Health services transformation plans for therapies and neurodevelopment services were shared with inspectors noting these are 'at an early stage' and have not yet significantly reduced waiting times. The local area partnership is committed to developing these at pace to bring about a stronger service offer to families.

## **Summary of the Area SEND Inspection**

31. Four areas of improvement are identified focused on: reducing waiting times across health services; keeping families well informed about support while waiting for assessment and diagnosis of neurodevelopment conditions; ensure sufficient staffing capacity and stability across health services; promoting more widely the local offer to families.
32. The report makes four recommendations for improvement. This feedback and the priorities will inform the work of the partnership to improve the experiences and outcomes for all children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in Herefordshire.
33. The local area partnership will receive its next full inspection in three years.

## **National Background**

34. The Government SEND Review which was launched in 2019, concluded in March 2022, with the publication of the SEND 'Green Paper'. This paper acknowledged the current pressures around SEND nationally. The paper concluded that:

- a) Outcomes for children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision are poor.



- b) Navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for children, young people and their families
  - c) The system is not delivering value for money for children, young people and families.
35. In July 2021, the Department for Education (DFE) published a set of documents around their 'High Needs Safety Valve' project. Local Authorities with the greatest deficits in their high needs funding took part in a project to reduce deficits and build sustainable local systems. They set out two goals of a sustainable system:
- a) Appropriately managing demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), including assessment processes that are fit for purpose.
  - b) Use of appropriate and cost-effective provision. This includes ensuring mainstream schools are equipped and encouraged to meet needs where possible, whilst maintaining high standards for all pupils.

## **Local Context**

36. The proportion of children and young people with additional needs has grown exponentially in Herefordshire, mirroring trends seen nationally. For context, within Herefordshire at January 2024, 4.6% of the total school population had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. This is slightly lower than the England average (4.8%) and in line with the regional average across the West Midlands. At the Autumn 2024 census, the percentage of children in Herefordshire Schools with SEN Support needs was 16%. This is the same at the same point last year and a slight increase from 2022. Of the children with an EHC Plan, 919 are educated in a mainstream school, nursery or college, 472 are educated in a local authority special school (maintained or academy) and 242 are educated other than at school, awaiting a school or attending an independent school.

## **Funding Implications**

37. Figures show that, as of March 2023, two-thirds (65%) of local authorities had cumulative deficits on the part of their budgets reserved for schools spending, with the primary reason being the cost of meeting their statutory duties to those with SEND. The combined deficit of these local authorities totalled £1.6bn, up on £1.5bn the year before (both figures in 2022/23 prices).
38. The most recent figures show that the biggest forecast deficits by next March include Hampshire County Council (£312m by March 2026), West Sussex (£222m), Norfolk (£186m), Cheshire East (£154m), Warwickshire (£151m), Wiltshire (£117m), Oxfordshire (£111m), Gloucestershire (£108m), Somerset (£100m), and Staffordshire (£100m).
39. Analysis of two-thirds of English upper-tier councils found at least 13 have forecast accumulated SEND deficits of between £50m and £100m, including Sefton (£86m), Hertfordshire (£81m), Cornwall (£70m), Cambridgeshire (£70m), Leicestershire (£66m), Merton (£65m), Central Bedfordshire (£65m) and Wokingham (£61m). (Source: The Guardian).
40. When the Herefordshire High Needs Budget for 2024/25 was approved it was acknowledged that the budget position would be reviewed in the Autumn Term. The forecasted in-year deficit and the cumulative DSG deficit balance forecast to 31 March 2025 is £17.2 million.
41. The issue can be traced back to 2014, when reforms increased the amount of support available to children and young people with SEND – something that was widely acknowledged as needed. The 2011 green paper that kicked off the reforms describes “a system where parents feel they have to battle for the support they need, where they are passed from pillar to post, and where bureaucracy and frustration face them at every step”. But variable levels of inclusivity in

mainstream schools nationally and limited capacity in state special schools meant the state school system was not able to absorb all the rapidly increasing demand. This has led to widespread use of independent provision – funded by local authorities, at a cost far greater than that of a place in a state school. In Herefordshire our local special schools are at capacity, and we have approximately 200 children in independent provision, 120 of which could be educated in our special schools if there was available space.

42. The Department for Education is taking action to try and reduce the deficit by supporting the local authorities that have the largest deficits, under a programme named 'safety valve'. Herefordshire is not included.
43. The Government's SEND and alternative provision improvement plan, published last year, is designed to make mainstream education more inclusive and to standardise provision nationally, which could reduce the need to use independent provision. It also promises earlier intervention, which can help prevent a child's needs from escalating. But this is not a quick fix. The statutory override allowing local authorities to keep deficits off their balance sheets currently runs up to March 2026.

## **Working Together**

44. Children without an EHCP are supported by schools, health and social care colleagues by following the graduated approach to ensure that children are supported wherever they are on the continuum of need. Schools can request funding to support children with additional needs who do not have an EHCP plan which allows them to put support in place quickly when they have identified that it is needed. Schools have access to a range of education outreach services from the council and health to support children both with and without an EHCP. Support could be from specialist health teams, Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Inclusion Service, Autism Outreach, Physical and Sensory Support Services or Education Psychology.
45. Currently, 38 primary schools are accessing up to 25 hours of support to help them identify and meet the needs of children with neurodivergent conditions (autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, language disorders etc. – this is a joint health and council initiative.
46. Herefordshire has a Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) that works across different parts of the health system to ensure that health assessments, planning and support is delivered in accordance with current legislation (Children and Families Act 2014) and statutory guideline (Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years 2015). The Designated Clinical Officer is a point of contact for schools, Council and other partners, into and between different parts of the health system, with a focus on improving the quality of experience of health support for children, young people who have SEND. The Designated Clinical Officer provides advice and training to health practitioners on SEND and undertakes regular audits as part of quality assurance of health sections in EHCPs. The post is key part of the Local Area Partnership.
47. The council has a Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) who ensures that colleagues across the social care space are supported to deliver the appropriate service to children and young people with SEND, whether this is a short break service or more intensive support. Both the DCO and DSCO along with school colleagues:
  - a) Attend the Education Health and Care Needs Assessment referral panel to identify the teams that are currently working with a child and giving information regarding medical/health/social care needs (now takes place twice a month with between 30-40 cases heard at each panel)
  - b) Attend the multi-disciplinary inclusion and engagement panel (remit for children and young people (CYP) unable to attend school for reasons of physical/mental health, CYP missing in education, CYP at high risk of permanent exclusion, requests for education other than at

- school for CYP with EHCPs) DCO and DSCO provide information relating to the CYP to help inform decision and to ensure health and social care teams are appropriately involved
- c) Participate in multi-agency audit activity with Head of Additional Needs and Designated Social Care Officer to look at lived experience of CYP with SEND identify positives and gaps in journey.
  - o Contribute to multi-agency residential school reviews aiming to achieve oversight of holistic needs of CYP with SEND.

48. Health is working to a transformation model of universal, targeted and specialist support across children's therapies services. The focus on outcomes and impact, not input, helps understand the difference that working in this way is making to children, young people and their families, with or without an EHC plan. From April – December 2024, the number of children waiting for Physiotherapy and Speech therapy reduced by around 50%, with most children being seen in under 36 weeks. Occupational Therapy has a small number of children waiting over 36 weeks for a first appointment.
49. What families will see differently is that there is easier access to advice and support with Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy drop-ins available for younger children. Supporting early identification of needs means more timely access to support to prevent needs escalating, and reassurance being given to families who do not need targeted or specialist support at this time. Working in partnership with Schools and SENCOs is resulting in improved access to advice and training on posture management, environments and equipment. Schools are identifying their learning needs, and the health teams are incorporating this into the training offer. Now, this relates to special schools in Herefordshire but will expand to mainstreams once the approach is established. The intention is to introduce link therapists for schools to further enhance support across the system.

### **LGA Review and Progress to Date**

50. In 2021 the LGA conducted a review of SEND services in Herefordshire. There were four recommendations:
  - a) Review effectiveness of resources, service delivery and systems to meet the child's needs and potential and the requirements of the SEND Green Paper
  - b) Establish the partnership governance and scrutiny arrangements at pace
  - c) Produce a multi-agency strategy with short, medium and long-term priorities
  - d) Develop a robust quality assurance framework for the local area with an immediate focus on all children with an EHCP open to Social Care and others with particular vulnerabilities
51. Since the LGA review actions to address the recommendations have been completed. A new SEND strategy was published with associated action plan. New governance arrangements established including the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Strategic Assurance Board and a regular cycle of multi-agency quality assurance activity.
52. Herefordshire's parent carer forum is Parent Carer Voice (PCV) Herefordshire, which is led by a steering group of parents who listen to and take forward the views and ideas of their members. PCV Herefordshire work in partnership with Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Integrated Care System (ICS) to make sure children and young people aged 0 – 25 years old with SEND, and their families, have their needs met. As a partnership, we have produced a co-production charter that sets out a working agreement and commitment to co-production of services for children and young people with SEND in the county. Our partners for the charter have included PCV Herefordshire, Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Integrated Care System (ICS), Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS Trust, Wye Valley NHS Trust and SENDIASS. Wherever

you see the co-production tree logo, it means that the event, training or document was created in a co-productive way with PCV Herefordshire, Herefordshire Council, the ICS and other relevant partners.

## **The Neuro-Development Pathway - Background**

53. Autism and ADHD are neurodevelopmental conditions which affect how the brain functions. ADHD is a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity (combined, predominantly inattentive or predominantly hyperactive-impulsive presentations). Autism affects the way that individuals communicate with other people and relate to and make sense of the world around them. Neurodivergent people will have their own strengths and may experience challenges that vary in degree. These can change over time presenting different support needs throughout a person's lifetime. Operating within a world designed for 'neurotypical' people poses a significant challenge for many neurodivergent children and young people. Social anxiety, low self-esteem, depression and exhaustion are common among neurodivergent children and young people as a result of navigating everyday life, social interactions and masking neurodivergent tendencies to 'fit in' (NICE, 2008, 2013). This can also impact on behaviours and escalate into serious mental health conditions.
54. Furthermore, inequalities in access to health care and historical lack of support for neurodivergent children and young people (CYP) contributes to the development of poor mental ill-health with wider longer-term impacts on education, societal and economic engagement.
55. Mental health issues are more common among neurodivergent populations for example, approximately 70% of children with Autism will experience a mental health difficulty, 40% will have at least two. ([Simonoff, et al., 2008](#)). Young people with autism are at increased risk of suicidality ([Gadow et al., 2012](#); [Mayes et al., 2013](#)). There is also evidence that neurodivergent children and young people may have more frequent and complex mental healthcare needs compared with their neurotypical peers (Lord, 2022, Chiri, 2012 & Walsh et al, 2019). However, they are also at risk of 'overshadowing' where a patient's mental health symptoms are misattributed to their neurodivergent presentation, resulting in access to mental health services or appropriate treatment being denied (NHSE, 2023). This is reflected in a recent NHSE Executive review of Tier 4 CAMHS services which found higher rates of autism in the CAMHS Tier 4 in-patient population than in general public, with up to 40% of children and young people with an Autism diagnosis.

## **Prevalence in Herefordshire**

56. World-wide prevalence of neurodivergence is estimated between 15% to 20% (Doyle, 2020). Using the national prevalence for children and young people, this suggests that the estimated population for Herefordshire is:
57. Changes in understanding and awareness of Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have also led to a significant increase in referrals for diagnostic assessments locally.
  - a) There were 135 referrals for children (under 10 years) for Autism diagnostic assessments in 2015-2016 rising to 251 in 2023-2024, an increase of 86%.
  - b) There were 52 referrals for children (over 10 years) for Autism diagnostic assessments in 2021 with 189 referrals in 2023-2024, an increase of 263%.
58. Historical data for ADHD diagnostic referrals is unavailable locally due to limitations in NHS data systems.
59. Locally, neurodivergent young people have told us that their emotional wellbeing / mental health are proportionally worse than their neurotypical peers. (Healthwatch Survey, 2024) and that access to mental health and well-being support is challenging. Due to the threshold for specialist

mental health service, neurodivergent CYP are often unable to access mental health support in a timely manner. Young people and parents describe getting to crisis point before support is received (Herefordshire and Worcestershire, All Age Autism Strategy, 2024-2029).

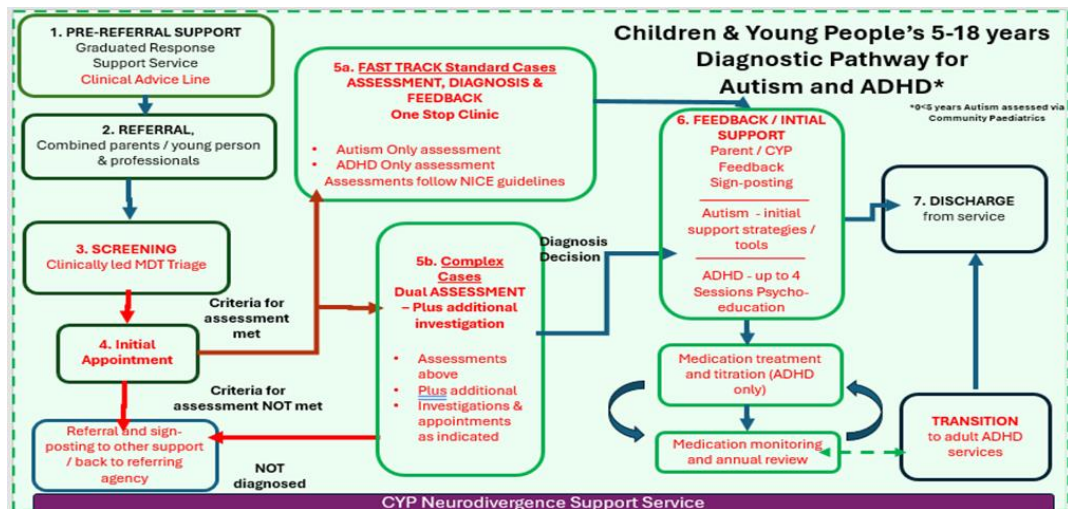
## **Neurodivergence Pathway**

60. Early intervention can reduce avoidable harm and distress and support the best chances of positive emotional health and well-being. Many children and young people can navigate daily life successfully if they and their families, receive support early to understand their neurodivergent traits and related lower-level mental health needs and develop strategies and tools to self-manage these. NICE Guidance recommends psychoeducation, peer and parenting support for children with [Autism](#) and [ADHD](#) and their families, with an objective to support children to learn about their presentation and how this relates to their mental health and wellbeing needs.
61. Current provision in Herefordshire has some small charities providing support to children and families. Mainstream services providing parenting support have been increasingly accessed by parents of neurodivergent children and young people who are unable to meet the needs of families who required more in-depth and tailored support. Parenting and emotionally supporting children and young people who have neurodivergent needs can be extremely challenging and requires differing techniques tailored to children and families. These areas were identified as gaps in the current service model during 2024.
62. Waiting times in Herefordshire for Autism and ADHD have been affected by the increase in demand and limited capacity of health services to see children in a timely manner. In 2024, effort has been focused on recovering waiting times. During the SEND Local Area Partnership Inspection, evidence was shared about work that has reduced waiting times. However, it is clear the current model is not sustainable or meets the needs of children and young people, as described above.
63. Over the past 18 months, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board has conducted engagement with parents, carers, young people and professionals to understand the challenges of the current system and the support needed by parents, carers and young people. This has informed revised models for (i) assessment and diagnosis and (ii) support service.

## **Assessment and Diagnosis**

64. Locally, Wye Valley NHS Trust (Community paediatricians) and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust (psychiatrists) deliver assessments and diagnosis of neurodivergence conditions. As part of the coproduction, a new model for assessment has been developed, that would create a single service with the appropriate workforce to assess, diagnosis and treat for neurodivergence conditions.
65. The Neurodivergence Support Service would be needs-led for young people aged 0-25 years and their families who present with, or show signs of, a neurodivergent need. This would provide early intervention to understand their neurodivergent traits such as sensory & communication needs, provide support on common challenges such as eating, sleeping, emotional regulation and behavioural issues. Support would be provided to families to develop strategies and tools to navigate and manage these. The service would be separate from, but wrap around, the diagnostic process.
66. Specifications have been written and agreed for a combined Autism and ADHD service and a support service for children, young people and families. The new model is detailed in figure 1.

*Figure 1: Combined Autism and ADHD Diagnostic Pathway 5-18 years & Support Service for 0-25 years*



67. In addition to the revised model outlined above, NHS England require all Integrated Care Boards to establish new local Right to Choose processes and accredit a minimum of 5 providers to deliver Autism and ADHD assessments for under 18s. These are to be delivered against locally agreed specifications to which providers are accredited by the ICB and contracted to deliver against. In November 2024, HWICB signed-off a combined under 18s Autism and ADHD Right to Choose service specification, and this has since been followed by separate specifications for Autism and for ADHD, to ensure that families can access the right level of assessment.

### Support for Children, Young People and their Families

68. A CYP Neurodivergence Support Delivery Group was established to co-produce proposals to consider how services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire could be improved. The group consists of representatives from education, social care, health, voluntary sector experts with lived experience & parent carers. The proposal for a CYP Neurodivergence Emotional Well-being Support Service for young people aged 0-25 years and their families has been developed by this group. It is envisaged that the model of care would be delivered across Herefordshire with a new dedicated service that would collaborate with existing community settings (such as Family Hubs/Children's Centres) to enable delivery in local areas as well as providing an on-line offer for accessibility. This would result in differentiated levels of support and the offer would include:
- information, advice and signposting to navigate the system and existing provision
  - parent workshops, training & peer support groups
  - 1:1 and family support
  - and referral to targeted services where required.
69. The aim of the service would be to provide:
- a needs-led service to support the mental health and well-being of for those who present with, or show signs of, a neurodivergent need; prevent development and escalation of lower-level mental health issues such as anxiety and depression
  - provide early intervention to CYP to enable them to understand their neurodivergent traits such as sensory & communication needs, flexibility, attention, and develop self-management strategies to support their everyday lives and build resilience
  - provide support on common challenges which affect mental health such as sleeping, emotional regulation, relationships and behavioural issues



- d. validate families and create space for them to understand their situation, their strengths and develop the skills to support their child to achieve good outcomes and quality of life for the whole family
  - e. provide evidence-based training programmes (such as Non-violent Resistance Training, Hope Programme, Yvonne Newbold, New Forest Parenting Programme (NFPP) to empower families to make informed choices and parenting support which is in the best interests of their CYP
  - f. provide support to parent carers to access benefits, housing and finance advice to enable them to manage factors that may impact on their ability to support their child
  - g. provide expertise and support to mental health services to better understand the needs of neurodivergent CYP
  - h. support individual neurodivergent CYP who do need to access specialist mental health services providing continuity of professional for the young person and advising on appropriate approaches to support the CYP
  - i. reduce negative effects of transitioning between services providing a consistency for the CYP and family when accessing other services.
70. This type of service would not replace reasonable adjustments expected by other community and statutory organisations, but it would offer dedicated and specialist expertise to ensure that children and young people are supported. Learning from other areas that have developed a similar service has been incorporated into the model, e.g. Derbyshire.
71. With an outline of the proposed service developed, the ICB will be sharing this model with Herefordshire Local SEND Partnership for endorsement before looking to commission the provision. It is envisaged that the service could be procured during 2025/26.
- a. The intention to commission a wider support offer will extend the existing provision of:
  - b. Local Neurodivergence Zone including booklet on available support
  - c. Workshops for children, young people, parents and carers
  - d. Therapy drop-in sessions
  - e. Partnership for Neurodiversity in Schools

### **Local Neurodivergence Zone**

72. During 2024/25, there has been improvements in the provision of information. The development of a specific [Local Neurodivergence Zone](#) is live. This has been co-produced with parents, carers and professionals and sits within Herefordshire Council's Local Offer website. It provides information and advice about neurodivergence for families and professionals including:
- a. Neurodivergent conditions (Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette's Syndrome etc)
  - b. National and local sources of information, advice and support
  - c. Local diagnostic pathways and how to make referrals
73. Recognising that waiting for assessments can be an anxious time for families, a booklet has been co-produced with parent carers for Herefordshire and Worcestershire parent carers

outlining the support available to children and young people and their families, who are experiencing long waits for Autism and ADHD diagnostic appointments. This is in the process of being finalised and will be available alongside referral information for parents and professionals to access.

74. Workshops: Workshops are currently commissioned by the ICB for parents, carers and young people through Autism West Midlands and the ADHD Foundation Trust. These provide support on a range of issues including understanding conditions, behaviour, 'navigating the system' and supporting teens.
75. Therapy Drop-in Sessions: Speech and Language Therapy services and Occupational Health services are piloting accessible drop-in sessions to identify and support needs early. Many children accessing the support have neurodivergent needs. Both services are extending the support offered through to schools in the coming year.
76. Herefordshire was in the first roll-out of a national pilot project 'Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)' which began in 2024 and continued into 2025. The aim of PINS is to bring health and education specialists and expert parent carers into mainstream primary school settings to:
  - a. Help shape whole school provision for children and young people with neurodivergent needs
  - b. provide early interventions at a school level
  - c. upskill school staff to support a range of neurodivergent needs based on self-assessment
  - d. strengthen partnerships between schools and parent carers
77. In Herefordshire 38 out of a possible 40 primary schools took part. The core offer, which all schools could access is currently being delivered alongside bespoke support tailored to individual schools. Delivery partners included: Speech and Language Therapy, Occupation Therapy, Support, SENDIASS, Worcestershire County Council's CCN Team, Herefordshire Councils, Educational Psychology Service and SEMH Inclusion Service. Sustainability of the programme will be maintained through continued support from OT, SALT and SEMH Inclusion Service to embed learning in everyday practice, development of resources that will be available to all schools and accompany training videos.

## **Neurodivergence and Mental Health**

78. Local services have been reviewed, with improved arrangements put in place to support children and young people with neurodivergence needs to access and receive support for their mental health. There are two key changes outlined below.
  - a. 0-25 years Early Intervention Emotional Well-being Service: In response to changing need among children and young people aged 0-25 years, the ICB have increased investment to provide an early intervention service for mental health issues. The service will provide evidence-based interventions, promote well-being and build emotional resilience alongside support for families. Neurodivergent children and young people have been targeted as a priority group in recognition of the increased need amongst this cohort.
  - b. CAMHS Youth Workers: Youth workers in CAMHS have been appointed to provide support to young people as they transition to adult mental health services. The youth workers are particularly focused on supporting neurodivergent young people with a mental health need who may need longer lead-in times and support to transition between services.



## **Community impact**

79. The Council Plan 2024–2028 includes the ambition to ‘enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and benefit from communities that help people to feel safe and supported’ and more specifically, the council aims to:
- a) We want to support children and young people to thrive, be safe, and for families to be supported.
  - b) We believe that children and young people are best supported in their family networks and within highly effective schools and flourishing communities. Our children are the future. Sometimes children and families need our help.
  - c) We are committed to improving children’s services and providing support to families who need it. Acting on Ofsted inspection reports are part of our drive to improve our services to children and families.
  - d) We will support all children to have the best start in life.

## **Environmental Impact**

36. There are no specific environmental impacts arising from this report.

## **Equality duty**

37. There are no equality issues arising from this report.

## **Resource implications**

38. There are no resources implications as a result of this report.

## **Legal implications**

39. There are no legal implications as a result of this report which is for information only.

## **Risk management**

40. There are no new or additional risks arising from this inspection. Risks associated with SEND are monitored through the SEND Assurance Board.

## **Consultees**

41. None

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Area SEND Inspection Report.

## **Background papers**

None identified

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

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Approved by	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.

# Area SEND inspection of Herefordshire Local Area Partnership

Inspection dates: 2 to 6 December 2024

Dates of previous inspection: 26 to 30 September 2016

## Inspection outcome

The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.

The next full area SEND inspection will be within approximately three years.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

## Information about the local area partnership

Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND in Herefordshire.

Significant changes have been made to the leadership of SEND services since the previous inspection. There have been some changes to leadership posts, including the appointment of a director of education, learning and skills in 2022 and an interim director of children's services in July 2024. The commissioning of health services changed across England in 2022. On 1 July 2022, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB became responsible for the commissioning of health services in Herefordshire.

The local area partnership commissions a range of alternative provisions (AP). AP, in Herefordshire, provides education for children or young people, including those who cannot attend schools due to social, emotional, mental health, or medical needs or for those who have been or are at risk of being permanently excluded from school.

## **What is it like to be a child or young person with SEND in this area?**

Families of children and young people with SEND have varying opinions about their experiences in Herefordshire. For example, while about half of those parents and carers who responded to the survey reported that their child gets the right help and support in schools or colleges, only some stated that their child gets the right help and support from social care and health teams. Key leaders across the partnership know the variable experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND across Herefordshire. The local area partnership is committed to making further changes to continue its work to reduce waiting times for therapy and diagnostic services and improve capacity in health services.

Across education, health and social care, there is variability in the timeliness of identification and assessment of SEND and issuing of EHC plans in the majority of cases. Within mainstream schools, staff typically spot emerging needs of children and young people quickly and identify whether there is a need for further assessment and provision. Specialist settings are innovative in finding appropriate solutions for meeting the most complex learning and health needs. However, although waiting times for assessment and therapies have recently reduced, some children and young people still wait too long to access assessment and intervention. This limits how quickly these children and young people get the proper support to meet their SEND.

For children and young people with SEND who might have faced exclusion, absence, or medical needs, the pupil referral unit (PRU), and other AP, provide timely intervention to reintegrate them into long-term, successful education, training and employment.

For those children and young people with the most complex health, care and learning needs, there is a broad offer of opportunities to develop hobbies, pastimes and personal interests outside of school or college. These include swimming, local football teams, youth clubs and dance clubs. Children and young people with SEND spoken to during the inspection valued these opportunities to socialise with other children and young people with similar needs. However, some families who responded to the inspection survey, and some young people we spoke to on inspection, were unaware of this offer and how to access it.

Some children and young people with SEND who responded to the survey reported that they only sometimes receive the help that they need in school or college. However, the children and young people that inspectors spoke with during the inspection felt well supported by people who listened to them and acted swiftly when they needed help.

Many families who responded to the survey did not feel that their children get the right support to prepare them for their next steps. However, disabled children and young people who receive a service from social care are well supported into adulthood. For example, the Young Adult Team strongly supports disabled young people as they move to adulthood. Assessments are detailed, and this helps to ensure that young people are supported in appropriate accommodation with a support package that meets their needs.

Some older children and young people with SEND in care are sensitively involved in developing their life stories, which aids their understanding and recollection of events and people that are important to them.

Children and young people with SEND who attend residential special schools or out-of-area provision typically receive a positive experience. The partnership works well to ensure that the intended provision accurately supports the education, health and care needs of children and young people. Young people told inspectors that professionals listen when they talk about their life ambitions. Consequently, there is a strong focus on preparation for the next steps and adulthood in these provisions.

## **What is the area partnership doing that is effective?**

- The local area partnership has made improvements in several areas at an operational and strategic level. For example, they have reviewed, refreshed and implemented effective quality assurance measures for AP. This has assured the partnership that those most vulnerable children and young people have access to high-quality provision that prepares them well for their next steps.
- The local area partnership has invested in appointing additional staff and improved training. For example, they have made youth support worker roles within SENDIASS permanent. Senior practitioners within the school's well-being and emotional support teams (WEST) have been appointed. The partnership has increased the number of health service therapists and invested in the designated clinical officer (DCO) role. These appointments have improved the identification, assessment and meeting of children and young people's needs effectively.
- Across the partnership, professionals know children and young people well. For example, workers within the children with disabilities team understand children's needs. They are regularly visited; most disabled children establish strong relationships with their workers. Assessments are detailed and give a clear understanding of the child's world and the family context.
- Children and young people with SEND known to early help services access swift support from education, health and social care teams where appropriate. This includes sometimes means directing and supporting families with courses that might help them at home. Other children and young people, known to early help services, are supported in accessing community opportunities, such as skateboarding or short break opportunities.
- Most disabled young people leaving care receive appropriate support to develop their independence skills for when they reach adulthood, and they are involved in preparing their pathway plan. These plans strongly reflect the child's voice and give an understanding of their strengths and areas for support as they move towards independence.
- The Youth Employment Hub (YEH) is an exciting recent development. It has successfully brought together a range of education, health and social care professionals to support young people in employment, education and training. During the inspection, inspectors sampled the current experiences of young people known to

the YEH, and it was clear that this is already making a significant difference for the young people who access the service.

- Over the last two years, the local area partnership has introduced new working models, including drop-in clinics for speech and language therapy and physiotherapy. Children and their families can access this specialist advice and support service without a referral in their early years.
- Children and young people with SEND and their families can access early years 'while you wait' groups within the area. This helps to meet children's needs while they wait to be seen by a paediatrician for an autism assessment.
- There are no extended waits for the core child and adolescent mental health services (CAHMS) team, meaning that children and young people are seen quickly. This is a timely and supportive service in identifying and supporting mental health.
- The health visiting service supports the early identification of needs effectively. Children and young people with SEND are seen at an additional three-year-old developmental review. This means that a child's health and developmental needs can be identified early, and appropriate specialist referrals can be made.
- Co-production with children and young people with SEND and their families is strong. The development of the 'Herefordshire Helpers' has raised the profile of children and young people at the highest levels. Parent carer voice Herefordshire told inspectors that they feel heard and that their views are acted on by the partnership.
- The special educational needs coordinator network has brought fresh enthusiasm for partnerships and joint work between schools, social care and health providers. Educational settings value the input from different services into this group, particularly from health colleagues. Education leaders are optimistic about the improvements in the local area partnership.

## What does the area partnership need to do better?

- During the inspection, parents, carers, children, young people and practitioners told inspectors they were unaware of the systems and processes that could help them get the needed support. For example, some parents, carers and practitioners, including those in social care and health services, thought that parenting programmes were a prerequisite to accessing CAMHS services. Leaders say this is not the case. Equally, during the inspection, some parents, carers and practitioners told inspectors that a child must have a diagnosed need before they can have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Partnership leaders are aware of these perceptions and offered assurance that this is not the case. They are working to raise the profile with parents, carers and practitioners that EHC plans are identified by need and are raising awareness of pathways to access assessment and support services.
- In some situations where there had been a significant turnover of social care and health services staff, some parents and carers reported that they had to repeat information about their child's needs or prior experiences. This slowed the speed at which their child was provided effective assessment and support.
- Some parents, schools, colleges and practitioners reported that the local offer is not

always well promoted. This limits how well children, young people and parents access the services and opportunities that could make the greatest difference to them. For example, some families told us they are unaware of the offer for children and young people with SEND to complete activities and pastimes in their local community.

- Access to health services varies for children and young people in Herefordshire, depending on their age and needs. For example, there is a comprehensive service in the early years for the diagnosis of autism. However, there is no commissioned service for speech and language provision in secondary schools unless the child or young person has an identified specific need. Where a child or young person does not have a potential diagnosis of autism, the availability of support is limited due to a lack of services for these children and young people.
- The local area partnership has developed transformation plans for therapies and diagnostic neurodevelopmental services. However, these are at an early stage of implementation, and have not yet sufficiently reduced waiting times for essential assessment and therapeutic intervention.
- Video fluoroscopy referrals in Herefordshire have been stopped due to a lack of referral pathways for specialist services. Although health services have effectively mitigated risks for children and young people, the local area recognises the need to re-establish this service. It is developing plans to establish a local service within Herefordshire to assure these children of a locally accessible service.
- Most disabled children and young people known to social care have plans that fully identify their needs. Plans are reviewed through regular multi-agency meetings, ensuring that most children and young people's plans progress and their needs are met. However, for some children and young people with SEND subject to child protection plans, changes in social workers can lead to them experiencing delays in having their needs met because records are not transferred effectively enough.
- There is a comprehensive offer for short breaks, and currently, there is no waiting list for specialist short breaks for those children with the most complex learning and health needs. Much work has also been completed recently to increase the range of providers for short breaks. However, this offer is not consistently well communicated to children, young people and their families. Most children and young people who responded to the survey said they do not get help to do things outside of education. Less than a quarter of parents who responded reported that their child gets the right help and support to join in with clubs, activities to benefit from holidays or make friends.
- Some health practitioners told inspectors about the challenges that they face regarding workload and capacity. Recently, there has been an increase in referrals across all services, which has led to challenges to the sustainability of the current workforce to meet the growing needs of the partnership. For example, some practitioners within specialist health roles stated that they sometimes do not have the capacity or training to fully meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

## Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement
The local area partnership must continue implementing recovery plans to reduce waiting times across health services, including therapeutic and diagnostic services.
The local area partnership needs to ensure that all children, young people with SEND, their families, and practitioners are well-informed about accessing the range of support services available to them while waiting for assessment and diagnosis of neurodevelopmental conditions.
The local area partnership needs to ensure sufficient capacity, stability and improved quality across all health services to improve service consistency, development and delivery.
The local area partnership needs to ensure that high-quality and accurate information regarding the range of services available to children and young people with SEND, their families, and professionals is promoted and communicated in an accessible form.



## Local area partnership details

Local authority	Integrated care board
Herefordshire Council	Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS Integrated Care Board
Tina Russell, Interim Director of Children's Services	Simon Trickett, Chief Executive
<a href="http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk">www.herefordshire.gov.uk</a>	<a href="http://Herefordshireandworcestershire.icb.nhs.uk">Herefordshireandworcestershire.icb.nhs.uk</a>
Plough Ln, Hereford HR4 0LE	Kirkham House, John Comyn Drive, Perdiswell, Worcester WR3 7NS

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004.

The inspection was led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors, including two HMI from education and social care, a lead Children's Services Inspector from the CQC, and another Children's Services Inspector from the CQC.

## Inspection team

### Ofsted

Chris Pollitt, Ofsted Lead inspector  
Nick Bennison, Ofsted HMI  
Gareth Morgan, Ofsted HMI

### Care Quality Commission

Deana Fowle, CQC Lead inspector  
Harriet Doran, CQC inspector

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# **Title of report: Supporting Children With Additional Needs**

**Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date: 18 March 2025**

**Report by: Head of Service Starting Well**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

This report seeks to show progress in relation to the sufficiency of short breaks available to children, young people and their families within Herefordshire. It highlights opportunities for further development and confirms how the service is moving forwards to co-produce the Local Offer.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) Scrutiny receive and note the feedback from the report at Appendix A.
- b) The committee to make any recommendations, or suggested actions, in connection to the content set out in Appendix A of this report.

## **Alternative options**

1. There are no alternative options. Short Break Regulations detail how local authorities must perform their care of duty under the Children Act 1989.

## **Key considerations**

2. In response to the Area SEND Inspection the service has challenged itself to answer the following questions as set out in Appendix A:
  - a. How do we publicise information regarding short break services at a universal, targeted and specialist level and how effective are we in doing so?
  - b. Are we assured that there is transparency and equity across the system giving opportunity to children of all ages, disability and level of need?
  - c. Are we using the services that we have in place efficiently and do they offer safe, flexible and cost-effective choice to families?
  - d. How are we going to develop increased sufficiency that delivers flexibility and choice for families ensuring that they can access a short break safely and easily?

## **Community impact**

3. Council Plan 2024–2028 includes the ambition to ‘enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and benefit from communities that help people to feel safe and supported’ and more specifically, the council aims to:
  - a. We want to support children and young people to thrive, be safe, and for families to be supported.
  - b. We believe that children and young people are best supported in their family networks and within highly effective schools and flourishing communities. Our children are the future. Sometimes children and families need our help.
  - c. We are committed to improving children’s services and providing support to families who need it. Acting on inspection reports are part of our drive to improve our services to children and families.
  - d. We will support all children to have the best start in life.
4. Effective scrutiny enables the committee to reflect community concern. Overview and scrutiny is a key part of the council's governance arrangements and provides accountability and assurance, as well as a vehicle for elected councillors to contribute to policy development and review. Scrutiny committees have the overall aim of driving improvement to services to the local community.
5. As well as scrutinising the council's own services, scrutiny committees have the power to look into the provision of local health services and issues which affect the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the county.

## **Environmental Impact**

6. This report contains no direct environmental impacts. However, the work that the committee will undertake resulting from agreeing this work programme may have direct impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline their potential environmental impact.

## Equality duty

7. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. This report contains no direct equality impacts. However, the reports and issues that the committee will consider may have direct impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline any associated equality impacts for committee consideration.

## Resource implications

6. This report contains no direct resource impacts. However, the issues that the committee will consider may have direct impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline any associated resource impacts for committee consideration.

## Legal implications

7. The remit of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 3 section 4 of the constitution and the role of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 2 article 6 of the constitution.
8. The Local Government Act 2000 requires the council to deliver the scrutiny function.

## Risk management

9. There are no new or additional risks arising from this inspection. Risks associated with SEND are monitored through the SEND Assurance Board.

## Consultees

10. None

## Appendices

Appendix A - Appendix A - Supporting Children With Additional Needs

## Background papers

None identified

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

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Risk	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.

Approved by	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
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## **Short Breaks scrutiny report– 18<sup>th</sup> March**

This report seeks to show progress in relation to the sufficiency of short breaks available to children, young people and their families within Herefordshire, to identify opportunities for further development and to confirm how we are moving forwards to co-produce the Local Offer. In response to the special educational needs and disability (SEND) inspection, we have challenged ourselves to answer the following questions:

- ✓ How do we publicise information re short break services at a universal, targeted and specialist level and how effective are we in doing so?
- ✓ Are we assured that there is transparency and equity across the system giving opportunity to children of all ages, disability and level of need?
- ✓ Are we using the services that we have in place efficiently and do they offer safe, flexible and cost-effective choice to families?
- ✓ How are we going to develop increased sufficiency that delivers flexibility and choice for families ensuring that they can access a short break safely and easily?

### **How do we publicise information re short break services at a universal, targeted and specialist level and how effective are we in doing so?**

The Short Breaks Statement and Eligibility Criteria is published on the council's website. This is currently being reviewed with Parent Carer Voice (PCV); amended Statement is to be published by end March 2025.

In light of the inspection recommendation the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) partnership are developing a communication strategy due April 25 with extensive activity to include:

- a range of materials to support parents and young people to understand and access the local offer
- Social media campaign using paid advertising to improve the reach of posts signposting to the local offer.
- A series of 'roadshow' events publicising the local offer including schools, colleges, market towns, pop-up events etc.
- Work with a range of parents and young people to ensure the information on the local offer is accessible.
- Cleanse the Talk Community Directory of activity providers to ensure this is up to date. Promote the revised Talk Community Directory with schools, colleges, customer service hubs and library staff.

The Talk Community Directory is the platform for providers to list themselves so that families can find out more about their services. In January 2022, there were 100 providers listed who said they offered support for children and young people with SEND. As of February 2025, this figure has increased to 122. However, this is a self-registration process, and no quality assurance is carried out so there is no guarantee that these providers can meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. Families must make their own decisions about whether the provider can meet their child / young person's needs.

The SEND Local Offer Facebook page, which went live in October 2022, now over 800 followers with each post reaching up to 3,000 users through onward sharing. In total, over 1,100 posts about activities that are accessible for children and young people with SEND have been shared on this page. The most popular post published to date was advertising a SEND Family Day at a local care farm in January 2025 – this post reached 3,100 people and led to the session being completely fully booked.

A Short Breaks survey which aims to acquire parental feedback on the local offer will inform future plans. This went live on 24/02 and due to close on 14 March. The survey has been widely published; with link sent to all parents known to children with disabilities (CWD) team, those in receipt of the TSB and via Herefordshire's Parent carer Voice (PCV).

Visible and valued week (Thursday 22nd May through to Wednesday 28th May 2025) - a collaboration with partners to celebrate our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Herefordshire. It aims to promote awareness and understanding of SEND and increase inclusion opportunities for children with SEND. This will be achieved by offering a range of workshops/open days, and opportunities for families to try new activities. This will support clubs and leisure providers to understand potential take-up and encourage them to offer regular SEND specific sessions.

**Are we assured that there is transparency and equity across the system giving opportunity to children of all ages, disability and level of need and if not, what plans are in place to make this happen?**

We are aware of quantitative data that describes how many family's access which type of service. We are currently working on a review of this information that will allow us to answer the question above and ensure that families needing services are able to find them, request them and use them safely. We are working across service areas to ensure we learn from areas of best practice and where we have been able to build engagement with community organisations and the wider market for short breaks e.g. contacting holidays activity and food (HAF) and providers offering provision through safer community funding.

We seek to deliver a Local Offer across the county recognising the importance of inclusion, community cohesion and access to transport. Opportunities to build on existing universal offer will be developed.

**Universal Offer of Short Breaks**

Since 2022, local activity providers who deliver sessions as part of Department for Education's Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme have been supported to improve the inclusivity of their sessions through free training. This has contributed to more children with SEND attending sessions, from 10.9% of attendees in Dec 2022 to 27% (September 2024), and eight providers offered SEND only sessions across the county.

**Targeted Offer of Short Breaks**

Over the last few years requests for a targeted offer of short breaks (TSB) grant have grown- in April 2024 330 families benefited and by Jan 25 this was 456. A review of the TSB grant undertaken in January 25 alongside PCV (Parent Carer Voice) found that there were ways to improve allocation and support families to use the pre-paid cards more easily. As a result,



- ✓ automatic roll over was offered to 378 eligible families and 255 requests have been received. All families who responded by end of February will receive their allocation in April.
- ✓ Families who applied in Dec 24 and their applications have been agreed will have their allocation added into 2025-26 to allow for reflective use
- ✓ Families who received their 2024-25 allocation late and still have funds to spend will carry over £50 into 2025-26

Qualitative review of this service has found that families are increasingly using their cards within more settings and initial hick ups with the pre-paid card are being resolved

The council has combined the 2024/25 SB grant (£23k) and a one-off Department for Education DfE grant (£19k), that will allow providers to bid for funds to develop/extend the service offer for targeted short breaks. A panel including parent/ carers will award funds and actively support models that reflect creative approaches and collaboration.

### Specialist Offer of Short Breaks

Families can currently access a range of commissioned services alongside direct payments. As of Feb 25, we have 112 direct payment packages in place, a reduction of 21 since April 24, however some families may have transferred over to a commissioned offer see below.

Challenges experienced by families seeking to recruit a personal assistant (PA) are well understand and this is a national problem. We are seeking to mitigate this by increasing payments in line with national minimum wage from £13.80 to £14.31 per hour (April 25), developing a robust training and continuous professional development offer to PA (with PCV for consultation) and by thinking how we can promote the appetite of people to become PA. An initial meeting with Specialist School Headteachers and PCV was held in the autumn, to explore how to develop the Personal Assistant (PA) market.

During 2024-25 three contracts delivering group based daytime community based short breaks and one for Buddying (1:1) went live. This has meant an increase of families accessing support from 26 in April 24 to 66 in Feb 25. The number of hours of short break support commissioned increased from 6,280 to 16,725 over this period. It is recognised however that delays in recruitment and other mobilisation issues has meant that some families allocated hours have not been able to start delivery. The local authority (LA) have supported the launch of groups and operational teams have appointed a senior family support worker to engage the providers and families. It is expected that within the next half term all packages will be started.

As of Feb 25, there were no outstanding requests for referral into these projects.

As expected, it takes time for services to embed and for families to confidently access them. Significant work to ensure families can have taster sessions and understand the different projects has been undertaken and continues to ensure maximum quality assurance. In response to feedback providers have changed location and are putting on a wider variety of session activities. This work will continue. Officers are also looking at promoting these services and increasing referral to them. We have an interim post of Snr family support worker (FSW) to support launching effective group based activities into the community. They are working across the whole of children's social care (CSC) and early help (EH) to create a better reach for the children who need our support.

### **Individual support service (also known as buddying)**

An extensive market engagement during 2023, resulted in a new provider coming into Herefordshire to deliver short breaks and Alternative Provision. Despite many discussions, the provider's position remains that they only agree packages via spot purchase arrangement.

In November 2023, following a competitive tender, the council awarded a two plus two-year contract to The Endorphins Group to deliver at least 5,000 support hours a year. This was a new provider that the procurement exercise attracted to Herefordshire.

As of January 2025, they have a cohort of 8 staff, 3 of which are currently completing their induction, actively supporting 9 children and a further 9 children's packages should commence within the next 2 months, and 5 referrals to be progressed.

### **Group-based support services.**

As of autumn 2023, Our Place was the only group-based service provider accepting new referrals. Whilst the service continues to be valued by CWD, parents and children, being out of county brings challenges; it is approx. 2 hour round-trip from Hereford and over 4 hours if using public transport.

Following a successful procurement exercise in 2023, three group activity block contracts were awarded to deliver a minimum of 8,250 support hours across the three contracts, over the lifetime of the contract (2 + 2 years). The number of children who could be attend a session, depends on level of supervision each child requires to meet their need. For example, five staff could support 5 children each requiring 1:1 support or up to 15 children requiring 1:3 (staff / children).

It was anticipated that by mid-February 2024, the three contracts would have commenced service delivery.

Our Place, as an established local provider, was able to incorporate the contracted hours into the service they were already delivering and by the end of July, they were operating at full capacity, and approval was given to increase the support hours from 784 to at least 1,253 per annum.

However, Sport Works and Endorphins, both providers the procurement exercise attracted to Herefordshire, have experienced challenges that resulted in them being unable to deliver sessions until end June and early July 2025, respectively. Whilst both providers have been delivering sessions for over 7 months, there has been a low take-up due to the needs of all identified children requiring a group-based service being met and parents not booking onto the service(s). A worker within CWD has been recruited as part of a 6-month pilot, to support with this and link with the two providers. There has been positive feedback from parents and CWD worker who attended the 1st of 2 Sport Works family sessions; resulting in three new referrals to date, and it is anticipated these children will attend their 1st session by end April. The Endorphins Group will provide a meet and greet session in March.

In addition to the block contracts described above, families are able to use four other providers on a spot purchase basis. We intend to review opportunities to develop more formal arrangements with these providers and build a bigger pool of providers via engagement with the market and development of arrangements that allow easy 'call-off'. This should allow providers to test new arrangements and build demand.

### **Overnight foster care**

In early 2023 the in-house fostering service recruitment and retention plan was updated to retain the (then) existing five registered carer households (October 2022) and to increase it by a net five additional foster households each year, for the next five years. Currently the sleep-over scheme has reduced to two carers each supporting one child requiring 24 nights a year (total 48).

Recent marketing and recruitment activity has resulted in one potential person currently going through assessment.

There is on-going work occurring to consider having the (Care Quality Commission) CQC Shared Lives project reduce their age limit from 18 to 16 years thus allowing young people to build stability and avoid a further move at 18. Joint working also means that we can test out if families may be able to be approved for both foster care and or shared lives and recruitment may be able to run side by side. Where families choose not to progress with foster care they may want to become Shared Lives carers.

### **Overnight residential care**

During 2024-25 the council has built relationships with several providers of overnight short breaks. The council has predominantly been reliant on two providers: one based in Worcestershire and operated by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust and the other is an independent provision in Shropshire. Neither provision has been operating at full capacity due to challenges relating to recruiting and retaining staff and are currently not taking any new referrals. In recent weeks the NHS provision has suspended their offer to Herefordshire.

This has meant that the number of nights provided as of Feb 25 and families benefiting from overnights has reduced in the last 12m. We are working to develop immediate options for families and commission increased capacity through block contracts. We intend to develop service for young people 16+ allowing for easy transition into adult services at 18 alongside with opportunities in county for those under 16.

Commissioners have worked with the Children with Disabilities team over the last 18 months to better understand current and future demand. Feedback from the Children with Disabilities team indicates that there may still be some hidden demand, where alternative day time services or direct payments have been provided in the absence of availability of overnight short breaks.

### **Are we using the services that we have in place efficiently and do they offer safe, flexible and cost-effective choice to families?**

With the development of a Children and Young Peoples Quality Assurance team we have added an extra layer of assurance to the existing contract monitoring in place. All new commissioned arrangements will have a full accreditation to ensure provision is fit for purpose and visits will be scheduled by a range of officers. Existing arrangements will have appropriate contractual paperwork and oversight in place with regular reviews.

Any feedback or complaint will be logged, and the outcome of subsequent review will inform the future provision.

**How are we going to develop increased sufficiency that delivers flexibility and choice for families ensuring that they can access a short break safely and easily?**

In addition to work previously described a programme of work has been agreed for 2025-26 that includes:

- ✓ Market engagement to build capacity from existing providers, encouraging them to consider developing services in county
- ✓ To review and evaluate current and future demand for children aged 8 and under. The outcome will inform the forward plan.
- ✓ Ongoing work to recruit Herefordshire foster carers who can offer short breaks on a planned basis
- ✓ Ongoing work with local independent foster care agencies (IFAs) to recruit locally
- ✓ A business case to develop 16+ overnight respite/short break facility -dual registered across Ofsted/CQC
- ✓ Options appraisal to consider development of registered short break overnight short break 0-16 years including bid for capital to buy building/s.



# **Title of report: Update on recommendations made by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date: 18 March 2025**

**Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

All wards

## **Purpose**

To provide the committee with an update to recommendations made by the committee since September 2023.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) The committee notes the responses to recommendations made by this committee.**
- b) Continues to pursue any outstanding recommendations; and**
- c) Agrees any response to the recommendations actioned or not.**

## **Alternative options**

- 1. As the committee has previously agreed to make these recommendations, and to receive a report on their implementation, no alternative options are presented.

## Key considerations

2. An important part of the scrutiny process is the recommendations made by a committee following its scrutiny of a given topic.
3. Paragraph 2.6.8 of Herefordshire Council's Constitution states that "*scrutiny committees can make reports and recommendations to the leader, Council and some partner organisations. The decision takers are not required to implement the recommendations but do have to consider any recommendations made.*"
4. Herefordshire Council has an established process for the consideration and implementation of scrutiny recommendations, contained in its Constitution. This states that "*The chief executive will notify the relevant scrutiny committee of the response of the executive within two months of receipt of the scrutiny report, with the exception of matters relating to statutory health scrutiny and issues relating to crime and disorder scrutiny which require a response from the relevant body within 28 days. If the cabinet or cabinet member wishes to extend the deadline a report will be made to the relevant scrutiny committee explaining why this is considered necessary. Decisions of the executive or Council on any scrutiny recommendations will be recorded in the usual way.*"
5. Appendix 1 of this report contains a list of every recommendation made by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee since September 2023. The table also includes:
  - a. the date the recommendation was submitted for a response;
  - b. the deadline for the response;
  - c. the date a response was received; and
  - d. the response received (if any).

## Community impact

6. The scrutiny function supports community development by holding the executive and its partners to account and making evidence-based recommendations that it believes will strengthen policy and practice in Herefordshire. Regularly reviewing reviews ensures that recommendations are considered and responded to, as well as providing feedback to committee in order to strengthen the quality of their recommendations.

## Environmental impact

7. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
8. All reports to scrutiny committees, as with all council committees, include appraisals of the impact of the report content on climate change. Scrutiny committee work programmes directly link to the council plan priorities, including the key priority to 'Protect and enhance our environment and ensure that Herefordshire is a great place to live'.

9. Whilst this is a report on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the council's Environmental Policy. Examples include:
- a. Creation of an online-only briefing programme, eliminating the need to travel to Hereford for a single meeting.
  - b. Paper-free briefings and informal meetings, eliminating the need for printed paper.

## **Equality duty**

10. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this act;
  - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
11. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this report is primarily for information, we do not believe that accepting (or rejecting) this report will have an impact on our equality duty.

## **Resource implications**

12. Effective scrutiny produces evidence-based recommendations. These can be informed by learning from best practice and an understanding of 'what works' at other similar local authorities, as well as developing a robust picture of what the situation is locally based on data, intelligence and insights. Where adopted, recommendations can help with the efficiency and effectiveness of services that can be delivered differently, as well as informing the development of current and new policies.
13. As this report is primarily for information, there are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

## **Risk management**

14. Effective scrutiny is a feature of the council's governance arrangements, where the council is operating executive arrangements. There are a range of factors that could result in risks to council of not doing scrutiny effectively. These include the failure to:
- a. challenge and hold decision makers to account
  - b. link scrutiny work to the delivery of the council's priorities and risk management
  - c. carry out thorough and appropriate research to make evidence-based recommendations
  - d. engage partners and providers

- e. ensure that structures and models of operation are fit for purpose and match ambition and available resources
  - f. ensure that scrutiny can operate as the voice of communities and
  - g. draw on member knowledge and experience to inform policy development.
15. To mitigate, tolerate or eradicate these risks, enablers for effective scrutiny include:
- a. operating in an apolitical manner
  - b. clarity of vision and purpose
  - c. scrutiny support availability, capability and capacity
  - d. effective engagement and commitment by members and officers at all levels, including cabinet, opposition leaders, scrutiny chairs and senior officers who play a central role in setting the tone and direction
  - e. robust work programming and prioritisation of topics with clear objectives and expected impacts
  - f. ensuring that scrutiny work will add value to the council and communities e.g. through strong links between work programme topics and the integrated strategic plans that set out the actions and timescales to deliver the priorities in the County Plan
  - g. access to and availability of robust data and intelligence and
  - h. good relationships with partners and providers.

## **Consultees**

16. None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Recommendations made by Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, September 2023 – January 2025

## **Background papers**

None



**Appendix 1 Recommendations made by Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, September 2023 – January 2025**

<b>Wednesday 26 September 2023</b>					
<b>Early Help</b>					
<b>Rec. No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Date Sent</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Recd Date</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	The council will make full use of school information collection to plan and deliver early help support				Noted
<b>Families' Commission Report Update</b>					
<b>Rec. No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Date Sent</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Recd Date</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	Director of Children's Services and improvement partner to deliver workshop on restorative/relational practice.				This took place during 2024. Committee member received the opportunity to attend one of a series of training sessions on relational practice.

<b>Tuesday 14 November 2023</b>					
<b>Co-opted member recruitment update</b>					
<b>Rec. No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Date Sent</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Recd Date</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	Recommends to full Council that the candidates in paragraphs 12 to 18 of this report should be appointed to the Committee.				Resolved
2	Agrees the suggested amendments and recommend to full Council to change the Constitution with regard to the recruitment of co-opted members.				Resolved
<b>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</b>					
<b>Rec. No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Date Sent</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Recd Date</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	For a training session around youth provision to be arranged.				Resolved
<b>Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Action Plan</b>					

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	The executive ensure that early intervention in schools is funded adequately in Herefordshire Council's 2024-2025 budget.				It was unanimously agreed that the recommendation with the amendment on the Council's SEND action plan made by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 November 2023 be noted, and that an Executive Response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by Cabinet in 2 months.

**Tuesday 23 January 2024**
**Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2022/23**

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	That a workshop be held including all data analysts from across the partnership.				This was not actioned. As the recommendation is now more than a year old it will not be pursued further.

**Task and Finish Group - Children and Young People Directorate Budget**

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	Financial performance data to form part of the 'measures that matter' and performance dashboard data and should be reported back to staff teams so that they are aware of the financial consequences of the service performance alongside other measures.				Noted
2	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to examine how SEND Transport demand and costs are managed, including a review of operations in other rural local authorities.				Action. Resolved - added to list of potential items for inclusion in future meetings
3	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise work to step children down from residential care, and to reunify families where children have become looked after.				Action. Resolved - added to list of potential items for inclusion in future meetings
4	Dedicated financial resource to continue to be embedded within the children and young people directorate to provide challenge and assurance that day-to-day costs are being captured and forecast correctly.				Noted
5	Each monthly financial outturn report for the Children and Young People directorate, and weekly Children's Service Analysis Tool (CHAT) be provided to the chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.				Noted

6	The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee undertake a piece of work to examine the robustness of the council's data and management information supporting the children and young people directorate.				Noted
7	Savings as proposed to be targeted for Children's directorate to deliver in 2024-25 but assured funding to be found from elsewhere to balance the council's budget.				Cabinet acknowledged recommendation - 25 January 2024

<b>Tuesday 12 March 2024</b>					
<b>Corporate Parenting Service</b>					
<b>Rec. No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Date Sent</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Recd Date</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	The Service Director for Safeguarding and Family Support to provide the Committee with the monthly family group conferencing report.				
2	For the Service Director, Safeguarding and Family Support to arrange an observation of a family group conference.				
<b>Corporate Parenting Board</b>					
<b>Rec. No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Date Sent</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Recd Date</b>	<b>Response</b>
2	Herefordshire Council to suggest proposals to make Corporate Parenting Board meetings more accessible to elected members and the public	28-May-24	04-Jun-24	28-May-24	Herefordshire Council will develop a Corporate Parenting Board executive summary to be disseminated after each Board in the form of a newsletter
3	Herefordshire Council to extend opportunities to write letters and cards celebrating the success of its looked after children.	28-May-24	04-Jun-24	28-May-24	The Corporate Parenting Board and Corporate Parenting Service welcome the proposal to write to care experienced children and young people and congratulate them on their achievements and successes. It is proposed that corporate celebration cards are designed for this purpose so that these can be completed and sent by senior leaders, including the Leader of the Council, Lead Member, the Chief Executive and members of the Corporate / Directorate Leadership Team.

Tuesday 07 May 2024					
Corporate Parenting Service					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council identifies measures of success for each of the strands in the children and young people workforce strategy.	24-Oct-24	16-Jul-24	31-Dec-24	Accepted
2	That Herefordshire Council makes clear the links between the council's corporate workforce strategy and its children and young people workforce strategy.	24-Oct-24	16-Jul-24	31-Dec-24	Accepted
3	That Herefordshire Council builds links with and invests in local schools and voluntary organisations to encourage people to consider children's services as a career.	24-Oct-24	16-Jul-24	31-Dec-24	Accepted in part – It is recognised that investing in activities that encourage people to consider children's services and local government as a career is important, particularly with local schools and colleges.
4	That Herefordshire Council encourages people to consider switching careers to Herefordshire Council's children and young people directorate.	24-Oct-24	16-Jul-24	31-Dec-24	Accepted. It is recognised that investing in activities that encourage people to switch careers could be important and this forms part of our corporate work
5	That Herefordshire Council ensures that the voice of children informs the children and young people workforce strategy.	24-Oct-24	16-Jul-24	31-Dec-24	Accepted
6	That Herefordshire Council describes the link between activity, outputs, outcomes and impact of the workforce strategy in terms of a theory of change.	24-Oct-24	16-Jul-24	31-Dec-24	Accepted in part. It is accepted that this is an approach which could be beneficial. The children's workforce strategy has been 12 months in the making and to adopt a radically different model would mean starting the process from scratch. This model will be considered for future strategy development.

Tuesday 30 July 2024					
Children's Services Complaints					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council review and revise the information on its website concerning complaints, to include information on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman process, and information on where to seek assistance.	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24	13-Nov-24	<a href="https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council/get-involved">https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council/get-involved</a> The link gives the Ombudsman's details and explains their role.
2	For the children and young people service to report to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee within six months on the demand, flow, and timeliness of complaints. The report should include an analysis of those complaints and the ongoing development of the complaints process.	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24		
3	That scrutiny recognises the work undertaken in partnership with Leeds City Council around complaints and asks that consideration be given to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having an independent professional investigate and document the complaint and desired outcome</li> <li>• understanding the demographics and protected characteristics of people making complaints and</li> <li>• ensuring that children's young people's and families' views are incorporated into that review.</li> </ul>	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24		
Families' Commission Update					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council provide analysis of funding provided through the Police and Crime Commissioner and My Family, My School, My Community to demonstrate that funding and resources are focused on delivering sustained early help and support for families and communities.	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24		
2	The funding available to support development of a child-friendly Herefordshire is distributed as rapidly as possible.	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24		

Tuesday 17 September 2024					
Quality Assurance					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	Adopt Unique Children's Services Values: Children's Services should adopt their own set of values and principles, separate from the corporate council values. These should be displayed on a child- and family-friendly page on the Herefordshire Council website alongside a user-friendly guide to the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), ensuring the framework and values are publicly accessible and reinforcing the strengths-based, restorative approach to cultural change.	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24		
2	Child and Young Person Involvement in Audits : The service should explore ways to involve children and young people in the analysis associated with the auditing process, ensuring their experiences and feedback contribute to service improvement.	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24		
3	That the service explores Quality Circles as a means of getting staff feedback.	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24		
Improvement Plan					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	Publicity Campaign for Feedback: Cabinet should endorse a publicity campaign to ensure maximum feedback from children, young people, and families on the "Working Together Consultation" concerning Right Time, Right Place thresholds and managing risk.	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24		
2	That Herefordshire Council identify a means to report publicly on progress in delivering the improvement plan for children's services.	31-Oct-24	31-Dec-24		

Tuesday 26 November 2024					
Including children's voices in council policy					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council Review and promote good practice in soliciting, capturing and sharing the voice of the child across the service areas of the council, partners and stakeholders, ensuring that: a) this practice builds on the good examples of engagement and consultation which have been developed in some areas of council business and by outside organisations; b) this practice builds on the good examples of engagement and consultation which have been developed in some areas of council business and by outside organisations; c) their ideas and wishes are adopted where possible, and where not possible the reasons for that are explained, and; d) it engages with other services, town and city youth councils and other youth projects to ensure it understands perspectives children and young people have articulated.	27-Nov-24	27-Jan-25	17-Jan-25	Officers from Children's Services and Corporate Services are working together to develop and deliver a range of improvements that will importantly be shaped co-productively with children and young people themselves. The proposed improvements are: 1) developing consultation and engagement guidelines for all council services in collaboration with children and young people to ensure that there is a meaningful and consistent whole-council approach. 2) Redesigning the council webpage and intranet to ensure that consultation activity and responses are made accessible to all Directorates, maximising the work we undertake and sharing the views of children and young people across the council. 3) Developing a newsletter that captures recent feedback from children and young people on a range of topics and sharing this across the organisation. This will not be a children's services newsletter, letter but one that reflects CYP feedback etc into wider council business 4) Developing a Children and Young People's Council as a transformational improvement to the way in which children and young people participate in, and shape, the working of the council and public services in Herefordshire.
2	Ensures that its scrutiny committees embed the need to consider the voice of children and young people when carrying out its work.	27-Nov-24	27-Jan-25	17-Jan-25	Officers from Children's Services and Corporate Services are working together to develop and deliver a range of improvements that will importantly be shaped co-productively with children and young people themselves. The proposed improvements are: 1) developing consultation and engagement guidelines for all council services in collaboration with children and young people to ensure that there is a meaningful and consistent whole-council approach. 2) Redesigning the council webpage and intranet to ensure that consultation activity and responses are made accessible to all Directorates, maximising the work we undertake and sharing the views of children and young people across the council. 3) Developing a newsletter that captures recent feedback from children and young people on a range of topics and sharing this across the organisation. This will not be a children's services newsletter, letter but one that reflects CYP feedback etc into wider council business 4) Developing a Children and Young People's Council as a transformational improvement to the way in which children and young people participate in, and shape, the working

					of the council and public services in Herefordshire. We are in the process of establishing a project group and work plan to take this forwards early this year and will share the detailed action plan with Committee in February.
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<b>Tuesday 21 January 2025</b>					
<b>Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership - Yearly Review of Effectiveness Report 2023-24</b>					
<b>Rec. No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Date Sent</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Recd Date</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	The partnership ensures that recommendations from the 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness onwards have an identified partnership lead and an indicative timeframe for completion;	28-Jan-25	27-Mar-25		Officers from Children's Services and Corporate Services are working together to develop and deliver a range of improvements that will importantly be shaped co-productively with children and young people themselves. The proposed improvements are: 1) developing consultation and engagement guidelines for all council services in collaboration with children and young people to ensure that there is a meaningful and consistent whole-council approach. 2) Redesigning the council webpage and intranet to ensure that consultation activity and responses are made accessible to all Directorates, maximising the work we undertake and sharing the views of children and young people across the council. 3) Developing a newsletter that captures recent feedback from children and young people on a range of topics and sharing this across the organisation. This will not be a children's services newsletter, letter but one that reflects CYP feedback etc into wider council business 4) Developing a Children and Young People's Council as a transformational improvement to the way in which children and young people participate in, and shape, the working of the council and public services in Herefordshire.
2	The partnership appends an implementation plan for the recommendations in its 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness; and	28-Jan-25	27-Mar-25		
3	Herefordshire Council's director of children's services and director of governance and law provide guidance to elected members on their corporate parent responsibilities in the event of a significant incident, or death, concerning a care leaver under the age of 25.	28-Jan-25	27-Mar-25	09-Mar-25	This will be circulated to elected members in due course.





# Title of report: Work programme 2024/5 – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

**Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date: 18 March 2025**

**Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer**

## Classification

Open

## Decision type

This is not an executive decision

## Wards affected

All Wards

## Purpose

To consider the work programme for Herefordshire Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

## Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The committee agree the work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee contained in the work programme report attached as Appendix 1.**

## Alternative options

1. The committee could decline to agree a work programme for its future committee meetings. This would likely result in unstructured and purposeless meetings.

## Key considerations

2. A fundamental part of good scrutiny is planning and agreeing a programme of work for the committee to undertake. A well-considered work programme:
  - a. identifies priorities for the committee's work that align with corporate and partnership priorities, as well as reflecting community concern;
  - b. ensures that each identified topic has clear objectives that focus the committee's work;

- c. creates a timetable for the committee's programme of work so that the committee carry out its work at the optimal time; and
  - d. provides officers and partners with requirements for evidence that will support the committee in providing evidence-based scrutiny
3. To prepare this work programme, the committee chair has met with officers of the council to identify potential priority areas of work for the committee. These priority areas have been scheduled within the work programme to ensure the committee considers topics when it is most useful to do so. A draft of this work programme has then been circulated to the council's corporate leadership team and other key senior directors, alongside committee chairs, for further comment and refinement.
  4. The most recent Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee work programme was published March 2025 and is attached as Appendix 1.
  5. Attached as Appendix 2 to this report is the council's most recently published forward plan of key decisions.

### **Community impact**

6. Effective scrutiny enables the committee to reflect community concern. Overview and scrutiny is a key part of the council's governance arrangements and provides accountability and assurance, as well as a vehicle for elected councillors to contribute to policy development and review. Scrutiny committees have the overall aim of driving improvement to services to the local community.
7. As well as scrutinising the council's own services, scrutiny committees have the power to look into the provision of local health services and issues which affect the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the county.
8. The proposed work programme reflects – as widely as possible – key local priorities within this context.

### **Environmental impact**

9. This report contains no direct environmental impacts. However the work that the committee will undertake resulting from agreeing this work programme may have direct impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline their potential environmental impact.

### **Equality duty**

10. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. This report contains no direct equality impacts. However the reports and issues that the committee will consider may have direct impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline the any associated equality impacts for committee consideration.

### **Resource implications**

11. This report constitutes part of the typical function of this committee. Similarly, a programme of work undertaken by committee is an integral part of the council's 'business as usual'. There is no resource implication in setting or agreeing a work programme. However agreed topics in the work programme, in particular any requests for bespoke research or the involvement of outside

experts or community groups, may incur resource costs. These will be contained in any reporting or planning of agreed topics within this work programme.

### **Legal implications**

12. The remit of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 3 section 4 of the constitution and the role of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 2 article 6 of the constitution.
13. The Local Government Act 2000 requires the council to deliver the scrutiny function.

### **Risk management**

14. There are no risks identified in the committee agreeing an effective and timely programme of work. However there is a risk to the council's reputation if committees fail to set a work programme, or set a programme of work that does not address local authority, partnership or community priorities.

### **Consultees**

15. In drafting this work programme, consideration has been given to:
  - a. The previous work of scrutiny committees;
  - b. Priorities suggested by members of the committee; and
  - c. Work with Herefordshire Council officers to develop topics and agree optimum timings to bring items for consideration.
16. This work programme is subject to ongoing review, which may involve additional consultees.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee work programme March 2025

Appendix 2 – Herefordshire Council Forward Plan 03 March 2025 Onwards

### **Background papers**

None



## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2025

### Briefing

4 March 2025

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees* (Report or presentation writer in bold)
<b>School attainment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of pupil attainment from Key Stage 1 to A level in Herefordshire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupil attainment data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Liz Farr – Service Director, Education</b></li> <li>Emily Garner – Lead Early Years Improvement Advisor</li> <li>Louise Tanner – Head of Learning and Achievement,</li> <li>Ian Sockett – Head of Business Intelligence</li> <li>Hilary Jones – Head of Additional Needs</li> <li>Pam Howell – School Improvement Advisor</li> </ul>

### Committee Meeting

18 March 2025 **report deadline 6 March 2025** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 06 March 2025

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees* (Report or presentation writer in bold)
<b>Findings of the CQC/Ofsted inspection of SEND services</b> Review the inspection and its finding, in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate the level of need for SEND provision in Herefordshire, and how Herefordshire Council and partners meet that need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government Association peer review of SEND services</li> <li>Ofsted/CQC inspection of services report (if available)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Liz Farr Service Director, Education</b></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how Herefordshire Council, the Department for Education and other bodies fund the development of capacity to support children with a SEND.</li> <li>• Scrutinise how the council, schools and health partners work together to support children, with or without a statement of need or education, health and care plan (EHCP).</li> <li>• Measure progress in meeting recommendations following the SEND peer review by the Local Government Association.</li> <li>• Explore how the council and the local parent-carer forum work together to co-produce strategy and practice.</li> <li>• Scrutinise the current neuro-development pathway and its role in supporting children.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hilary Jones – Head of Additional Needs</li> <li>• Jade Brooks – Integrated Care Board Children’s Lead</li> <li>• Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board</li> <li>• Wye Valley Trust</li> <li>• Anna Swift – Lead for Neurodivergent Children and Young People NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire.</li> <li>• Debbie Hobbs and Sara Reid Parent Carer Voice Herefordshire</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting children with additional needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ascertain the effectiveness of the assessment process</li> <li>• Explore the role of short breaks and their commissioning.</li> <li>• Scrutinise work to develop the market for short breaks and other forms of respite care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of support offered to children and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hayley Doyle, Service Director All Age Commissioning</li> <li>• <b>Jessica Davies – Service manager Children with Disabilities</b></li> <li>• Zoe Richards – Head of Service, Starting Well</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update to the committee on responses to its recommendations made in 2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of recommendations made by the committee, and any outcomes arising from them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Statutory Scrutiny Officer</b></li> </ul>
<b>Work programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Statutory Scrutiny Officer</b></li> </ul>

### Committee Meeting

27 May 2025 **report deadline 15 May 2025** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
<b>School Capital Programme Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms of Reference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Statutory Scrutiny Officer</b></li> </ul>
<b>Child exploitation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand different ways children are at risk of exploitation and the factors that contribute to that risk, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Criminal Exploitation</li> <li>Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers</li> </ul> </li> <li>Scrutinise how the different agencies work together to tackle exploitation.</li> <li>Scrutinise the role of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership in tackling exploitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member briefing on child exploitation</li> <li><a href="#">Criminal exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults - county lines</a></li> <li><a href="#">Childrens-society-Criminal-Exploitation-Stages-of-Recruitment</a></li> <li><a href="#">Exploitation Safety Plan Practice Guidance</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Service Director, Safeguarding</b></li> <li>West Mercia Police</li> <li>West Mercia Youth Justice Service</li> <li>Wye Valley NHS Trust</li> <li>Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership exploitation lead</li> </ul>
<b>Update on Improvement Plan and Quality Assurance Framework</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objectives to be agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated Improvement Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Head of Service Safeguarding and Review</b></li> <li>Service Director, Safeguarding</li> </ul>
<b>Work programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Statutory Scrutiny Officer</b></li> </ul>

### Committee Meeting

24 June 2025 **report deadline TBC** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
<b>Early help for children and families</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on the localities programme</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence to be agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendees to be agreed</li> </ul>
<b>Work programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Statutory Scrutiny Officer</b></li> </ul>





## Committee Meeting

16 September 2025 **report deadline 4 September 2025** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
<b>Youth Justice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence to be agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Lorna Tilley, West Mercia Police</b></li> <li>Anne-Marie Kemp, Safeguarding Partnerships Business Manager</li> <li>Angela Wilson, Safeguarding Partnerships Business Manager</li> </ul>
<b>Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual review of effectiveness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutinise the partnership's work for 2023-2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence to be agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kevin Crompton, Independent Scrutineer, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Work programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statutory Scrutiny Officer</li> </ul>

\*The Corporate Director, Children and Young People and Portfolio Holder, Children and Young People, both have a standing invitation to each committee meeting. It is assumed that the portfolio holder will attend each meeting.

November

Home Education



# HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN



This document, known as the Forward Plan, sets out the decisions which are expected to be taken during the period covered by the Plan by either Cabinet as a whole, or by individual Cabinet Members. The Plan is updated regularly and is available on the Herefordshire Council website ([www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk)) and from Council Offices. This edition supersedes all previous editions.

The council must give at least 28 days' notice of key decisions to be taken. A key decision is one which results in the council incurring expenditure or making savings of £500,000 or more, and/or is likely to be significant in terms of the strategic nature of the decision or its impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the council to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected.

**Current cabinet members are listed below.** For more information and links papers for Cabinet meetings please visit <https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251>

Councillor Jonathan Lester	Corporate Strategy and Budget (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst	Environment (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillor Carole Gandy	Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Ivan Powell	Children and Young People
Councillor Harry Bramer	Community Services and Assets
Councillor Graham Biggs	Economy and Growth
Councillor Pete Stoddart	Finance and Corporate Services
Councillor Barry Durkin	Roads and Regulatory Services
Councillor Philip Price	Transport and Infrastructure

Documents submitted in relation to each decision will be a formal report, which may include one or more appendices. Reports will usually be made available on the council website at least 5 clear working days before the date of the decision. Occasionally it will be necessary to exempt part or all of a decision report from publication due to the nature of the decision, for example if it relates to the commercial or business affairs of the council. Other documents may be submitted in advance of the decision being taken and will also be published on the website unless exempt.

To request a copy of a decision report or related documents please contact [governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk) or telephone 01432 261699.

FORWARD PLAN FOR 1 April 2025 ONWARDS

The following information is provided for each entry in the Forward Plan:

Heading	Contains
<b>Report title and purpose</b>	A summary of the proposal
<b>Decision Maker and Due date</b>	Who will take the decision and the date the decision is expected to be made
<b>Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)</b>	The cabinet member with responsibility for this decision and the officers producing the decision report.
<b>Directorate</b>	The directorate of the council responsible for the decision.
<b>Date uploaded onto plan</b>	The date the decision was first uploaded and the notice period started for key decisions.
<b>Decision type, exemptions and urgency</b>	Whether the decision is a Key or Non-Key decision, if the report is expected to be fully open, partly exempt or fully exempt and if urgency procedures are being followed.

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Decisions to be taken by Cabinet at a formal meeting are listed first, ordered by date, and include both Key and Non-Key decisions. Decisions to be taken by individual Cabinet Members are then listed, grouped by portfolio area and sorted by date. These include Key decisions only.

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
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### Cabinet decisions by date (Key and Non-key listed)

<b>Housing Development Company</b> To explore the development of a council owned housing development company. There is a critical need for additional housing in the county. Following the outcome of a recent best practice study of how other Local Authorities across England have addressed this issue, the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee have recommended that the council explore the development of a council owned housing development company, which is supported by the Cross Party Housing Working Group.	Cabinet 6 March 2025	Cabinet member economy and growth  Roger Allonby, Service Director Economy and Growth Roger.Allonby@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260330	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Q3 2024/25 Budget Report</b> To report the forecast position for 2024/25 at Quarter 3 (December 2024).	Cabinet 6 March 2025	Cabinet member finance and corporate services  Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	20 February 2025	<b>Non Key</b> Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>Q3 Performance Report</b> To report to Cabinet the quarterly performance updates for across the council.	Cabinet 6 March 2025	Cabinet member finance and corporate services  Jessica Karia, Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence <small>jessica.karia@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260976</small>	Corporate Support Centre	20 February 2025	<b>Non Key</b> Open
<b>Delivery Plan 2025-26</b> To approve the council's Delivery Plan 2025-26. Cabinet is required to produce a delivery plan which sets out how the strategic priorities within the Herefordshire Council Plan will be delivered and monitored.	Cabinet 27 March 2025	Cabinet member corporate strategy and budget  Michelle Price, Project manager, Helun Sandifort, Project Manager, Rosie Thomas-Easton, Director of Strategy and Transformation <small>michelleprice@herefordshire.gov.uk, Helun.Sandifort@herefordshire.gov.uk, rosie.thomas-easton@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383778, ,</small>	Corporate Support Centre	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>Education Strategy</b> To endorse the Education Strategy	Cabinet 27 March 2025	Cabinet member children and young people  Liz Farr, Service Director, Education, Skills and Learning liz.farr@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260897	Children and Young People	20 February 2025	<b>Non Key</b> Open
<b>Ofsted Monitoring Visit Feedback</b> To share the feedback letter from Ofsted following their sixth monitoring visit conducted on 18 and 19 February 2025.	Cabinet 27 March 2025	Cabinet member children and young people  Maxine David, Executive Support Officer, Tina Russell, Corporate Director Childrens and Young People maxine.david@herefordshire.gov.uk, tina.russell@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260044, Tel: 01432 260 267	Children and Young People	NEW ITEM	<b>Non Key</b> Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>Re-procurement of Unit 4 Business World</b> Re-procurement of our ERP system - Unit 4 Business World	Cabinet 27 March 2025	Cabinet member finance and corporate services  Simon Basran, Head of ICT & Digital <a href="mailto:Simon.Basran@herefordshire.gov.uk">Simon.Basran@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>	Corporate Support Centre	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>SEND inspection update (formerly known as Education Update and Overview)</b> To update Cabinet on the outcome of the SEND Inspection carried out by Ofsted and CQC.	Cabinet 27 March 2025	Cabinet member children and young people  Liz Farr, Service Director, Education, Skills and Learning, Hilary Jones, Head of Additional Needs, Louise Tanner, Admissions and 14 to 19 curriculum manager <a href="mailto:liz.farr@herefordshire.gov.uk">liz.farr@herefordshire.gov.uk</a> , <a href="mailto:hjones@herefordshire.gov.uk">hjones@herefordshire.gov.uk</a> , <a href="mailto:Louise.Tanner@herefordshire.gov.uk">Louise.Tanner@herefordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01432 260897, Tel: 01432 260579, Tel: 01432383333	Children and Young People	20 February 2025	<b>Non Key</b> Open



Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>Food Waste Collection Service</b> Following the successful award and mobilisation of the new waste collection service this report is to consider the business case for the introduction of a new food waste collection service.	Cabinet 24 April 2025	Cabinet member environment  Ben Boswell, Head of Environment, Climate Emergency and Waste Services  <small>bboswell@herefordshire.gov.uk</small> <small>Tel: 01432 261930</small>	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Garden Waste Collection Service</b> Following the successful award and mobilisation of the new waste collection service this report is to consider the business case for the introduction of a new chargeable garden waste collection service.	Cabinet 24 April 2025	Cabinet member environment  Ben Boswell, Head of Environment, Climate Emergency and Waste Services  <small>bboswell@herefordshire.gov.uk</small> <small>Tel: 01432 261930</small>	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>New care facility</b> To consider and agree the business case to invest in and develop the council's own care facility in Herefordshire to meet future demand	Cabinet 24 April 2025	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing  Hilary Hall, Corporate Director Community Wellbeing, Hayley Doyle, Service Director - All Age Commissioning  <small>Hilary.Hall@herefordshire.gov.uk, Hayley.Doyle@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260832</small>	Community Wellbeing	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b>
<b>Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association Ltd (HWGTA) Investment Partnership Model</b> To develop a business case outlining options for a preferred investment model and;  to approve the preferred investment model option for the HWGTA Ltd and Herefordshire Council partnership to enable the development of a vocational centre of excellence on Skylon Park.	Cabinet 15 May 2025	Cabinet member community services and assets  Joni Hughes, Head of Chief Executive's Office, Gabriela Singh, Project Manager  <small>Joni.Hughes@herefordshire.gov.uk, Gabriella.Singh@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260598, Tel: 01432 260375</small>	Corporate Support Centre	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Cabinet Member Decisions (Key decisions only)</b>					
<b>Portfolio: adults, health and wellbeing</b>					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>Portfolio: children and young people</b>					
<b>High Needs Budget 2025/26</b> To approve the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) high needs budget for 2024/25 as recommended by Schools Forum.	Cabinet member children and young people 28 March 2025	Cabinet member children and young people  Clare Bellis-powley, Senior Finance Business Partner <small>clare.bellis-powley@herefordshire.gov.uk</small>	Children and Young People	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Portfolio: community services and assets</b>					
<b>Property Services Estate Capital Building Improvement Programme 2025/28</b> To agree the proposed programme of works as set out in appendices incorporating a series of planned project works to enable Council to deliver on its obligations to maintain buildings fit for purpose.	Cabinet member community services and assets 19 March 2025	Cabinet member community services and assets  Michael Griffin, Head of Major Projects, Anthony Oliver, Interim Director of Commercial Services <small>Michael.Griffin2@herefordshire.gov.uk, anthony.oliver@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383519</small>	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>Shire Hall Phase 2 Refurbishment Work</b> Approval to spend allocated capital budget to deliver phase 2 of the planned Shire Hall refurbishment	Cabinet member community services and assets 19 March 2025	Cabinet member community services and assets  Johnathan Pritchard, Senior Project Manager Johnathan.Pritchard@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 261885	Corporate Support Centre	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Play Area Investment</b> The purpose of this report is to set out how the £1 million for Play Area Investment is proposed to be spent and to seek the necessary approvals to do so.	Cabinet member community services and assets 7 April 2025	Cabinet member community services and assets  Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Portfolio: economy and growth</b>					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>UKSPF Allocation 2025/2026</b> To accept and spend Herefordshire's UKSPF allocation for 2025/26, totalling £2,172,966, made up of £401,198 capital and £1,771,768 revenue.	Cabinet member economy and growth Before 8 March 2025	Cabinet member economy and growth  Nadine Kinsey, Economic Development Manager <small>nkinsey@herefordshire.gov.uk</small>	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Hereford Enterprise Zone Retained Business Rates – Herefordshire Growth Programme</b> To approve the expenditure of the retained business rates from the Hereford Enterprise Zone, to deliver a county wide business growth, skills and inward investment programme	Cabinet member economy and growth 11 March 2025	Cabinet member economy and growth  Roger Allonby, Service Director Economy and Growth <small>Roger.Allonby@herefordshire.gov.uk</small> <small>Tel: 01432 260330</small>	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Portfolio: environment</b>					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>River Restoration</b> To draw down funding from the Cabinet Commission for the delivery of river restoration projects.	Cabinet member environment 7 March 2025	Cabinet member environment  Elizabeth Duberley, Phosphate Mitigation Lead <small>Elizabeth.Duberley@herefordshire.gov.uk</small>	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>Non Key</b> Open
<b>Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan</b> To consider and adopt the new management plan for the Malvern Hills National Landscape.	Cabinet member environment 21 March 2025	Cabinet member environment  James Bisset, Principal Countryside Officer, Ben Boswell, Head of Environment, Climate Emergency and Waste Services <small>bboswell@herefordshire.gov.uk</small> <small>Tel: 01432 261930</small>	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>Wye Valley National Landscapes - acceptance of grant funding</b> This report seeks approval to accept a number of confirmed and indicative funding awards, allocations and bids from National Grid, DEFRA, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales for the future management and duties of the Wye Valley National Landscape, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This report also seeks approval to delegate the review of the AONB Management Plan and the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding between the 4 constituent local authorities, on account of the complex nature of the cross-border designation.	Cabinet member environment 27 March 2025	Cabinet member environment  Ben Boswell, Head of Environment, Climate Emergency and Waste Services <small>bboswell@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 261930</small>	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Warm Homes: Local Grant</b> We are seeking approval to apply for and spend funding under the new Warm Homes: Local Grant funding scheme	Cabinet member environment 31 March 2025	Cabinet member environment  Bernadette Muldowney, Programme Management Office <small>Bernadette.Muldowney@herefordshire.gov.uk</small>	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Portfolio: finance and corporate services</b>					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>ICT systems upgrades &amp; server replacements</b> Draw down of funds to perform ICT Systems upgrades and replace servers.	Cabinet member finance and corporate services 27 March 2025	Cabinet member finance and corporate services  Simon Basran, Head of ICT & Digital <small>Simon.Basran@herefordshire.gov.uk</small>	Corporate Support Centre	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Debt Enforcement Contract Award</b> To award the debt enforcement contract	Cabinet member finance and corporate services 31 March 2025	Cabinet member finance and corporate services  Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance <small>Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk</small> <small>Tel: 01432 383775</small>	Corporate Support Centre	NEW ITEM	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Portfolio: roads and regulatory services</b>					



Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>Highways Infrastructure Investment - Additional Funding</b> The purpose of this report is to set out how the £5.0 million additional Highways Infrastructure Investment is proposed to be spent and to seek the necessary approvals to do so.	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 18 March 2025	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services  Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Resurfacing Herefordshire Highways - Additional Funding</b> The purpose of this report is to set out how the £5.0 million additional investment in Resurfacing Herefordshire Highways is proposed to be spent and to seek the necessary approvals to do so.	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 18 March 2025	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services  Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Road Safety Schemes</b> The purpose of this report is to set out how the £3.0 million for Road Safety Schemes is proposed to be spent and to seek the necessary approvals to do so.	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 18 March 2025	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services  Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<b>Portfolio: transport and infrastructure</b>					
<b>Herefordshire Flood Risk Mitigation</b> The purpose of this report is to set out how the £2.055 million for Herefordshire Flood Risk Mitigation is proposed to be spent and to seek the necessary approvals to do so.	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure 18 March 2025	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure  Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open
<b>Procurement of a professional services supplier to support Highways &amp; Infrastructure</b> To assist with the delivery of highways, transport and infrastructure work the Council requires the services of an external consultant possessing specialist technical skill to provide specialist design, project management and transport planning services to supplement and support Herefordshire's in-house teams	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure 28 March 2025	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure  David Jones, Programme Manager, Tina Pugh, Senior Project Manager, Scott Tompkins, Delivery Director - Infrastructure David.Jones2@herefordshire.gov.uk, tina.pugh@herefordshire.gov.uk, scott.tompkins@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383320, Tel: 01432 383212,	Economy and Environment	20 February 2025	<b>KEY</b> Open