

Supplement to the agenda for

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 16 September 2025

2.00 pm

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

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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Questions from members of the public – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, 16 September 2025

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr James McGeown Weobley	<p>UK Parliament inquiry: Human Rights of Children in the Social Care System in England, 15 July 2025: https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/93/human-rights-joint-committee/news/208343/new-inquiry-human-rights-of-children-in-the-social-care-system-in-england/</p> <p>The Joint Committee has launched a call for written evidence.</p> <p>A number of the written evidence submissions from Herefordshire families highlight abuses by Herefordshires Social Care System, of human rights, specifically Article 8, respect for private and family life.</p> <p>Parliament Inquiry Question 9. Complaints and remedies To what extent are there clear and effective complaints mechanisms, as well as effective remedies, to deal with human rights issues arising in children's social care system?</p> <p>So, taking note of agenda item 7, what are the Chairpersons/ Collective Committee understanding of clear and effective complaints mechanisms and effective remedies, to deal with human rights issues arising in Herefordshire and how should scrutiny be provided?</p>	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
<p>Response: <i>Thank you for raising this important point. The committee recognises that the question of human rights within the children's social care system is a matter of national significance, and we welcome the opportunity to ensure that Herefordshire remains attentive to the developments of the parliamentary inquiry.</i></p> <p><i>We note that the inquiry explicitly values contributions from individuals and families, and we would encourage those in Herefordshire who feel their experiences can inform the debate to engage with this process.</i></p> <p><i>As a committee, our role is to scrutinise the council's complaints function carefully. We aim to understand how the council ensures that its processes are accessible, fair, and effective, and how any lessons from complaints are used to improve services. Through our questioning, we will seek assurance that mechanisms are in place to address human rights concerns and provide effective remedies where issues arise.</i></p>			

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 2	Ms Maggie Steel, Hereford	<p>On the Families' Alliance for Change website, there is a page which gives examples of complaints which have been rejected or not properly answered by the Complaints Department in 2025.</p> <p>The public are concerned that it appears that complaints about the actions of some senior officers can be rejected by the Complaints Team because of the "seniority of the officer". If this happens in a case where the complainant is not directly and personally affected by the actions/inactions being complained about, the Local Government Ombudsman will also not address the complaint. Such practice by the Complaints Team opens up the risk that some senior officers can act with impunity.</p> <p>Does the Committee's Chair share the public's concern about this deeply unsatisfactory situation which means that the public has no way to call out potentially harmful malpractice.</p>	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
<p>Response: <i>The role of a committee chair is to lead the committee in holding the executive to account, ensuring balanced, evidence-based discussion. The chair fosters cross-party collaboration, guiding councillors to scrutinise policies, decisions, and service delivery constructively.</i></p> <p><i>By maintaining impartiality, the chair helps the committee produce clear recommendations that influence decision-making. As such, it would be inappropriate for me to share any view on your concerns, however I will raise these concerns with the committee members so that they can build them into the lines of enquiry as they consider appropriate.</i></p>			