

Questions from members of the public – Scrutiny Management Board, 16 December 2024

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Ms Reid Hereford	<p>Per Local Authority Interactive Tool (31 March 2024), the rates per 10,000 children are:</p> <p>Children in care: Herefordshire: 114 Statistical Neighbours' average (SNs): 67</p> <p>Children in Need: Herefordshire: 466 SNs: 287</p> <p>Section 47 enquiries: Herefordshire: 276 SNs: 161</p> <p>Child Protection Plan: Herefordshire: 60 SNs: 34</p> <p>Cafcass care applications: Herefordshire: 10.30 SNs: 9.05</p> <p>In 2023-24, the Children and Young People Directorate spent £63,500,000 (budget: £51,800,000) ie overspent by £11,700,000, including £8,700,000 overspend on children in care.</p> <p>In 2024-25, according to Appendix C of Agenda Item 7, the "Approved Revenue Budget" of the Children and Young People Directorate is £67,222,000 (£64,919,000 plus "Supplementary Budget Approval" of £2,303,000). However, the above LAIT figures suggest that its budget is materially too high.</p>	Scrutiny Management Board

		Will Herefordshire Council establish a Reunification Team to reduce the number and cost of children in care and, if so, by when?	
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Response:

Reunification of children back to parental care is very much something we are supportive of and conscious to consider through our care planning for individual children. Where “reunification” is agreed we have our Edge of Care and Home team (ECHO) who offer support for rehabilitation programmes and this service has remained a central county wide service in our recent locality re-design so it is able to respond to all children in care cases wherever they reside. Please see attached parents leaflet outlining the offer and the professionals road map we follow. This is a substantive team of staff who work in addition to social workers and family support workers in our children in care and child protection teams to support in delivery against child protection and care plans to both keep children at home and to reunify them where it is safe and in their best interests.

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 2	Mr Jeremy Milln Hereford	<p>At the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board on 28th October, Herefordshire Council gave a glowing account of its project management. Members heard about the Council's knowledge system which stored relevant documentation so that another manager could pick things up straight away.</p> <p>Yet it had to admit at Council on 6th December that for the various active travel projects for which the last administration won considerable Government funding, most unprofessionally it minuted no record of its regular meetings with the DfT's Active Travel England. So much for the Nolan principles for openness and accountability. Given the limitations of Verto, this makes it impossible for anyone else to understand and scrutinise the process by which decisions are later made, essential if we are to evaluate them properly.</p> <p>The Council is asked to explain how it proposes to improve on this performance?</p>	Scrutiny Management Board

Response:

Thank you for your question. This question was answered twice at Council on Friday 6 December 2024. You can find the answer in the Council minutes at [Questions to Council](#).