

# Agenda

## Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 12 October 2021**

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Time: **2.30 pm**

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Place: **Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, 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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# Agenda for the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

## Membership

**Chairperson** Councillor Phillip Howells

**Vice-chairperson** Councillor Jennie Hewitt

Councillor Graham Andrews

Councillor Toni Fagan

Councillor Helen l'Anson

Councillor Mike Jones

Councillor David Summers

Councillor Jim Kenyon

Andy James

Sam Pratley

Co-Opted Member

Co-Opted Member

## Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>To receive apologies for absence</p>	
2.	<p><b>NAMED SUBSTITUTES</b></p> <p>To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.</p>	
3.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>To receive declarations of interest in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
4.	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting on 7 September 2021.</p>	9 - 14
5.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the public.  <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 6 October 2021.</i></p> <p><i>Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:</i>  <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>.  <i>Further information and guidance is available at</i>  <a href="http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved">www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</a></p>	
6.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the council.  <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 6 October 2021.</i>  <i>Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:</i>  <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>.</p>	
7.	<p><b>PROVISION OF CHILDREN CENTRE SERVICE IN THE BROMYARD AREA</b></p> <p>To consider proposals for the provision of the Council's early help children's centre service for the Bromyard area from 1 April 2022.</p>	15 - 30
8.	<p><b>EFFECTIVE SCRUTINY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFER</b></p> <p>To review and approve the Local Government Association (LGA) scrutiny training and development offer.</p>	31 - 78
9.	<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW</b></p> <p>To review the attached work programme for 2021/22 and responses to recommendations previously made by the committee.</p>	79 - 114

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 23 November 2021 at 2:30pm



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- 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. Information about councillors is available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors)
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<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. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



**Minutes of the meeting of Children and young people scrutiny committee held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Tuesday 7 September 2021 at 2.30 pm**

**Present:** Councillor Phillip Howells (chairperson)  
Councillor Jennie Hewitt (vice-chairperson)

**Councillors:** Helen l'Anson, Mike Jones and David Summers

**Virtual attendees** Councillor Toni Fagan  
Mr Andy James – education co-optee

**Officers:** Interim Director of Children and Families and statutory Director of Children's Services, Interim Assistant Director for MASH CIN CP, Interim Assistant Director Quality Assurance, Safeguarding and Partnerships and Acting deputy chief executive - solicitor to the council

**23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Graham Andrews and Jim Kenyon and from Mr Sam Pratley.

Apologies were noted from Councillor Diana Toynbee, cabinet member for children and family services and Cath Knowles, interim director of children and families.

Councillor Toni Fagan and Mr Andy James were not able to attend the meeting in person. They joined the meeting by remote video link but did not vote on any resolutions of the committee.

**24. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

There were no named substitutes.

**25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**26. MINUTES**

The chair explained that additional comments had been received from a member of the public in relation to the minutes of 1 June. It was accepted that it was important to compare Herefordshire to its statistical neighbours and noted that Herefordshire's LAC rate was twice that of 'statistical neighbour' Cornwall, 88:10,000 and 44:10,000 respectively.

The minutes of the meeting of the 5 August would be amended as follows in relation to the discussion of the minutes of 1 June:

'Under item 8 the minutes recorded in the first bullet point that "The number of children in care in the county was slightly higher than in statistical neighbours but there could be many different reasons for this". This had been challenged by a member of the public who felt

highlighted that the difference in figures for Herefordshire from comparator authorities statistical neighbours was significant.'

**With this point noted, it was resolved that the minutes of 5 August 2021 be approved and signed by the chairperson.**

It was noted that the clerk to the committee would set up a separate 'action tracker' to record progress on agreed committee actions over time and added in addition to the minutes from after the next meeting of the committee.

**27. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The question and response are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

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

There were no questions from councillors.

**29. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY**

*The chairperson agreed that this item be taken ahead of the other substantive items on the agenda due to the availability of presenting officers.*

The committee considered the report by the interim director for children and families. The report was presented by the Interim Assistant Director for MASH CIN CP and the Interim Assistant Director Quality Assurance Safeguarding and Partnerships.

In response to concerns regarding the wellbeing of staff and avenues for support, including outside of line management arrangements, officers outlined the role of the principal social worker, the whistleblowing process and planned team away days.

The committee received an update on progress with case audits and noted the emerging themes, support and training for social workers and timescales for completion of the work.

The recommendations below were proposed and seconded and carried unanimously.

**That the committee having reviewed and noted the directors update report makes the following recommendations:**

- a) **That progress on development with heat maps be shared with the committee by 23 November 2021;**
- b) **That development sessions include members of children's services legal team as well as social workers;**
- c) **That the committee review all the challenges identified in the report with a view to identifying areas where scrutiny can contribute;**
- d) **That examples of audit documentation be shared with the committee by 23 November 2021;**
- e) **That a link to relevant information on the council website be provided to the committee;**
- f) **That the voice of the staff be captured in an appropriate form as evidence for external review and the scrutiny committee.**

*Mr Andy James left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.*

*The committee adjourned at 16:15 and resumed at 16:25.*

### 30. UPDATE ON CHILDREN'S LEGAL TEAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The committee considered the report which was introduced by the acting deputy chief executive – solicitor to the council.

The committee queried the numbers of cases under the Human Rights Act and whether training was required.

The committee received an update on the staffing structure in and progress on recruitment to the children's services legal team. The challenges of recruiting permanent staff were noted.

The committee reflected on the Internal Escalation Procedure for Managing Disagreements on Case Planning for Children and Young People and queried the support available to senior officers when considering potentially very difficult decisions. It was suggested that the process be reviewed in relation to the criteria under which a second opinion should be sought.

The ability of councillors to call in decisions was noted. It was felt that training was required to give councillors the confidence to initiate the call in procedure.

In answer to the chair's question on progress in adding a new standing co-optee to the committee as already agreed, the acting deputy chief executive advised that an advert was expected to be placed soon and that agreement to add to the standing co-optee list would be put to the full council meeting on the 8th October for formal confirmation.

#### Actions arising:

- The solicitor to the council to check and confirm if the Human Rights Act is highlighted as a workshop requirement for social workers;
- The solicitor to the council to provide an example of an induction pack for new starters.

The recommendations below were proposed and seconded and carried unanimously.

- a) The committee notes the progress made to date and the plan to continue with improvements in the Children's Legal Team;**
- b) Further updates on the legal team improvement plan be presented to the committee bi-monthly, with evidence in the next meeting (23 November 2021) on the service level agreement, knowledge and understanding of when to access legal services by middle managers**
- c) Add more clarity on the status of HRA cases and include evidence of training / workshops of areas of concern;**
- d) Post court proceedings meetings be required rather than optional (Q7 in Children's Legal Team Improvement Plan relates);**
- e) A review of the escalation process be undertaken in relation to decision making by senior officers within the escalation process and support for them, including the criteria under which a second opinion is sought;**
- f) Training be provided to councillors to help them be confident in instigating the call in procedure**

### 31. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The committee considered the recommendation tracker and work programme which were attached as appendices to the agenda paper. Potential additional items were discussed and it was noted that a work programming session would be scheduled after Council had agreed the new scrutiny structures as part of the re-thinking governance project.

Actions arising:

- The clerk to the committee to seek an update on the schools update briefing promised on 28 July 2020.

**The committee**

- a) **Notes the updated recommendation tracker in appendix 1; and**
- b) **Agrees the work programme at appendix 2 with the following amendments:**
  - i. **A report on health and wellbeing be scheduled for the December meeting, to include mental health in schools**
  - ii. **A report on holiday activities provided by schools during covid be scheduled for the December meeting, with a focus on contextual safeguarding**

**32. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as Tuesday 12 October 2021 at 2:30pm.

The meeting ended at 5:31pm

**Chairperson**

COMPLETED ACTIONS WILL BE MOVED TO THE 'REPORTED COMPLETE' TAB ONCE THEY HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED AT AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING				RED TEXT INDICATES UPDATES MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING BLUE TEXT INDICATES NEW ACTIONS ADDED FOLLOWING THE			
Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Owner	Directorate	Progress Update	Due date	Reported complete
1	07 September 2021	check and confirm if the Human Rights Act is highlighted as a workshop requirement for social workers	Claire Ward	Corporate Centre		02 November 2021	
2	07 September 2021	provide an example of an induction pack for new starters	Claire Ward	Corporate Centre		02 November 2021	
3	07 September 2021	seek an update on the schools update briefing promised on 28 July 2020.	Clerk to the committee	Corporate Centre	Updates added to recommendation tracker	02 November 2021	





## **Title of report: Provision of children centre service in the Bromyard area**

**Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee**

**Meeting date: Tuesday 12 October 2021**

**Report by: Cabinet member children and families;**

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

### **Wards affected**

Bishops Frome & Cradley; Bromyard Bringsty; Bromyard West; Hampton; Three Crosses;

### **Purpose**

To consider proposals for the provision of the Council's early help children's centre service for the Bromyard area from 1 April 2022.

The Bromyard Reach area is the only part of Herefordshire where Children's Centre provision is externally commissioned. All other areas are supported via an in-house service which is centrally governed and managed.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

**The committee reviews the proposals to recommission the provision of the children centre service in the Bromyard area for two years, and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive which may enhance the effectiveness of the plans.**

### **Alternative options**

1. Integrate the Bromyard service with the provision for the rest of Herefordshire, which is delivered in-house by the Council. Since the previous decision was made to extend the

existing contract there have been several local and national developments, described by this report, that provide a strategic opportunity to review the Council's approach to providing support to children in their early years and their families. The Council is planning to undertake further work to inform its future strategies around Early Years and Early Help, which will inform its plans for the future development of children's centre service across the County including services for the Bromyard area.

2. Direct award of a new contract to the incumbent provider. Market testing undertaken in 2018 indicated that there may be other alternative providers which would require the council to undertake a competitive procurement process. Therefore, there does not appear to be a legitimate reason to seek an exemption from the Council's standing procurement rules.

## **Key considerations**

3. The Childcare Act 2006 sets out a duty for councils to improve the inequalities of young children in its area. The Act describes the duties of local authorities to consider providing services through a children's centre but does not prevent an English local authority or any of their relevant partners from providing early childhood services otherwise than through a children's centre. Available statutory guidance describes children's centres as being as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas.
4. Children's centre services operate as part of a strategic whole family and whole system approach to early help, supporting families with different levels of need that may require universal, targeted, multi-agency or specialist/statutory support (Appendix 1). The work of children's centre services is informed by the number of 'known' 0-5 year olds living in the reach area. The core purpose of children's centre services is about improving outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on early help for the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in:
  - i. child development and school readiness
  - ii. parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills
  - iii. child and family health and life chances
5. Bromyard is the only area in Herefordshire where children's centre services have ever been procured from an external provider. Services across the rest of the county have been delivered directly by the council since their inception.
6. The last statutory guidance on the 'Core Purpose' of Children's Centre Services was published by the Government in April 2013 and Ofsted inspection of this provision was suspended in 2015. During this period, the level of resource available to provide Children's Centre Services significantly declined as a result of national funding reductions.
7. The last comprehensive review of Children Centre Service provision in Herefordshire was undertaken by the Council between 2012 and 2013. Subsequent decisions regarding the contract for the Bromyard area service noted the intention to strategically

review the County's Children Centre Service provision but the lack of updated national guidance made this difficult to achieve. In the intervening years, the local landscape in which Children's Centre Services operate has changed with the introduction of new approaches to Early Help and Talk Community and the move to agile service delivery that was less reliant on physical buildings.

8. In this context, the local Core Purpose of Children's Centre Services has evolved organically over time to target and meet need within the resources available. Currently in Herefordshire, the Core Purpose is to provide appropriate support for families of children aged 0-5 who may need some extra early help or, in some cases, support those that need further or serious help (Appendix 1). Advice and guidance can be provided around healthy lifestyles, school readiness, managing behaviour, nursery education funding etc. or families can be signposted to appropriate support elsewhere such as breastfeeding, immunization, weaning, domestic violence services, and job centre plus. The range of support can include facilitating midwife and health visiting clinics, supervised contact, speech and language therapy, adult learning, and parenting support. As funding has reduced nationally since 2011, the council has increasingly focussed its children's centre activities on vulnerable families through a more targeted approach that is enhanced by partnerships across a breadth of early year's provision.
9. In March 2021, the Government published its new review-led Policy Paper regarding The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days (from pregnancy to the age of two), which describes the following priorities:

***Ensuring families have access to the services they need***

- I. Seamless support for families: a coherent joined up Start for Life offer available to all families.
- II. A welcoming hub for families: Family Hubs as a place for families to access Start for Life services.
- III. The information families need when they need it: designing digital, virtual and telephone offers around the needs of the family.

***Ensuring the Start for Life system is working together to give families the support they need***

- I. An empowered Start for Life workforce: developing a modern skilled workforce to meet the changing needs of families.
- II. Continually improving the Start for Life offer: improving data, evaluation, outcomes and proportionate inspection.
- III. Leadership for change: ensuring local and national accountability and building the economic case.

10. Similar to Herefordshire's levels of need approach (Appendix 1), the Government paper considers a range of needs that might be supported by a tiered service model:
  - i. Universal services are those which are accessible to all, including health visiting and midwifery services.
  - ii. Universal+ services that are available to all families but may not need to be accessed by everyone

- iii. 'Targeted' specialist support for babies, children and families with severe and complex needs. They are usually only accessed via referral.
11. The Government intends to ensure councils understand how best to build a Family Hub network, including incorporating existing Children's Centres into their network where appropriate. What will matter is that every family knows where they can receive high-quality advice and support. A hub approach allows families to access face-to-face and digital support from public, private and voluntary organisations at a single place. However, the Government's review heard that it can be difficult for parents and carers to ask for help, in part because they fear they will be judged. Some people specifically mentioned that Children's Centres can be perceived as places for those who need help with specific problems. This can dissuade families from accessing services, as they fear being perceived as a 'bad parent'. Much more work needs to be done to make it easier for families to feel it is OK to need support and to ask for help – to remove the stigma many parents feel. One of the ways to do this is to make each Family Hub a place where you go to do the things that every parent does, including registering the birth of your baby.
12. In its Policy Paper, the Government has recognised that having a place to go to is important for families but a single, centralised location will not be able to meet the needs of all families in a community. More rural locations, as well as more diverse communities, will need different specialist or outreach services that can form a part of the wider Family Hub network but which are tailored for the particular needs of a community. Appendix 2 provides an extract of the Government review regarding providing Start for Life Services in rural areas. The Government review saw examples of local authorities using their Children's Centre estate to create a core of superb, multidisciplinary Family Hubs in the locations that best meet the needs of their communities. These Family Hubs sit at the heart of other physical and virtual services delivered in the community, in people's homes and in other locations such as GP surgeries and libraries.
13. Herefordshire's Early Years Partnership, which is led by the Council, will be developing the local strategy response to the new national policy. This work will dovetail with ongoing work to improve support for children and families via Universal services within the Talk Community approach, Universal+ services that are part of Early Help and Targeted specialist services that are part of the Council's children's services improvement programme. The new local Early Years strategy will help to inform a refreshed Core Purpose for Children's Centre Services across Herefordshire and subsequently inform future commissioning or service redesign proposals.
14. The current contract for Children's Centre Services in the Bromyard area will cease in March 2022. In light of the new national Best Start for Life policy and plans to refresh Herefordshire's Early Years Strategy, it is proposed to recommission the Bromyard Area service for a further two years through a competitive procurement process, which should be completed by the end of January 2022 or earlier. Operational priorities for all Children's Centre Services, including for the Bromyard area, are updated annually. Prior to tendering for a new Bromyard area contract for 2022/24, the Council will review and update the existing service specification as appropriate to ensure it continues to be aligned with plans for services in the rest of the county. Operational priorities will also

be kept under review during the contract period to ensure they remain appropriate and consistent with other Children's Centre Services.

## **Community impact**

15. The recommendations support the council's County Plan priorities, with particular reference to specific community priorities:

- I. Ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve
- II. Protect and improve the lives of vulnerable people

16. The recommendations will also support the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan across all pledges with a particular focus on safety:

- a. Keeping children and young people safe – BE SAFE FROM HARM
- b. Improving children and young people's health and wellbeing – BE HEALTHY
- c. Helping ALL children and young people succeed – BE AMAZING
- d. Ensuring that children and young people are influential in our communities – FEEL PART OF THE COMMUNITY

17. At the end of August, 2021, there were 8,554 children aged under five years in Herefordshire, of which 403 lived in the Bromyard reach area. Within in these figures, there were 2,694 children that were living in areas that ranked among the 25% most deprived in England, including 151 in the Bromyard reach area.

## **Environmental Impact**

18. The 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.

## **Equality duty**

19. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

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.

20. 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.

21. Children and families with emerging or additional needs will continue to be supported effectively through Herefordshire’s approach to Early Help, with children’s centre provision working alongside local partners to ensure a consistent approach to supporting vulnerable families across the County. With a focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged families, a positive impact will be expected in relation to the number of vulnerable families achieving sustainable change. Equalities monitoring of children’s centre provision will be undertaken via council systems to ensure equality of access to support across the County. The council will continually monitor any impact of service changes to ensure that any mitigation against negative impacts are in place for children and adults with protected characteristics.

## Resource implications

22. The historical value of the Bromayrd area contract was comparatively higher than the resources allocated to the service for the rest of the county. This in-balance was addressed with the resource allocation being realigned between the contracted and in-house services from April 2020, since when the annual contract value has remained at £25,000.

23. The amount of resource allocated per known child aged under 5-years has been reviewed (below), and it is proposed that the contract price is increased to £27,695 for 2022/23 and a 2% inflationary uplift is applied for 2023/24

### 2021/22 £resource per child aged under 5 years

	Known children (Aug 2021)	Budget	£ per known child
Bromyard Area	403	£ 25,000	£ 62
Rest of Herefordshire	8151	£ 560,157	£ 69

### Proposed Bromyard Area Contract Value

2022/23 adjustment equal to rest of county (403 children X £69)	£ 27,695
2023/24 2% inflationary uplift	£ 28,249

## Legal implications

24. Scrutiny committees have the power to undertake pre-decision call in of forthcoming decisions programmed on the forward plan. The constitutional rules concerning pre-decision call in are contained in the Scrutiny Rules under paragraph 4.5.90.

## Risk management

25.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Given the potential challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, adaptations to service delivery may cause disruption and negatively impact vulnerable families.	The council will work alongside the contracted provider to minimise any potential disruption to service delivery.
The outcome of a competitive procurement process may result in a change of service provider for the new contract.	<p>Prior to commencing the procurement process, the council will work with the current provider to confirm any TUPE implications for its employees and progress with consultation as appropriate.</p> <p>In the event of a service transfer, the Council will work the current and new provider during the new contract mobilisation period to ensure that families receive good communications about any changes and that any family with an ongoing support package is transferred to the new provider as seamlessly as possible.</p>

## Consultees

26. Political group consultation regarding this specific decision for the Bromyard area contract will be completed and feedback will also help inform the decision taken.
27. The best way to tell whether a service is meeting a family's needs is to ask the family themselves. The Government's vision is for Start for Life offers to be co-designed with Parent and Carer Panels and include a Universal offer for every family and a Universal+ offer to meet the needs of their specific local communities.
28. The development of Parent and Carer Panels will be promoted, where professionals and parents work together to co-design services and provide regular feedback on their

effectiveness and quality. These panels must include dads and other partners, so they get the chance to shape the services that are there for them. Parents and carers of disabled babies and professionals who deliver services for babies with additional needs should be represented on these Panels, also with input from existing Parent Carer Forums.

29. It is expected that the work described previously to develop a new Early Years Strategy for Herefordshire will support the national policy on Parent and Carer Panels and involve consultation and engagement activities with key local stakeholders across the County. The scope and timetable for the Early Years Strategy consultation and engagement work should be determined by the end of March 2022. The results of these activities will help to inform future commissioning or service redesign proposals relating to Children's Centre Services.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Early Help in Herefordshire

Appendix 2: Extract of the Government review regarding providing Best Start for Life Services in rural areas

## **Background papers**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days>

## Appendix 1: Early Help in Herefordshire

Whilst parents and carers have primary care for their children, local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, have specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. *'Working Together to Safeguard Children'*<sup>1</sup> was published by the government in July 2018 to provide a guide for inter-agency working with the intention of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This national guide provides a definition of Early help:

*'Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child is returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse.'*

Working Together (2018) also states that:

"Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life..... Early help can also prevent further problems arising".

"Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

- identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child".

Practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/942454/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_inter\\_agency\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)

## **Early Help in Herefordshire**

In Herefordshire Early Help means providing the Right Help at the Right Time to meet a family's needs, to develop the families own skills to determine their future, reducing poor outcomes and inequalities, with the child at the centre.

Early help is recognised as everyone's responsibility and key partners include:

Primary and Secondary Schools, Health Visitors, School Nurses, Midwives, General practitioners and other health practitioners, Mental Health partners CAMHS and Adult Services, Early Years providers, Police, Department of Work & Pensions, Housing Associations, Voluntary and Charitable organisations, HVOSS, Youth Offending Service and Probation.

The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership vision is "Children are safely cared for by their family. Where needed services will work well together with them to achieve this".

The board recognized that this can only be successfully achieved by supporting the right children and their families, at the right time, in the right place for as long as is needed.

Services need to:

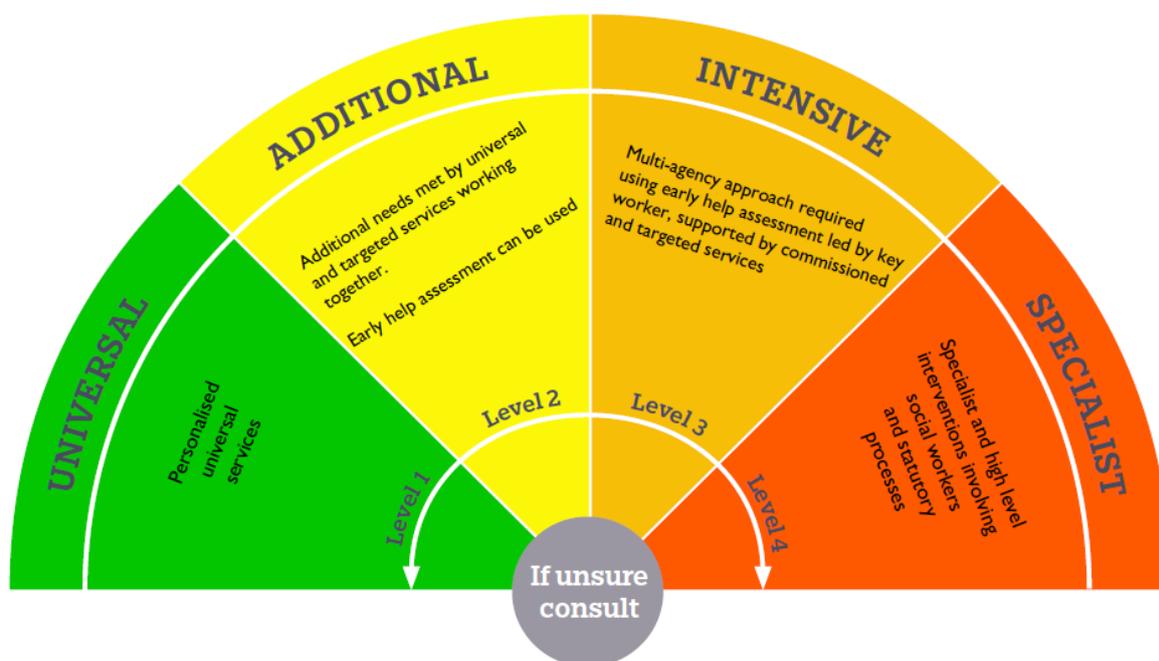
- Support children and families when they first need help
- Build strong relationships with children, parents, extended family and local communities so children are safe
- Listen to children and parents to understand their strengths and needs and offer support that they know can make a difference
- Provide support so change happens, and children can be cared for by their parents/family

Partner agencies deliver a range of services to support children and families and recognise the need for collaboration with children and families and each other when so doing.

## **Early Help Assessments**

For children and families with more complex needs, Herefordshire partners have developed the Early Help Assessment to assess the needs of the whole family and offer the right support at the right time. Multi-agency services will work collaboratively to support families before their difficulties escalate. Most children and families supported by an early help assessment do not need council or more specialist services to achieve positive change.

The diagram below sets out the 4 levels of need that services and professionals will use to ensure the right help is provided at the right time to the right children and families.



The below table provides information about when an Early Help Assessment is required, who provides support to the family and how to access support and advice when completing an assessment.

Levels and Referral Routes	Needs	Services (examples)	Outcome
<b>Level 1 Universal</b> <b>Open access to provision</b>	All children and families who live in the area have core needs such as parenting, health and education	Early years, education, primary health care, maternity services, housing, community health care, children centre services Let's Play & Baby Let's Play and leisure services. Children are supported by their family and in universal services to meet all of their needs.  WISH – Wellbeing, Information & Signposting Herefordshire website	Children and young people make good progress in all/most areas of development

<p><b>Level 2 Additional</b></p> <p><b>Two or three services work together to meet child and family needs, co-ordinated by a service and/or people who know the child/family best</b></p> <p><b>It may be helpful for these professionals to complete an Early Help Assessment but not essential at level 2. If no EHA a plan of actions with a review timeline to make sure that the help on offer is making a difference. This would</b></p> <p><b>be a plan established and managed by the leading agency</b></p>	<p>Children and families with additional needs who would benefit from or who require extra help to improve education, parenting and/or behaviour, or to meet specific health or emotional needs or to improve their material situation</p>	<p>Parenting programmes</p> <p>School holiday and short breaks provision for disabled children</p> <p>Extra health support for family members; behavioural support</p> <p>Housing support</p> <p>Additional learning support</p> <p>CAMHS tier 2 support to schools ( SEN support and help to find education and employment</p> <p>Speech and language therapy</p> <p>Children’s centre services</p> <p>Services provided on a voluntary basis to families (these may be offered by volunteers and/or commissioned through a voluntary organisation)</p>	<p>The life chances of children and families will be improved by offering additional support</p>
<p><b>Level 3 Intensive</b></p> <p><b>An Early Help assessment to be completed by the agency which knows the family best or who the family trust with an outcome based support plan agreed by the family. There will be an identified Key Worker who will be the main link for the family and hold all the agencies involved to account to deliver their agreed support.</b></p> <p><b>Support from the special educational needs and disability service</b></p>	<p>Vulnerable children and their families with multiple needs or whose needs are more complex, such as children and families who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a disability resulting in complex needs</li> <li>• exhibit anti-social or challenging behaviour, including the expression of radicalised thoughts or intentions.</li> <li>• suffer some neglect or poor family relationships</li> <li>• have poor engagement with key services such as school and health</li> <li>• are not in education or work long- term</li> </ul>	<p>Due to the complexity of needs, especially around behaviour and parenting, a shared professional and co-ordinated plan is developed with the family. The assessment and plan is led by a Key Worker and the service is provided ONLY with the consent of the parents/carers</p> <p>A wide range of services might be involved in meeting the family’s needs, eg CAMHS tier 3, adult mental health or drug/alcohol team</p> <p>Families needing substantial support to care for a disabled child, usually with the help of a social worker from the children with disability service</p>	<p>Life chances will be significantly impaired without co-ordinated multi-agency support</p>

<p><b>Level 4 Specialist</b> <b>Access requires a MARF</b></p> <p><b>Children`s social care Child protection Care proceedings Children in need</b></p> <p><b>Youth treatment orders/ custody</b></p> <p><b>Tier 4 CAMHS</b></p> <p><b>Hospital or hospice in-patient</b></p>	<p>Children and young people who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>This will include victims of child exploitation and also those at high risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)</p> <p>Children with significant impairment of function/learning and/or life limiting illness</p> <p>Children whose parents and wider family are unable to care for them</p> <p>Families involved in crime/misuse of drugs at a significant level</p> <p>Families with significant mental or physical health needs</p>	<p>Children`s social care, youth offending service</p> <p>Criminal justice system, tier 3 and 4</p> <p>CAMHS In-patient and continuing health care Fostering and residential care</p> <p>Health care for children with life limiting illness</p> <p>Services for children with profound and enduring disability</p> <p>Referrals have to be made to services with the power to undertake statutory non- voluntary intervention and services with specialist skills</p>	<p>Children and /or family members are likely to suffer significant harm/ removal from home/ serious and lasting impairment without the intervention of specialist services, very often using their statutory powers</p>
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For more information please use the link below:

<https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/for-professionals/right-help-right-time-levels-of-need/>

The Early Help Hub in Herefordshire has been developed to promote children and their families get the right help at the right time. The Early Help Hub sits alongside the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub and is responsible for contacts which come into the local authority at level 3 or below and for contacts that MASH have assessed as not needing level 4 intervention. The Early Help Hub proactively works with families and referrers to ensure the right support is offered, including signposting, offering advice and guidance and facilitating the completion of an Early Help Assessment, where appropriate, with those families whose needs meet level 3 or high level 2 and who give their consent.



## **Appendix 2: Extract of the Government review regarding providing Best Start for Life Services in rural areas**

The Review wanted to hear from a wide range of parenting and caring experiences. Here we share some of what we heard from parents, carers and Start for Life professionals and volunteers who live and work in rural areas.

### **What the Review heard**

1 Caring for a baby in a large rural area can bring with it a number of obstacles. These come on top of the challenges which parents and carers face regardless of where they live. The Review heard that living in a large rural county where the towns and cities are many miles apart can make accessing support very difficult for families as they have a long way to travel. For example, the average journey time to hospital using public transport is 34 minutes in urban areas, compared to 61 minutes in rural areas<sup>102</sup> and the Review heard that in Devon, families can live up to 29 miles away from their nearest Children's Centre.

2 In rural areas, accessing services can be especially difficult for families who do not have use of a car. The Review heard how transport options can be very limited; in some areas, the train services are virtually non-existent and residents have to rely on bus services which are infrequent and often expensive. For some families, travelling on buses to get to appointments can take up a large portion of their day, especially if there is no direct bus route.

3 The Review also heard how covering a large geographical area can make things harder for Start for Life professionals and volunteers. Many professionals – such as health visitors and community midwives – are able to offer home visits to the families they support. Having long distances to travel between visits will reduce the number of families Start for Life professionals and volunteers are able to see each day. This might make it more difficult for families to get a home visit and it might mean increased workload pressures for professionals.

4 We also heard about the ways in which service providers have overcome the challenges faced by geographically dispersed areas. For example, some local partners are able to provide free transport to help parents access services. Others have been conducting research with local families to find out which locations are the easiest for parents to get to. Local partners have also made some of their services mobile, running sessions in different locations around an area so they can reach out to communities which are often isolated.

5 The Review has also heard about how the changes to service provision as a result of the coronavirus pandemic have been welcomed by some families living in rural locations. As many local partners have been able to offer virtual services – either online or over the phone – families have been able to avoid travelling long distances in order to attend a face to face appointments.

### **Families living in rural areas: How the actions in this Review will have real world impact**

6 The Review has heard how living and working in rural areas comes with additional challenges for families, with difficulties around accessing face to face services due to the time and cost of travelling to appointments. While having a physical place to go is central to the Start for Life offer, meeting the needs of every family requires services to connect with those in isolated communities, giving them the support they need without expecting them to always travel far for it.

7 There are similar challenges for those professionals and volunteers providing services as part of the Start for Life offer, where one person doing home visits can by necessity spend more time travelling between appointments than working with families. While home visits are a vital service, particularly for midwives and health visitors, we want to enable greater ability to connect with families remotely through the digital offer to supplement face to face engagement.

8 Services provided under both Universal and Universal+ offers should include a digital element wherever possible, be it telephone appointments or group activity sessions held over a video call. However, we recognise that broadband connectivity and mobile phone networks are unavailable or unreliable in some rural areas. For this reason, we think digital services must complement, but not replace, in-person physical services.

9 We have seen some excellent examples of services adapted to meet the needs of their local communities, particularly those that have been implemented due to the coronavirus pandemic. It is important that others are given the opportunity to learn from these experiences; we think local leaders will be well-placed to identify and share best practice, as well as 'what works' when commissioning service

10 It is really important that local partners listen to the people they serve and consider their preferences when designing a Start for Life offer. The Review has heard how some local areas have conducted research with parents and carers to ensure that physical services are based in the locations which are easiest for families to reach. We want to see more local partners involving their communities in all aspects of how services are designed. This should be achieved by the co-design of the Start for Life offer by local authorities and Parent and Carer Panels.

# Effective Scrutiny of Children's Services: training and development offer

**Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee**

**Meeting date: Tuesday 12 October 2021**

**Report by: Democratic services manager**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

To review and approve the Local Government Association (LGA) scrutiny training and development offer.

As part of the LGA's continuing work to support political and corporate leadership for children's services, they are offering Herefordshire Council a training and development offer. This offer forms part of an LGA pilot to support councils to improve the effectiveness of their scrutiny of children's services.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) **The committee reviews the LGA training and development offer, as set out in appendices A to C**
- b) **Considers any recommendations it wishes to make to the LGA and/or the improvement board on the content**

## **Alternative options**

1. Not to accept the training and development offer from the LGA. This is not recommended. The LGA provide bespoke and specialist training and development which is structured around the needs of different councils, and the modules that are most relevant to their needs. All modules will be facilitated by an LGA associate with significant experience of supporting councils with effective scrutiny, working with a Member with recent or current experience of children's services leadership.
2. To provide 'in-house' training. This is not recommended. The training offer from the LGA has been designed to support and strengthen the children and young people scrutiny committee and officers as part of the council's improvement plan journey. Further, the training offer provides the council with access to children's scrutiny 'experts' in other local authority settings where similar improvement journeys have been undertaken.

## **Key considerations**

3. In March, a highly critical court judgement involving a child in the care of the Council (the YY case) was handed down by His Hon Justice Keehan to Herefordshire Council. This Judgement was not the first in which His Hon Justice Keehan had raised concerns regarding Herefordshire Children's Services.
4. Following this judgement, a Department of Education (DfE) approved independent improvement advisor (Ms. Gladys Rhodes White) has been appointed and Chairs a newly established Improvement Board. The Improvement Board is to ensure compliance with the non-statutory notice issued by the DfE. It is proposed a web page containing all minutes of meetings and information relating to board will be published. This board has developed an improvement plan to support the Council on our improvement journey.
5. Herefordshire Council has also sought external advice and support through the DfE, Ofsted and the Local LGA and has recently been successful in obtaining grant funding from the DfE (£215k) to provide additional expertise and capacity to support practice improvement.
6. Part of this improvement involves enhancements in scrutiny. As corporate parents, councillors have particular duties regarding the effectiveness and safety of children's services, and the Corporate Parenting Board and scrutiny should provide a mechanism for them to exercise these duties.

## **The Training Package**

7. A training package is being developed to provide children's scrutiny committee members with a range of additional competencies and skills. This training is highly recommended to all scrutiny and non-scrutiny committee members.
8. Discussions with the children and young people scrutiny committee – specifically - has indicated that they wish to cover a range of training types. These include:
  - a. Bottom up training and support – where the basic elements of how the service works and operates are covered. Including providing a 'scrutiny committee' basic guide that includes a glossary of key terms used in the children's services sector and an outline of the processes that the service is required to report against to scrutiny..
  - b. Mid-term training – where specific training around the way the service operates is provided. This would allow scrutiny committee members to have detailed knowledge of the practices and processes carried out by the service, including any service standards that are required to be met.

c. Specific scrutiny 'practice training'.

9. In relation to 'c' above the council has been working with the LGA and the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to develop a bespoke training package for the scrutiny committees.
10. The LGA, with their specialist knowledge in supporting children's scrutiny in other LA setting have designed a 'bespoke' training and development offer for the the children's scrutiny committee to consider. The full training and development offer is set out in appendix a to c. In summary, this training will focus on
  - a. Supporting scrutiny boards to identify strengths and areas for development using our self-assessment tool.
  - b. Using a mixture of workshop sessions, individual coaching and resources to improve the confidence and ability of scrutiny chairs and members to use their roles to have a positive impact on the lives of children and families.
  - c. Ensuring that the wider system of support around children's services supports and enables scrutiny to operate effectively.

### **Participation Scrutiny**

11. It is important to the committee members that they can speak directly with children who have direct 'lived' experience of being in the care of the council. As part of the wider improvement plan work, the council is developing feedback processes to engage more Young People in their children in care reviews in order that they can be more proactive in planning. The participation service is being reviewed with a view to broaden the span of engagement with children and young people to ensure that they are not only engaged in their own individual plans but also have a voice in ongoing service development, review and improvement.
12. Further, the scrutiny committee membership have also noted that they wish to have opportunities to meet with and understand the role of our frontline social workers and other children's service support staff.
13. In conjunction with the training and development programme, children and young people scrutiny committee members will wish to explore how they can integrate these experiences in to the forward work programme of activities.

### **Additional training for all of the council's scrutiny committees**

14. In combination with the LGA offer, the CfGS have been working up a further training offer for all of the scrutiny committees and supporting officers. The opportunity is being taken as part of this improvement to put in place changes to the operation of scrutiny more generally. In particular, to enhance the way that cross-cutting matters are considered by scrutiny committees and to increase the opportunity for broader engagement with scrutiny (through public engagement, co-option and the use of expert witnesses).
15. While still being worked up, the CfGS scrutiny training offer will seek to focus on:
  - a. enhancing councillors' confidence and capability on core scrutiny skills, including questioning skills and use of data and information;
  - b. enhancing the ability of councillors to be able to draw on the lived experience of people in the area (and particularly children) to inform and support their scrutiny work;
  - c. enhancing officers' ability to support councillors in carrying out these roles.

16. The proposal seeks to integrate training opportunities into the delivery of scrutiny's substantive work.

### **Training schedule**

17. A training schedule, which will include key dates and times, will be prepared with support from the project management office. It is envisaged this training will commence later this year.

### **Community impact**

18. The Children's Legal Improvement Plan feeds into the broader Council Children's Improvement Programme with the aim to safeguard and protect Herefordshire children.
19. The term 'corporate parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after by the council. Being a good corporate parent means we should; accept responsibility for children in the council's care; make their needs a priority; and seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.
20. Corporate parenting responsibilities are not confined to elected members. All officers share the responsibility to promote the needs of looked after children. Key responsibilities of all officers are: to promote the life chances of looked after children and care leavers in their area of responsibility; and to consider the impact of decision making on looked after children and care leavers.

### **Environmental Impact**

21. Whilst this report relates to 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.

### **Equality duty**

22. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

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.
23. 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 is a decision on back office functions, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

## Resource implications

24. There are no financial resource implications with the council accepting the LGA training and development offer. The LGA, under their contractual obligations and arrangements with the DfE fully subsidise their training and development programmes for local authorities.
25. There will be some financial and resource implications with the council providing all of the scrutiny committees with training and development via the centre for governance and scrutiny. The training package being prepared for the council is currently under consideration with final costs yet to be confirmed. Democratic Services holds the member development budget which will be the budget assigned to cover the costs of this training offer.

## Legal implications

26. There are no legal implications with the matters discussed in this report.

## Risk management

27. There are no risk implications with the matters set out in this report.

## Consultees

28. None.

## Appendices

Appendix A: LGA Training offer – effective scrutiny of children’s services

Appendix B: LGA Presentation – Introduction to effective scrutiny of children’s scrutiny

Appendix C: Effective Scrutiny Self-Assessment

## Background papers

None

## Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

- I. **The Local Government Association (LGA)** - the national voice of local government, working with councils to support, promote and improve local government.
- II. **The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS)** - is a social purpose consultancy and national centre of expertise. Its purpose is to help organisations achieve their outcomes through improved governance and scrutiny.
- III. **Department for Education (DfE)** - is the government department responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy.



## Six Steps to Effective Scrutiny of Children's Services

### Self-Assessment Template

This self-assessment is a tool to diagnose areas of strength and areas for development in children's services scrutiny practice. It links directly to training modules offered by the LGA aimed at improving the effectiveness of children's services scrutiny.

It is recommended that the self-assessment is completed by the Chair and/or members of the Scrutiny Committee (either individually, in small groups, or as a collective). A sponsor should be nominated at the start of the process to support and co-ordinate completion with, or on behalf of, the Chair. This could be a democratic services representative, the Director of Children's Services or someone from within the Scrutiny Committee.

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The template is organised around 'Six Steps' which together articulate good practice in scrutiny of children's services. For each Step, the prompt questions should be used to explore this component of effective scrutiny and form a view on which of the following statements best describes current scrutiny practice in this area:

- Beginning its journey
- Developing its practice
- Strong and embedded

The self-assessment template provides space for answers to specific questions to be recorded, and a space that should be used to evidence why a particular response (beginning/developing/embedded) has been chosen.

An introductory presentation on scrutiny of children's services and support available through the LGA is attached and should be viewed alongside the self-assessment.

## Step 1 – Knowledge of Children’s Services

Children’s Services is complex, and the council and its councillors are accountable for safeguarding children and a myriad of statutory duties, including acting as corporate parents to children in the care of the local authority. To effectively challenge and scrutinise delivery of children’s services, councillors need to understand the services provided to children and families, the challenges faced by professionals in delivering these, and the impact that these services have on the lives of children.

<p>Use the questions below to explore scrutiny practice, and form a view on whether the committee is: <b>Beginning</b> its journey, <b>Developing</b> its practice or whether it is strong and <b>Embedded</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Beginning its journey</b></p> <p>There is a limited understanding from members of the committee on the services provided by the council for children and how they are performing. There is little challenge in meetings, which leads to less oversight of policy, practice and decisions of the executive.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Developing its practice</b></p> <p>Members of the committee have some understanding of children’s services and the standards of services that are delivered. Challenge is less robust, leading to less impactful reviews, and reduced oversight of policy, practice and decisions of the executive.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Embedded</b></p> <p>Members of the committee have a clear understanding of the services provided, and their performance. They use this knowledge to effectively challenge, scrutinise and influence policy, practice, and decisions of the executive.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you as a councillor ensure that you have the knowledge you need to make the right decisions or recommendations?</li> <li>• What training and development opportunities are there to develop your knowledge of Children’s Services?</li> <li>• Is there an annual briefing to ensure that all councillors understand the services provided to children and young people?</li> <li>• How are you and other councillors supported to understand your statutory</li> </ul>	<p><b>Response to questions</b></p>	<p><b>Where we are now and evidence to support</b></p>	

duties regarding children, young people and safeguarding?

- What do you think councillors need, to facilitate a better understanding?
- Are there any barriers preventing you from developing your skills and confidence?
- Do you and your scrutiny colleagues input into the development of Agendas and the Forward Plan?
- Are you provided with a good overview of performance information?

Areas for Development

## Step 2: The role of children’s scrutiny

“Scrutiny works best when it has a clear role and function. This provides focus and direction.

*The scrutiny function can often lack support and recognition within an authority because there is a lack of awareness among both members and officers about the specific role it plays, which individuals are involved and its relevance to the authority’s wider work. Authorities should, therefore, take steps to ensure all members and officers are made aware of the role the scrutiny committee plays in the organisation, its value and the outcomes it can deliver, the powers it has, its membership and, if appropriate, the identity of those providing officer support.”*

### **Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local and combined authorities, May 2019**

How committees are created, its membership and its meeting structure are key to creating effective scrutiny. Scrutiny is no place for politics and should be cross-party in its membership.

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<p>Use the questions below to explore scrutiny practice, and form a view on whether the committee is: <b>Beginning</b> its journey, <b>Developing</b> its practice or whether it is strong and <b>Embedded</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Beginning its journey</b></p> <p>There is limited understanding or commitment to the role that scrutiny has and can play in improving services.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Developing its practice</b></p> <p>The role of scrutiny is understood by members of the committee. However, this is less understood across other councillors, staff and partners.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Embedded</b></p> <p>There is a clear view on the role and purpose of overview and scrutiny, which is shared across the whole council and its partners.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do councillors in your authority have a clear understanding of the remit of Scrutiny?</li> <li>• How has the role of scrutiny been defined?</li> <li>• What challenges do you face in describing or fostering understanding of your role?</li> <li>• Is there a clear terms of reference for the Scrutiny committee?</li> <li>• Do Scrutiny Minutes reflect meeting discussion and include evidence of challenge, areas of concern and good practice?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Response to questions</b></p>	<p><b>Where we are now and evidence to support</b></p>	

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are meetings accessible and held frequently enough to maintain momentum?</li><li>• Are relevant reports, adequate information and evidence supplied ahead of meetings with sufficient time for you to digest?</li><li>• Is there sufficient capacity and officer support to facilitate evidence gathering by the committee?</li></ul> |  |  |
| <p>Areas for Development</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |  |

## Step 3: Work programming and planning

*“Effective scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the committee making recommendations that will make a tangible difference to the work of the authority. To have this kind of impact, scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year. Authorities with multiple scrutiny committees sometimes have a separate work programme for each committee. Where this happens, consideration should be given to how to co-ordinate the various committees’ work to make best use of the total resources available.”*

**Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local and combined authorities, May 2019**

Effective work planning for the year will allow scrutiny to see how its work can add value to the other aspects of children’s service governance - such as the Cabinet, Partnership Boards, Corporate Parenting Board, Improvement Boards and social care professional plans. Scrutiny also has additional strength in the type of review that it undertakes - being more pro-active and using the overview role more effectively.

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<p>Use the questions below to explore scrutiny practice, and form a view on whether the committee is: <b>Beginning</b> its journey, <b>Developing</b> its practice or whether it is strong and <b>Embedded</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Beginning its journey</b></p> <p>There is limited evidence of work programming and how topics are selected. Meetings tend to be reactive to current issues.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Developing its practice</b></p> <p>The committee undertakes work programming for the year ahead, however this can be done in isolation of the wider governance framework and partners.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Embedded</b></p> <p>Work programming is holistic and is done in consultation with the wider council governance framework, and that of partners. A variety of types of review are used to encourage engagement and maximise impact.</p>
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- How do you work with other review panels, and partnership boards, such as the Corporate Parenting Board, Strategic Safeguarding Partnership, Improvement Board?

## Areas for Development

## Step 4: Engagement and working with others

*“Evidence will need to be gathered to inform the work programming process. This will ensure that it looks at the right topics, in the right way and at the right time. Gathering evidence requires conversations with:*

- The public... Listening to and participating in conversations in places where local people come together, including in online forums, can help authorities engage people on their own terms and yield more positive results.*
- The Council’s partners... Relationships with other partners should not be limited to evidence-gathering to support individual reviews or agenda items. A range of partners are likely to have insights that will prove useful.*
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### Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local and combined authorities, May 2019

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| <p>Areas for Development</p>                                                                                                                                               |  |  |

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“Overview and scrutiny activity typically produces recommendations about subjects reviewed, but practitioners have not always focused on measuring their impact.” **Tipping-the-Scales: a model to measure the return on investment of scrutiny 2011**

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Areas for Development

## Step 6: Creating a strong organisational culture

*“The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails. While everyone in an authority can play a role in creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny, it is important that this is led and owned by members, given their role in setting and maintaining the culture of an authority. Creating a strong organisational culture supports scrutiny work that can add real value.”*

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<p>Use the questions below to explore scrutiny practice, and form a view on whether the committee is: <b>Beginning</b> its journey, <b>Developing</b> its practice or whether it is strong and <b>Embedded</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Beginning its journey</b></p> <p>Politics can hinder effective scrutiny. There is limited support for the role and purpose of scrutiny and the value that it can bring to children’s services.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Developing its practice</b></p> <p>The value that scrutiny can bring is beginning to be understood by the rest of the council. This is evidenced by better communication and acceptance of reviews and recommendations</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Embedded</b></p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny is valued, and a key component of the improvement and governance of Children’s Services. Reviews are non-political, and use a wide range of evidence to inform recommendations</p>
	<p><b>Response to questions</b></p>	<p><b>Where we are now and evidence to support</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe the scrutiny landscape in your council?</li> <li>• What do you consider the strengths of Scrutiny in your council?</li> <li>• How would you describe scrutiny’s relationship with the Executive?</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe scrutiny's relationship with officers?</li> <li>• How would you describe the relationships between Scrutiny Committee Members?</li> <li>• Is the role of scrutiny understood in your authority?</li> <li>• Is scrutiny valued within your authority? How do you know?</li> <li>• What do you believe to be the challenges and barriers that prevent scrutiny from working more effectively?</li> <li>• How can you evidence that the whole Council values and prioritises children's services?</li> </ul>		
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Areas for Development

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# Introduction to Effective Scrutiny of Children's Services

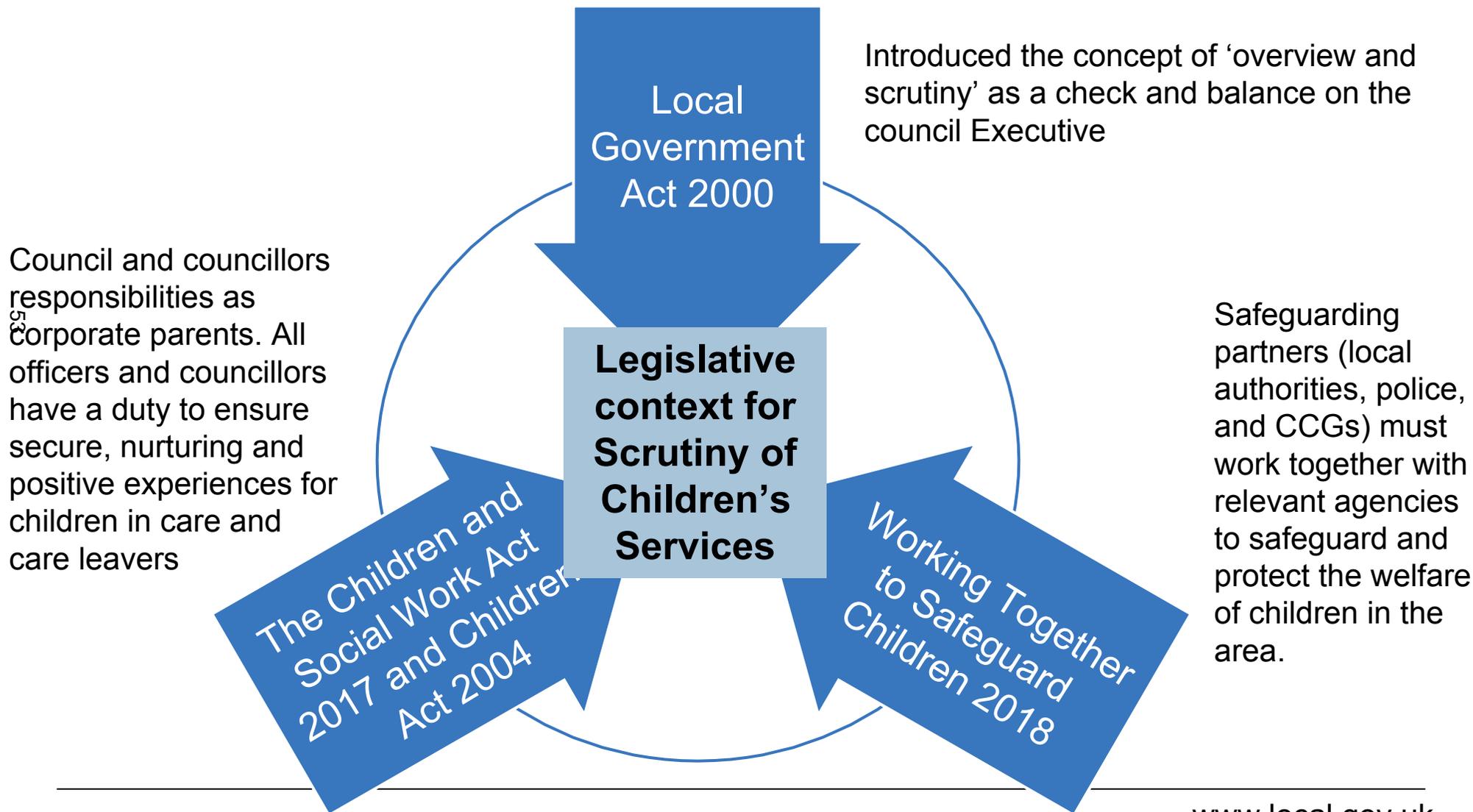
September 2021

[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

# The purpose and role of scrutiny

- To play a role in the wider governance system that holds the authority's decision-makers to account.
- To influence policies and decision made by the council and other organisations involved in delivering public services, and drive improvement.
- To gather evidence on issues affecting local people and make recommendations based on its findings.
- To add value and make a positive contribution to the lives of local people.

# Statutory context for Scrutiny of children's services



# Reach of children's services scrutiny

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# Corporate parenting

- All councillors and council employees have a unique responsibility to be ‘corporate parents’ to children they look after and their care leavers.
- Councillors with the opportunity to be part of the scrutiny of children’s services are uniquely positioned to champion the interests of children, be active corporate parents, and to provide challenge that supports the systems that keep children safe.

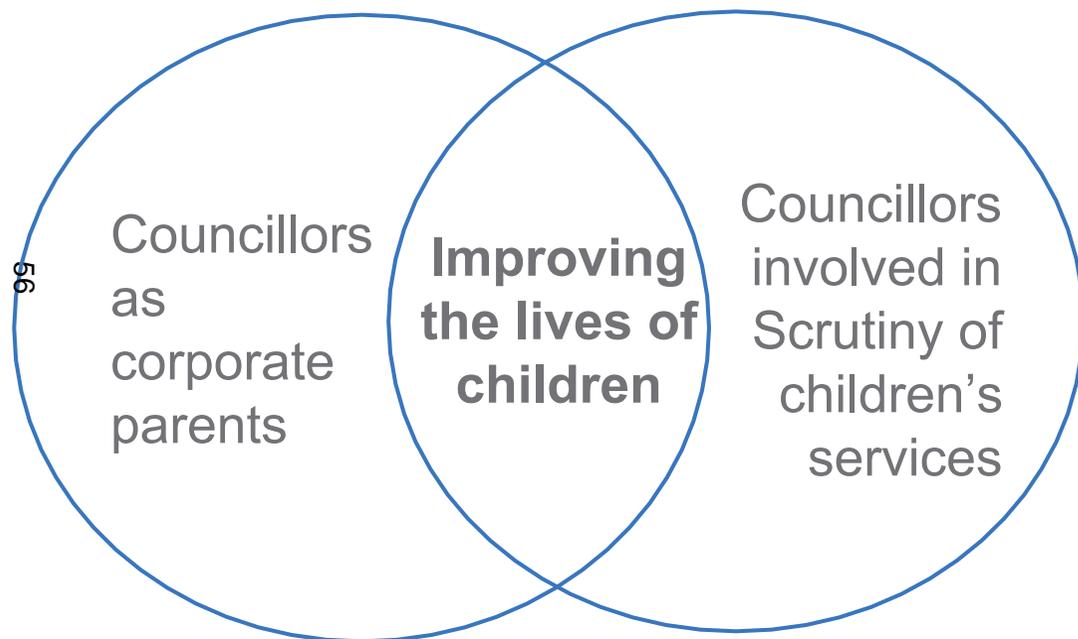
55

**‘Would this be good enough for my child?’**

**“All children need love and stability in order to thrive. A strong corporate parenting ethos means that everyone from the Chief Executive down to front line staff, as well as elected council members, are concerned about those children and care leavers as if they were their own.”**

*Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers*

# 'Superpowered' scrutiny



## Scrutiny roles offer unique opportunities for councillors:

- ask searching questions of a range of service providers to assure themselves that children in care are being well looked after
- hear directly from children and to ensure that their voices are heard when considering the impact and effectiveness of services
- champion the role of corporate parenting amongst wider councillor group

# Importance of getting scrutiny right

Providing effective challenge

‘The challenge and scrutiny function...was lacking over several years at a time when it was more required.’ **Jay report**

A clearly defined role and place in wider governance system

‘An issue or responsibility that belongs to everybody effectively belongs to nobody.’ **Jay report**

Positive relationships to influence change – ‘critical friend’

‘The notion of challenge has been misunderstood and misinterpreted as bullish questioning.’ **Casey report**

The right knowledge and information to effectively challenge

‘Senior Members admitted that Cabinet has been unprepared to release information to scrutiny.’ **Casey report**

An organisational culture that values scrutiny

‘Inspectors concluded that overview and scrutiny had been deliberately weakened and under-valued.’ **Casey report**

## Signs of effective scrutiny of children's services...

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**Children are at the centre and their voices are captured and heard**

**There are positive and constructive working relationships between scrutiny, other councillors and officers**

**Scrutiny is seen as a 'critical friend' and is focused on forward thinking and positive changes**

**Scrutiny is impartial and transcends party politics**

**Scrutiny members champion a dynamic and curious learning and improvement culture**

**Work is well planned and focused with clear criteria for the selection of topics**

# When scrutiny works well

“Probing oversight and challenge from the corporate parenting board, scrutiny committee and the East Sussex safeguarding children’s board are routine, all closely holding senior managers to account.”

***East Sussex – Ofsted outstanding***

“Effective scrutiny and engagement of elected members in understanding services for children has successfully maintained and increased investment in early help and safeguarding services that appropriately deliver responsive support to build on families’ strengths.”

***Lincolnshire – Ofsted outstanding***

“Strong political and corporate support and carefully targeted investment have enabled the local authority to manage demand and prioritise children’s needs across the council. This whole-council approach underpins the learning environment in which frontline practice is flourishing. Robust governance arrangements and effective scrutiny of service provision are helping to drive performance.”

***Essex – Ofsted outstanding***

# 6 Steps to effective scrutiny of children's services

## 6. A strong organisational culture

Scrutiny is valued and a key component of the improvement and governance of Children's Services.

## 5. Demonstrating value and influence

Scrutiny reviews are well planned and run. Scrutiny recommendations are used to influence services and policies to great effect, with a demonstrable impact.

## 4. Engagement and working with others

Scrutiny has excellent lines of communication with children and young people, partners, officers and the executive. It uses positive relationships to influence change.

## 3. Work programming and planning

Work planning is holistic and carried out in consultation with the wider council governance framework, and partners.

## 2. Clarity of role and purpose

A clear view on the role and purpose of scrutiny is shared across the whole council and its partners.

## 1. Knowledge of children's services

A clear understanding of children's services is used to effectively challenge and scrutinise policy, practice and executive decisions .

# Supporting effective scrutiny: LGA offer

As part of the LGA's continuing work to support political and corporate leadership for children's services we offer:

- Support for scrutiny boards to identify strengths and areas for development using the '6 steps to effective scrutiny' self-assessment tool.
- A mixture of workshop sessions, individual coaching and resources to improve the confidence and ability of scrutiny chairs and members to use their roles to have a positive impact on the lives of children and families.
- Support to embed learning and ensure that the wider system of support around children's services enables scrutiny to operate effectively.

# How to use the self-assessment tool

- The self-assessment tool provides children’s Scrutiny Chairs and members with a framework for diagnosing areas of strength and areas for development in their scrutiny practice, organised around ‘Six Steps’ which describe good scrutiny practice.
- Prompt questions invite participants to explore each of the ‘Steps’ and to form a judgement on which of the following statements best describes their committee position:
  - Beginning its journey
  - Developing its practice
  - Strong and embedded
- It is recommended that the self-assessment is completed by the Chair and/or members of the Scrutiny Committee (either individually, in small groups, or as a collective).
- A sponsor should be nominated at the start of the process to support and co-ordinate completion with, or on behalf of, the Chair. This could be a democratic services representative, the Director of Children’s Services or someone from within the Scrutiny Committee.

# LGA Further information and support



## Courses

Leadership Essentials courses for councillors providing learning and networking opportunities on specific themes, including Scrutiny and Children's Services <https://local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/leadership-essentials>



## Resources

[Councillor workbook on scrutiny](#)  
[LGA resources and 'must know' guides for children's services](#)



## Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring for Scrutiny Chairs from an experienced children's services lead member or scrutiny chair.



## Further information

For further information please contact:

- The LGA Children's Improvement Adviser for your region
- The LGA Children's Programme Team [amy.brace@local.gov.uk](mailto:amy.brace@local.gov.uk)



## Six Steps to Effective Scrutiny of Children's Services

### Self-Assessment Template

This self-assessment is a tool to diagnose areas of strength and areas for development in children's services scrutiny practice. It links directly to training modules offered by the LGA aimed at improving the effectiveness of children's services scrutiny.

It is recommended that the self-assessment is completed by the Chair and/or members of the Scrutiny Committee (either individually, in small groups, or as a collective). A sponsor should be nominated at the start of the process to support and co-ordinate completion with, or on behalf of, the Chair. This could be a democratic services representative, the Director of Children's Services or someone from within the Scrutiny Committee.



The template is organised around 'Six Steps' which together articulate good practice in scrutiny of children's services. For each Step, the prompt questions should be used to explore this component of effective scrutiny and form a view on which of the following statements best describes current scrutiny practice in this area:

- Beginning its journey
- Developing its practice
- Strong and embedded

The self-assessment template provides space for answers to specific questions to be recorded, and a space that should be used to evidence why a particular response (beginning/developing/embedded) has been chosen.

An introductory presentation on scrutiny of children's services and support available through the LGA is attached and should be viewed alongside the self-assessment.

## Step 1 – Knowledge of Children’s Services

Children’s Services is complex, and the council and its councillors are accountable for safeguarding children and a myriad of statutory duties, including acting as corporate parents to children in the care of the local authority. To effectively challenge and scrutinise delivery of children’s services, councillors need to understand the services provided to children and families, the challenges faced by professionals in delivering these, and the impact that these services have on the lives of children.

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<p>Use the questions below to explore scrutiny practice, and form a view on whether the committee is: <b>Beginning</b> its journey, <b>Developing</b> its practice or whether it is strong and <b>Embedded</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Beginning its journey</b></p> <p>There is a limited understanding from members of the committee on the services provided by the council for children and how they are performing. There is little challenge in meetings, which leads to less oversight of policy, practice and decisions of the executive.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Developing its practice</b></p> <p>Members of the committee have some understanding of children’s services and the standards of services that are delivered. Challenge is less robust, leading to less impactful reviews, and reduced oversight of policy, practice and decisions of the executive.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Embedded</b></p> <p>Members of the committee have a clear understanding of the services provided, and their performance. They use this knowledge to effectively challenge, scrutinise and influence policy, practice, and decisions of the executive.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you as a councillor ensure that you have the knowledge you need to make the right decisions or recommendations?</li> <li>• What training and development opportunities are there to develop your knowledge of Children’s Services?</li> <li>• Is there an annual briefing to ensure that all councillors understand the services provided to children and young people?</li> <li>• How are you and other councillors supported to understand your statutory</li> </ul>	<p><b>Response to questions</b></p>	<p><b>Where we are now and evidence to support</b></p>	

duties regarding children, young people and safeguarding?

- What do you think councillors need, to facilitate a better understanding?
- Are there any barriers preventing you from developing your skills and confidence?
- Do you and your scrutiny colleagues input into the development of Agendas and the Forward Plan?
- Are you provided with a good overview of performance information?

### Areas for Development

## Step 2: The role of children’s scrutiny

“Scrutiny works best when it has a clear role and function. This provides focus and direction.

*The scrutiny function can often lack support and recognition within an authority because there is a lack of awareness among both members and officers about the specific role it plays, which individuals are involved and its relevance to the authority’s wider work. Authorities should, therefore, take steps to ensure all members and officers are made aware of the role the scrutiny committee plays in the organisation, its value and the outcomes it can deliver, the powers it has, its membership and, if appropriate, the identity of those providing officer support.”*

### **Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local and combined authorities, May 2019**

How committees are created, its membership and its meeting structure are key to creating effective scrutiny. Scrutiny is no place for politics and should be cross-party in its membership.

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<p>Use the questions below to explore scrutiny practice, and form a view on whether the committee is: <b>Beginning</b> its journey, <b>Developing</b> its practice or whether it is strong and <b>Embedded</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Beginning its journey</b></p> <p>There is limited understanding or commitment to the role that scrutiny has and can play in improving services.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Developing its practice</b></p> <p>The role of scrutiny is understood by members of the committee. However, this is less understood across other councillors, staff and partners.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Embedded</b></p> <p>There is a clear view on the role and purpose of overview and scrutiny, which is shared across the whole council and its partners.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do councillors in your authority have a clear understanding of the remit of Scrutiny?</li> <li>• How has the role of scrutiny been defined?</li> <li>• What challenges do you face in describing or fostering understanding of your role?</li> <li>• Is there a clear terms of reference for the Scrutiny committee?</li> <li>• Do Scrutiny Minutes reflect meeting discussion and include evidence of challenge, areas of concern and good practice?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Response to questions</b></p>	<p><b>Where we are now and evidence to support</b></p>	

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are meetings accessible and held frequently enough to maintain momentum?</li><li>• Are relevant reports, adequate information and evidence supplied ahead of meetings with sufficient time for you to digest?</li><li>• Is there sufficient capacity and officer support to facilitate evidence gathering by the committee?</li></ul> |  |  |
| <p>Areas for Development</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |  |

## Step 3: Work programming and planning

*“Effective scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the committee making recommendations that will make a tangible difference to the work of the authority. To have this kind of impact, scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year. Authorities with multiple scrutiny committees sometimes have a separate work programme for each committee. Where this happens, consideration should be given to how to co-ordinate the various committees’ work to make best use of the total resources available.”*

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Effective work planning for the year will allow scrutiny to see how its work can add value to the other aspects of children’s service governance - such as the Cabinet, Partnership Boards, Corporate Parenting Board, Improvement Boards and social care professional plans. Scrutiny also has additional strength in the type of review that it undertakes - being more pro-active and using the overview role more effectively.

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The Council, its councillors and officers have a statutory duty to provide services for children and young people. Establishing a culture of scrutiny and the value it can bring will support the council in delivering its responsibilities, including as corporate parents.

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<p>Use the questions below to explore scrutiny practice, and form a view on whether the committee is: <b>Beginning</b> its journey, <b>Developing</b> its practice or whether it is strong and <b>Embedded</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Beginning its journey</b></p> <p>Politics can hinder effective scrutiny. There is limited support for the role and purpose of scrutiny and the value that it can bring to children’s services.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Developing its practice</b></p> <p>The value that scrutiny can bring is beginning to be understood by the rest of the council. This is evidenced by better communication and acceptance of reviews and recommendations</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Embedded</b></p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny is valued, and a key component of the improvement and governance of Children’s Services. Reviews are non-political, and use a wide range of evidence to inform recommendations</p>
	<p><b>Response to questions</b></p>	<p><b>Where we are now and evidence to support</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe the scrutiny landscape in your council?</li> <li>• What do you consider the strengths of Scrutiny in your council?</li> <li>• How would you describe scrutiny’s relationship with the Executive?</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe scrutiny's relationship with officers?</li> <li>• How would you describe the relationships between Scrutiny Committee Members?</li> <li>• Is the role of scrutiny understood in your authority?</li> <li>• Is scrutiny valued within your authority? How do you know?</li> <li>• What do you believe to be the challenges and barriers that prevent scrutiny from working more effectively?</li> <li>• How can you evidence that the whole Council values and prioritises children's services?</li> </ul>		
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Areas for Development

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## **Title of report: Work programme review and tracking of recommendations**

**Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee**

**Meeting date: Tuesday 12 October 2021**

**Report by: Democratic Services Officer**

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

### **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

### **Purpose**

To review progress against previous recommendations, review the work programme for 2021/22 and agree any necessary updates.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the committee:**

- a) Notes the updated recommendation tracker in appendix 1;
- b) Reviews the work programme at appendix 2 and discusses any additional items of business or topics for inclusion in the work programme.

### **Alternative options**

1. It is for the committee to determine its work programme to reflect the priorities facing Herefordshire. The committee needs to be selective and ensure that the work programme is focused, realistic and deliverable within existing resources. The committee needs to develop a manageable work programme to ensure that scrutiny is

focused, effective and produces clear outcomes. Topics selected on the work programme should reflect issues of current importance facing children's services at Herefordshire Council.

## **Key considerations**

### **Tracking of resolutions made by the committee which require a response or action**

2. A schedule of recommendations previously made by the committee which require a response or action is appended to this report as appendix 1.
3. Key changes since the last meeting include:
  - Addition of recommendations arising from meeting on 7 September;
  - Updates provided on action following the Schools Update of July 2020;
  - The Youth Justice Plan 2021/22 has not yet been considered by Cabinet following a request for additional information by cabinet members, the comments of the scrutiny committee will be reported when the report progresses;
  - In relation to the activities of the Youth Justice Service, a written briefing on diversionary schemes and activities and a copy of the national standards improvement plan have been received and circulated to members of the committee;
  - It has been confirmed that it is not necessary for Council to confirm the creation of an additional non-voting co-optee to represent families who are or have been supported by social workers, drafting of an advertisement for recruitment to this post is now underway;
  - An action tracker has been created and appended alongside the minutes of the previous meeting. Actions arising from meetings will be recorded and reported on this new document in future, with the recommendation tracker focused on recommendations to the executive.

### **Forward plan**

4. The constitution states that scrutiny committees should consider the forward plan as the chief source of information regarding forthcoming key decisions. Forthcoming decisions of the children and families directorate will be highlighted by the clerk to the committee as part of the work programming item at each committee meeting.
5. Suggestion for scrutiny from members of the public
6. Suggestions for scrutiny are invited from members of the public through the council's website, accessible through the link below. There have been no suggestions for scrutiny received from members of the public since the previous meeting of the committee.

## **Work Programme**

7. The work programme needs to focus on the key issues of concern and be manageable allowing for urgent items or matters that have been called-in. The work programme will be reviewed at each meeting of the committee and may be amended as required.
8. The latest agreed work programme for 2021-2022 is attached at appendix 2.
9. Should committee members become aware of any issue they think should be considered by the committee they are invited to discuss the matter with the chairperson, vice chairperson and the statutory scrutiny officer.

## **Budget setting 2022/23**

10. It has been suggested that it would be beneficial for the scrutiny committees to review proposals for the 2022/23 budget earlier in the consultation process. This would be in addition to the usual scrutiny activity which is currently scheduled for January 2022. The committee is invited to consider if and when it would wish to undertake additional scrutiny of budget proposals.

## **Constitutional Matters**

### **Task and Finish Groups**

11. A scrutiny committee may appoint a task and finish group for any scrutiny activity within the committee's agreed work programme. A committee may determine to undertake a task and finish activity itself as a spotlight review where such an activity may be undertaken in a single session; the procedure rules relating to task and finish groups will apply in these circumstances but the review is likely to be attended by all members of the committee and chaired by the chairperson.
12. The scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken by a task and finish group, the membership, chairperson, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. A task and finish group will be composed of a least 2 members of the committee, other councillors and may include, as appropriate, co-opted people with specialist knowledge or expertise to support the task. The committee will appoint the chairperson of a task and finish group.
13. The committee is asked to determine matters relating to the convening of a task and finish group including the scope of the review to be undertaken, the chairperson, membership, timeframe, desired outcomes, what will not be included in the review and whether to co-opt any non-voting members to the group. Such co-optees could consist of individuals with valuable skills and experience that would assist a task and finish group to undertake a review (see co-option below).

14. During its work programming session on 20 November 2020 the convening of a paediatric therapies task and finish group was proposed. A scoping document was approved by the committee at the meeting on 30 April 2021.

### **Co-option**

15. A scrutiny committee may co-opt a maximum of two non-voting people as and when required, for example for a particular meeting or to join a task and finish group. Any such co-optees will be agreed by the committee having reference to the agreed work programme and/or task and finish group membership.

16. The committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to exercise this power in respect of any matters in the work programme.

### **Community impact**

17. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

18. The term 'corporate parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after by the council. Being a good corporate parent means we should; accept responsibility for children in the council's care; make their needs a priority; and seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children. The committee should be mindful of these responsibilities when undertaking scrutiny work.

### **Environmental Impact**

19. Whilst this is an update on the work programme and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the council's Environmental Policy.

### **Equality duty**

20. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

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.

21. 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 concerns the administrative function of the children and young people scrutiny committee, it is unlikely that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

## **Resource implications**

22. The costs of the work of the committee will have to be met within existing resources. It should be noted the costs of running scrutiny can be subject to an assessment to support appropriate processes.

23. The councillors’ allowance scheme contains provision for co-opted and other non-elected members to claim travel, subsistence and dependant carer’s allowances on the same basis as members of the council. If the committee agrees that co-optees should be included in an inquiry they will be entitled to claim allowances.

## **Legal implications**

24. The council is required to deliver a scrutiny function. The development of a work programme which is focused and reflects those priorities facing Herefordshire will assist the committee and the council to deliver a scrutiny function.

25. The Scrutiny Rules in Part 4 Section 5 of the Council’s constitution provide for the setting of a work programme, the reporting of recommendations to the executive and the establishment of task and finish groups, as below.

26. Paragraph 4.5.28 of the constitution explains that the scrutiny committee is responsible for setting its own work programme. In setting its work programme a scrutiny committee shall have regard to the resources (including officer time) available.

27. Under section 4.5.10 of the constitution a scrutiny committee may appoint a task and finish group for any scrutiny activity within the committee's agreed work programme. A committee may determine to undertake a task and finish activity itself as a spotlight review where such an activity may be undertaken in a single session; the procedure rules relating to task and finish groups will apply in these circumstances. The relevant scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken, the membership, chairperson, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. It will be a matter for the task and finish group to determine lines of questioning, witnesses (from the council or wider community) and evidence requirements.
28. Under section 4.5.19 of the constitution task and finish groups will report their findings/outcomes/recommendations to the relevant scrutiny committee who will decide if the findings/outcomes/recommendations should be reported to the cabinet or elsewhere.

## Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
There is a reputational risk to the council if the scrutiny function does not operate effectively.	The arrangements for the development of the work programme should help mitigate this risk.

## Consultees

29. The work programme is reviewed at every committee meeting. Additional formal or informal work programming sessions may be arranged as necessary during the year. The work programme may also be reviewed during business planning meetings between the chairperson, vice-chairperson and statutory scrutiny officer.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Recommendation tracker
- Appendix 2 – Work Programme 2021/22

## Background papers

None identified

## Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, schedule of recommendations and responses

28 July 2020		
Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
Schools Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee recommends that a further survey is undertaken concerning children’s mental health and schooling arrangements during the pandemic;</li> <li>• A briefing note is circulated providing details of the number of private nurseries that have opened in September 2020 and stayed open in October and November;</li> <li>• An update is provided regarding the national catch-up programme;</li> <li>• The work on children’s mental health is prioritised by the committee and includes a review of school pastoral support and a mental health pathway for looked after children;</li> <li>• Further detailed examination of the outcomes of the survey is undertaken to determine how the provision and effectiveness of mental health services were impacted during the lockdown;</li> <li>• An update is provided regarding the attendance rates after the return to school in September.</li> </ul>	<p>This was undertaken in partnership with public health.</p> <p>Updates were provided at intervals throughout the year. A summary will be produced and circulated.</p> <p>We are awaiting further clarity on the national programme. Schools can access a database of consultants approved by the Department for Education and get funded accordingly. We do not have data at present as to how successful this is seen by schools.</p> <p>Completed. Item scheduled for 7 December 2021 meeting on Health and Wellbeing to include mental health in schools.</p> <p>This is provided monthly.</p>

19 January 2021		
Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
Provision of children centre service in Bromyard area: pre-decision scrutiny	<p>1) Has significant concerns about the timing of the proposed decision during the current pandemic and the implications for services users. The committee recommends deferral of the decision and extension of the current contract up to 12 months to enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive consultation with the local community, service users and voluntary sector organisations;</li> <li>• Engagement with the HOPE Family Centre to ensure that the Council has necessary evidence to conduct a full and detailed evaluation of the service provided by the HOPE Family Centre and how it compares to the in-house service;</li> <li>• Greater exploration of alternative options including a potential tendering exercise for a commissioned service;</li> <li>• Work to ascertain what staffing arrangements would be put in place to ensure existing HOPE Family Centre staff have a greater degree of understanding about their future roles within the service; and</li> <li>• The committee to undertake a detailed scrutiny exercise on the proposal involving evidence from service users.</li> </ul> <p>2) Recommends that in future the committee is made aware of issues of a sensitive and emotive concern to local communities as potential items for scrutiny.</p>	<p>A <a href="#">decision</a> was taken on 19 February 2021 to extend the current contract for the delivery of children’s centre services in the Bromyard reach area to no later than 31 March 2022.</p> <p>The decision also confirmed that further analysis would be provided regarding the benefits and risks of the different options for the future delivery of children’s centre services and that further community engagement would be undertaken to explore the different options for the future delivery of children’s centre services.</p> <p>A further decision on the future of the contract beyond March 2022 will need to be taken in the autumn of 2021 and is proposed to be subject to pre-decision scrutiny.</p> <p>The forward plan will be monitored for forthcoming items and regular liaison will take place between the chair / vice-chair and cabinet member.</p>

<b>23 March 2021</b>		
Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
Children and Young People Mental Health	<p>That an update report on CYP mental health is presented to the meeting on 14 September;</p> <p>That the mental health and wellbeing survey is circulated to all members of the committee once completed;</p> <p>That the executive investigates an increase in the number of support assistants trained in emotional literacy in local schools;</p> <p>That the executive looks to work with schools to encourage the identification of safe spaces, as raised by Healthwatch.</p>	To be picked up as part of Health and Wellbeing report in December 2021.
Herefordshire capital investment strategy 2021-2030 for specialist settings educating children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities SEND	<p>The committee supports the strategy but recommends:</p> <p>That the strategy clarifies that the outcomes of the 6th form consultation for Westfield school will inform the scope of the feasibility study; and</p> <p>Requests that further detail is presented to a future meeting of increasing provision offered for children with autism.</p>	<p>The strategy was approved at Cabinet meeting on <a href="#">22 April 2021</a>. Requested clarification was included in the final version of the strategy.</p> <p>It was agreed at the committee meeting 30 April 2021 that this be listed as an item to be allocated.</p>

**20 May 2021**

Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
Update on children's legal team	<p>A scrutiny panel is established to monitor recommendations arising from notable cases and their implementation and to have an overview of care concern cases;</p> <p>A project plan with timescales of all legal services teams actions, required as part of the overall improvement plan considerations be produced for the July meeting of CYPSC. (e.g. new escalation protocol and end of life protocol); and</p> <p>As part of the project plan, a tasks vs resources available breakdown be produced to identify who does what to show: 1) Where resources and gaps exist; and 2) the actions and timescales to address them.</p>	<p>An update on the Children's Legal Team Improvement Plan was presented to the committee on 7 September 2021. This included a copy of the resilience and improvement plan and internal escalation policy.</p> <p>The resilience and improvement plan includes details of activities with lead officers within legal services, target dates and current RAG rating.</p>

<b>1 June 2021</b>		
Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
Children's Services Improvement Plan	<p>That the improvement notice is noted</p> <p>That Jane Ellis, Director of Healthwatch Herefordshire be invited to join the improvement board.</p> <p>That the chairperson of the children and young people scrutiny committee attend the first meeting of the improvement board and that a decision be taken at a future meeting as to whether they should be a permanent member of the board, considering advice form the improvement advisor.</p> <p>That additional meetings of the committee be added to the work programme to deal with improvement board matters.</p> <p>That details be provided to the committee of other authorities who could act as examples of good practice.</p> <p>That the improvement advisor be invited to attend a future meeting of the committee.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>This was discussed at the improvement board meeting of 9 August 2021. Healthwatch will be invited to take a seat on the operational group to be convened by the interim director for children and families.</p> <p>The chairperson attended the improvement board held on 14 June 2021. Membership of the board was discussed at the improvement board meeting of 9 August 2021. It was agreed that the chairperson of the scrutiny committee should not be a permanent member of the improvement board to maintain independence and enable the committee to undertake scrutiny of the activities of the work of the board.</p> <p>Work programme updated with additional improvement focus meeting for September 2021. Requirement for additional meetings to be reviewed as part of work programming.</p> <p>The improvement advisor, Gladys Rhodes-White, attended the work programming session on 16 July and will be invited to attend future meetings of the committee on appropriate occasions.</p>
Looked After Children Performance Report	<p>That the work programme be updated to include a report on corporate parenting and a report on the independent reviewing service and that these should be included in training.</p>	<p>Added to work programme as agenda items for scheduling.</p>
Update on Peer on Peer Abuse Recommendations	<p>An update on the investigation into the historic lack of sharing by the council, including the terms of reference, be shared with the committee by the July meeting.</p>	<p>Terms of reference shared with committee members 28 July and briefing provided to committee members by Natalia Silver.</p>

	<p>That consultation take place with families ahead of the signature of the contract for the mediation service.</p> <p>A quarterly update on peer on peer abuse be shared with the committee, ahead of the July meeting if possible.</p> <p>A list of consultees and approvals be included in the final guidance to schools and included as standard in any similar documents produced in future'</p> <p>That the offer from a member of the public to share their understanding of the Human Rights Act be reviewed at the next committee meeting.</p>	
<p>Report of work of prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation and the current risk of exploitation in Herefordshire</p>	<p>The committee recommends that arrangements for future meetings and sessions of the prevent and disrupt group that committee members could attend should be advised to the committee.</p>	<p>Invite to Serious Organised Crime Professional Development day (SOCJAG Training) held 2 July 2021 circulated to all councillors.</p>

5 August 2021		
Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
Youth Justice Plan 2021-2022	<p>The committee endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2021-2022 for presentation to Council.</p> <p>A written briefing be provided on diversionary schemes and activities.</p> <p>A copy of the national standards and improvement plan be shared with the committee.</p> <p>For the 2022/23 iteration of the plan the committee recommends the inclusion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased evidence of consultation with young people and the wider public;</li> <li>• evidence on staff consultation; and</li> <li>• more information on progress on county lines, exploitation and peer on peer abuse.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted. Presentation of the plan to Cabinet for recommendation to Council has been delayed.</p> <p>Briefing received and circulated to members of the committee.</p> <p>Copy of National Standards Improvement Plan received and circulated to members of the committee.</p>
Co-optee membership of scrutiny committees	<p>The process for the appointment of co-optees set out in appendix one is adopted.</p> <p>The process is used to appoint one representative from the teaching sector.</p> <p>The term of service of co-optees be reviewed with a view to making appointments for more than one year and up to four years, linking to the election cycle.</p> <p>The process is used to recruit an adult representative of families who are or have been supported by social workers and Council be asked to appoint an additional co-optee at its next suitable meeting.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Drafting of advertisement underway.</p> <p>To be reported to the next Annual Council meeting in May 2022.</p> <p>Drafting of advertisement underway.</p>

The induction of co-optees be more structured and include safeguarding training.

Consider how the participatory officer could bring the voice of the child to the committee as and when needed.

7 September 2021		
Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
Children's services improvement journey	<p>That progress on development with heat maps be shared with the committee by 23 November 2021</p> <p>That development sessions include members of children's services legal team as well as social workers</p> <p>That the committee review all the challenges identified in the report with a view to identifying areas where scrutiny can contribute</p> <p>That examples of audit documentation be shared with the committee by 23 November 2021</p> <p>That a link to relevant information on the council website be provided to the committee</p> <p>That the voice of the staff be captured in an appropriate form as evidence for external review and the scrutiny committee</p>	
Update on children's legal team improvement plan	<p>The committee notes the progress made to date and the plan to continue with improvements in the Children's Legal Team</p> <p>Further updates on the legal team improvement plan be presented to the committee bi-monthly, with evidence in the next meeting (23 November 2021) on the service level agreement, knowledge and understanding of when to access legal services by middle managers</p> <p>Add more clarity on the status of HRA cases and include evidence of training / workshops of areas of concern</p> <p>Post court proceedings meetings be required rather than optional (Q7 in Children's Legal Team Improvement Plan relates);</p>	Noted.

	<p>A review of the escalation process be undertaken in relation to decision making by senior officers within the escalation process and support for them, including the criteria under which a second opinion is sought</p> <p>Training be provided to councillors to help them be confident in instigating the call in procedure</p>	
Work Programme Review	<p>Agrees the work programme at appendix 2 with the following amendments:</p> <p>A report on health and wellbeing be scheduled for the December meeting, to include mental health in schools</p> <p>A report on holiday activities provided by schools during covid be scheduled for the December meeting, with a focus on contextual safeguarding</p>	Added to work programme for December 2021.

**Children and Young People  
Scrutiny Committee**

**Work programme**

4 October 2021

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# Work programme rationalisation and prioritisation

- Potential items of business have been identified previously and other items may be proposed. These need to be rationalised and prioritised, reflecting the time and resources available.
- Should this go on the work programme?

## Yes, if...

- ✓ the issue is strategic, county-wide and not limited to just a few communities...
- ✓ scrutiny is being proactive, able to make a difference at the right time...
- ✓ additional transparency and influence can be added to the topic at hand...
- ✓ there is considerable public interest in scrutiny lifting the lid.

- How can the issue be dealt with most efficiently and effectively?
  - a briefing note
  - a seminar / workshop
  - an agenda item
  - a task and finish group

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# Annual reports

The following reports are recommended to be considered by the committee on an annual basis:

1. Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and Child Protection (CP)
2. Adoption Service
3. Fostering Service
4. Principal Social Worker
5. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
6. Health & Wellbeing
7. Herefordshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership
8. Corporate Parenting
9. Youth Justice Plan
10. Complaints/Compliments and Comments

## Agreed meeting dates

**Thursday 5 August 2021 – mainstream agenda**

**Tuesday 7 September 2021 – improvement focus**

**Tuesday 12 October 2021 – mainstream agenda**

**Tuesday 23 November 2021 – improvement focus**

**Tuesday 7 December 2021 – mainstream agenda**

**Tuesday 11 January 2022**

**Tuesday 22 March 2022**

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# Agenda items

Thursday 5 August 2021, 2:30 pm			Publication deadline: 28 July Questions deadline: 30 July
Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Youth Justice Plan  [Pre-decision call-in of Policy Framework item]	Standard annual item to endorse the current plan for approval by Council and consider any comments to inform the production of the plan for the next financial year.	Keith Barham, Head of Service, West Mercia Youth Justice Service	Agenda published 28 July.  Due to covid-19 there was no Youth Justice Plan for 2020/21.  Draft plan 21/22 due to be considered by Cabinet in September 2021 and by Council in October 2021.
Co-optees report	Following a <a href="#">resolution at Council on 28 May 2021</a> a report to be presented setting out how co-optees, including the additional representative of the teaching sector, are to be appointed.	Claire Ward, solicitor to the council	Agenda published 28 July.
Work programme	To review and approve the updated work programme.		To approve the latest version of the work programme.

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# Agenda items

**Tuesday 7 September 2021, 2:30pm**  
**Improvement Focus**

**Publication deadline: - 27 August**  
**Questions deadline: - 1 September**

Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
<p>Improvement Plan timescales report                      [Performance review]</p>	<p>The committee received a report on 20 May 2021 on developments in the children’s legal team. It was requested that the following be added to the work programme for the July meeting:</p> <p>To receive a project plan with timescales of all legal services teams actions, required as part of the overall improvement plan considerations (e.g. new escalation protocol and end of life protocol). As part of the project plan, a tasks vs resources available breakdown be produced to identify who does what to show 1) where resources and gaps existing; and 2) the actions and timescales to address them.</p>	<p>Cath Knowles, Interim Director for Children and Families</p> <p>Kate Charlton, Interim Head of Legal Services</p>	<p>Deferred from 27 July meeting.</p>

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# Agenda items

7 September cont.		Publication deadline: - 27 August Questions deadline: - 1 September	
Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Update on the children services improvement journey –including director’s update report [performance review – improvement]	Agreed at committee 5 August 2021, linked to projected cycle of improvement meetings.	Cath Knowles, Interim Director for Children and Families	Delivered

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# Agenda items

**Tuesday 12 October 2021, 2:30 pm**

**Publication deadline: - 4 October**  
**Questions deadline: - 6 October**

Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Children's Centre services, Bromyard [Pre-decision scrutiny]	The committee undertook pre-decision scrutiny on 19 January 2021 on Provision Of Children Centre Service In Bromyard Area. It was resolved that the committee undertake a detailed scrutiny exercise on the proposal involving evidence from service users.	Richard Watson, Childrens Joint Commissioning Manager	A decision was taken on 19 February 2021 to extend the current contract for the delivery of children's centre services in the Bromyard reach area to no later than 31 March 2022. A further decision on the future of the contract beyond March 2022 will need to be taken in the autumn of 2021 and is proposed to be subject to pre-decision scrutiny.
Effective scrutiny of children's services: training and development offer		John Coleman, Democratic Services Manager	

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# Agenda items

**Tuesday 23 November 2021, 2:30pm**  
**Improvement Focus**

Publication deadline: - 15 November  
Questions deadline: - 17 November

Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:

# Agenda items

**Tuesday 7 December 2021, 2:30 pm**

**Publication deadline: - 29 November**  
**Questions deadline: - 1 December**

Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Public Health – Dental Health and Childhood Obesity [Performance review]	<p>Current work programme.</p> <p>To provide a report on the high-level action plan for improving oral health in Herefordshire and details of any progress against the recommendations in the oral health needs assessment.</p> <p>To provide an update on work of the council to address childhood obesity.</p> <p>To provide detail regarding the Public Health England better start in life (BSIL) Programme.</p>		

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# Agenda items

Tuesday 7 December 2021, continued		Publication deadline: - 29 November Questions deadline: - 1 December	
Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
<p>Health and wellbeing [Performance review – annual report] To include mental health in schools</p>	<p>Standard annual item  Requested to schedule for December at meeting on 7 September 2021.</p>		
<p>Holiday activities provided by schools during covid With a focus on contextual safeguarding</p>	<p>Requested at committee meeting 7 September 2021.</p>		

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# Agenda items

**Tuesday 11 January 2022, 2:30 pm**

**Publication deadline: 3 January 2022**

**Questions deadline: -5 January 2022**

Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) [Pre-decision call in / policy review and development – Annual Report]		Andrew Lovegrove, Acting Deputy Chief Executive - Chief Finance Officer  Josie Rushgrove, Head of Corporate Finance	Arrangements for consideration of the budget may change following outcome of re-thinking governance.

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# Agenda items

Tuesday 22 March 2022, 2:30pm

Publication deadline: 14 March  
Questions deadline: 16 March

Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Work programme 2022/23	Standard annual item - to agree the work programme and meeting dates for the 2022/23 administrative year	Clerk to the committee	

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## To be scheduled and prioritised or removed (1/4)

Potential agenda items			
Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Corporate Parenting Strategy [Performance review – Annual Report]	Standard annual item. Also focus on leaving care and preparing for adulthood	Andrews Osei, Interim AD Corporate Parenting Children in Care and Fostering and Adoption	Deferred from 27 July meeting
Adoption Service and Fostering Service annual reports [Performance review – Annual Report]	Standard annual item.	Andrews Osei, Interim AD Corporate Parenting Children in Care and Fostering and Adoption	Deferred from 27 July meeting.
Principal Social Worker [Performance review – annual report]	Standard annual item		
Complaints, compliments and comments report. [Performance review – annual report]	Standard annual item		

## To be scheduled and prioritised or removed (2/4)

Potential agenda items			
Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and Child Protection (CP) report [Performance review]	Performance Review – annual report		
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) annual report [Performance review]	Performance Review – annual report	Andrews Osei, Interim AD Corporate Parenting Children in Care and Fostering and Adoption	
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) annual report [Performance review]	Performance Review – annual report		Query if this should come alongside IRO / CP report?

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## To be scheduled and prioritised or removed (3/4)

Potential agenda items			
Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Funding routes to schools and governance around schools funding			Requested at committee meeting 30 April 2021
Early years intervention and prevention			Requested at committee meeting 30 April 2021
Progress report on savings proposals relating to foster carers and sufficiency strategy			Requested at committee meeting 30 April 2021
Mental health [Performance review]	The committee received a report on 23 March 2021 on Children and Young People's mental health. It was requested that an update report be presented at the September meeting.	Ceri Morgan, Assistant Director Education Development and Skills  Public health	Deferred from agenda for October meeting during discussion of the work programme on 5 August 2021.

OUT

## To be scheduled and prioritised or removed (4/4)

Potential agenda items			
Item [type of scrutiny]:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Paediatric therapies T&F Report [Task and Finish Group]			Scoping document approved at committee meeting 30 April 2021. Timescales for reporting back to be agreed.
Autism provision and nurture hubs [tbc]	<p>The committee received a report on 23 March 2021 on the Capital Investment Strategy 2021-2030 For Specialist Settings Educating Children And Young People With Special Educational Needs And Disabilities SEND. It was requested that further detail be presented to a future meeting of increasing provision offered for children with autism.</p> <p>It was agreed at the committee meeting 30 April 2021 that this be listed as an item to be allocated.</p>		

## Workshops / seminars

Topic:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:

## Task and finish groups

Topic:	Origin:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
112 Paediatric therapies			Scoping document approved at committee meeting 30 April 2021
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)			T&F proposed

# Briefing notes (1/1)

Topic:	Target date:	Lead officer(s):	Current position:
Outcome of the audit of the reduction in child protection plans	Summer 2021		
Kick Start Programme	June / July 2021		Requested at committee meeting 30 April 2021. To be produced and circulated prior to the item on the impact of the pandemic
NEETs project	September 2021		
Impact of pandemic on opportunities for school and care leavers	12 October 2021	Ceri Morgan, Assistant Director Education Development and Skills	Agreed to receive as a written briefing in discussion of the work programme at meeting 5 August 2021. (Was previously on the agenda for Sept / Oct committee meeting)
Elective Home Education and current trends	November 2021		

