

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 JULY 2022

Question 1

From: A Attfield, Bromyard

I was looking over some of the published Committee papers, to find out what had happened to certain minuted actions. I could not find any information about them. I have worked with a number of public governance/committee structures, and a simple, rolling, updated, publicly available action list was always used as a standard part of effective governance; it helped ensure actions were completed in a timely fashion, and helped ensure action owners were held to account as needed. I was surprised not to find this in place. What mechanism does the Committee use to ensure actions are followed up and completed?

Response

Thank you for your question regarding the checking and tracking of actions arising from resolutions previously made by the Scrutiny Committee. This is an opportune moment to raise this query as we are now considering ways to improve and clarify the tracking of actions arising from Scrutiny Committee resolutions, which is proposed to be implemented from September 2022.

Already, however, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee has been tracking actions arising from previous committees through information reports published with its agenda papers; an Action Log report and a Recommendations Tracker report. You will be able to find these published as an appendix to the minutes and /or the Committee Work Plan on previous committee agenda papers. For the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee 26th July 2022, you will find these published as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the Minutes at agenda item 4.

The Committee have included a recommendations tracker since August 2021 in recognition of the need to track scrutiny recommendations.

I hope this helps to clarify the process being followed at the moment. From September we hope to bring a report to Scrutiny Committees that provides greater clarity about this process and brings the different trackers into one report.

Question 2

From: F Reid, Hereford

I am interested in the LAC rate (Looked After Children) - i.e. number of children from every cluster of 10,000 children aged 0 to 18 in care – for Herefordshire and other areas.

What is latest LAC rate (and its date) for Herefordshire?

What is the latest number (and its date) of LAC in Herefordshire?

(Same date for both above.)

What is the LAC rate for:

- “Statistical Neighbours”: Shropshire, Devon and Cornwall?
- West Midlands region (average)?
- England (average)?

Please have the same date for all immediately above and state it. If the date is different from Herefordshire's latest figures, give the rate and number of LAC for the county as at that date.

Response

The rate per 10,000 in Herefordshire as at 12 July 2022 was 109 per 10,000. This equates to 391 children and young people, as of the same date.

Statistical neighbour and England average rates are published annually and the rates for the period to 31 March 2022 are not yet published.

The most recent published rates for our statistical neighbours and England are therefore for 31 March 2021 and are as follows:

Statistical neighbour average rate:	60 per 10,000
England average rate:	67 per 10,000
West Midlands rate:	85 per 10,000

At the same point in time, the Herefordshire rate was 87 per 10,000.

There is another useful and relevant metric here, being the rate at which children become accommodated in the year (rather than the overall total already detailed above)

The rate at which children became looked after in the year to 31 March 2021 was 23 per 10,000 similar to both the statistical neighbour rate (22 per 10,000) and the England average rate (24 per 10,000) at that time. The West Midland rate was 25 per 10,000.

The rate at which children were coming into our care during the period 2017 – 2021 had fallen from 31 per 10,000 in 2017-18 to 23 per 10,000 in 2020-21.

Data for the period to 31 March 2022 is not yet validated/published but we know that there was a rise in the rate of children coming into our care in the year, in part due to the rise in legacy unmet need that became apparent, and the rate rose to 44 per 10,000. We can also see that the rate at which children come into our care has been falling steadily over the past four months (and that the rate in June was back down to 20 per 10,000).

The picture is a complex one that cannot be explained in numbers alone and we would be happy to report further on this to the Scrutiny Committee in the future.

Supplementary question

The original question asked:

'What is the LAC rate for:

- "statistical neighbours": Shropshire, Devon and Cornwall?'

Therefore, please give the LAC rate for these specific counties as at 31 March 2021. In the *Looked After Children Performance Report* (scrutiny committee meeting on 1 June 2021) LAC rates were given for Herefordshire and its nearest "statistical neighbours", namely:

- Cornwall: 44 per 10,000
- Devon: 51 per 10,000
- Shropshire: 66 per 10,000
- Herefordshire 88 per 10,000

Response

As at 31 March 2021:

- Cornwall: 46 per 10,000
- Devon: 55 per 10,000
- Shropshire: 84 per 10,000

Please confirm whether or not the statistics in your (first) response for West Midland(s) are for West Midlands region (rather than West Midlands conurbation).

Response

The data is for the West Midlands region.

As at 31 March 2021, please advise the average length of time that children and young people have spent in the care of:

- Herefordshire Council?
- Cornwall Council?
- Devon Council?
- Shropshire Council?
- "Statistical neighbour" (average)?
- England (average)?
- West Midlands region (average)?

Response

For Herefordshire Council, as at 11 September 2022, the average length of time our current cohort of young people have spent in care is 3 years and 4 months (rounded to the nearest whole month).

Data for the other authorities/regions requested is not held by Herefordshire Council or centrally published.