



## Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

### Work Programme 2025-2026

Work programmes are subject to change, with revised programmes agreed at the end of formal committee meetings.

#### Committee Meeting

11 November 2025 **report deadline 30 October 2025** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning took place late October

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
<b>Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual review of effectiveness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutinise the partnership's work for 2024-2025</li> <li>Identify potential topics for further committee scrutiny</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence to be agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Kevin Crompton</b> – Independent Scrutineer, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership</li> <li><b>Angela Wilson</b> – Safeguarding Partnerships Business Manager</li> </ul> <p><b>Board Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tina Russell</b>, Director of Children's Services</li> <li><b>Leanne Lowe</b></li> <li><b>Natalie Solomon</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Sub Group Chairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heather Manning</li> <li>Rachel Gillott</li> <li>Christine Wellington</li> <li>Liz Farr</li> </ul>
<b>Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objectives to be agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence to be agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Kayte Dixon-Thompson</b> – Community Resilience Manager</li> <li>Vicky Leader Service Manager Early Help and Prevention</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holly Powell – Team Manager, Get Safe</li> <li>Niall Crawford – Lead Officer for Education Safeguarding Social Inclusion and Elective Home Education</li> <li>Christine Wellington – Head of Service, Children in Need of Support and Assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Work programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Statutory Scrutiny Officer</b></li> </ul>

**Committee Meeting**

3 February 2026 **report deadline 22 January 2025** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
<b>ILAC inspection and action plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objectives to be agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence to be agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendees to be determined</li> </ul>
<b>Work programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Statutory Scrutiny Officer</b></li> </ul>

**Committee Briefing**

3 March 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
<b>School Capital Programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of the programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lizz Farr</li> <li>Quentin Mee</li> </ul>

**Committee Briefing****14 April 2026**

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
<b>Fostering</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefing on fostering.</li> <li>Update on recommendations made July 2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tori Lynch</b></li> </ul>

**Committee Meeting****12 May 2026 report deadline 30 April 2025 pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC**

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
<b>Topic TBC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBC</li> </ul>
<b>Work programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft work programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Statutory Scrutiny Officer</b></li> </ul>

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

**Topics for possible future scrutiny**

- Permanency
- Youth provision
- Neglect strategy
- Home/elective education
- WMP Peel report – assurance briefing – safeguarding
- Think Family/Families First Programme

# Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

## Early help task and finish group

### Terms of reference

#### Background

Herefordshire's Early Help offer includes both universal and targeted services aimed at supporting children, young people, and families before statutory intervention is required. The offer includes:

- **Universal services:** Provided largely through Talk Community, voluntary and community organisations, schools, health, and public health-funded initiatives.
- **Targeted early help:** Led by the Early Help team within Children's Services, working directly with families who require structured support.

Key developments in this area in recent years include:

- Integration of Early Help into wider Children's Services through locality models.
- Introduction of Families First and Lead Practitioner roles.
- Recruitment of two new children's-focused community development workers within Talk Community.
- Partnership commissioning (such as with the PCC) to support local early intervention initiatives.

To build on these developments, work is underway to identify and address weaknesses in current practice, including:

- Persistent confusion around distinctions between universal and targeted Early Help.
- Limited public visibility of the Early Help offer and recent developments.
- Variability in provision and access across different localities.
- Pressure on schools to deliver Early Help without sufficient funding or infrastructure.
- Need for improved coordination between statutory and non-statutory partners.

#### Purpose

The group therefore aims to provide a constructive and collaborative space to:

- Recognise strengths in current Early Help provision.
- Identify good practice across different communities.

- Highlight gaps or inconsistencies in provision and the work in place to address them.

### **Scope of Inquiry:**

In recognition of the broad and varied nature of early help available in Herefordshire, the group intends to carry out two distinct but closely interdependent streams of work:

- **Targeted Early Help and Families First**
  - Understanding the Families First implementation.
  - Exploring the role of lead practitioners.
  - Clarifying the role of schools and multi-agency collaboration.
- **Community and Universal Offer**
  - Mapping and showcasing local Early Help initiatives.
  - Exploring partnerships with Talk Community hubs, voluntary groups, parish and town councils.
  - Engagement around youth activities, access barriers (transport), and local innovation.

### **Work Programme**

The group will determine its programme of work to meet the above objectives. This programme is likely to include:

- Local Appreciative Inquiry events in Hereford City and each of the five key market towns (Ross, Ledbury, Kington, Leominster, Bromyard), Supported by Talk Community and Children's Services.
- Case studies
- Meeting with families and professionals, individually and in focus groups

### **Proposed Timeline**

- Summer 2025: Agree task and finish group, establish membership, agree programme of work
- Autumn 2025 to Spring 2026: Community engagement events, interviews, focus groups.
- Spring/Summer 2026: Reflection and analysis.
- Summer 2026: Presentation of findings and recommendations to Children and Young People Scrutiny.

# Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

## Early Help Task and Finish Group

### Scope of work and work programme

#### Targeted early help and Families First

- Recognise strengths in current Early Help provision.
- Identify good practice across different communities.
- Highlight gaps or inconsistencies in provision and the work in place to address them.

Objective	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Understand targeted early help - rationale and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of programme briefing note               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Thresholds of need</li> <li>○ Current performance management</li> <li>○ Current programme of activity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Simon Cann	November 2026
Overview of current Families First programme and targeted early help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with service managers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Victoria Leader</li> <li>○ Dawn Knight</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Simon Cann	December 2026
Appraise current Families First programme and targeted early help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with team leaders               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Victoria Roe – North</li> <li>○ Jane Marshall – South – Ross</li> <li>○ Chantelle Bennett – Central</li> <li>○ Tracey Spencer – Central</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Simon Cann	January 2026
Support for young carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with young carers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jane Marshall – South – Ross</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Simon Cann	January 2026

Appraise locality-based targeted early help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with a locality team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combine with a locality event</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Simon Cann	January 2026
Working with schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neil Crawford</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Simon Cann	January 2026
Commissioned early help services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with Venture – commissioned service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hilary Thomas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Simon Cann	January 2026

## Community and Universal Offer

- Mapping and showcasing local Early Help initiatives.
- Exploring partnerships with Talk Community hubs, voluntary groups, parish and town councils.
- Engagement around youth activities, access barriers (transport), and local innovation.

Topic	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Overview of local early help initiatives	Early help marketplace – Ross-on-Wye	Danial Webb	13 Oct 25
Overview of local early help initiatives	Early help marketplace - Hereford	Danial Webb	17 Nov 25
Overview of local early help initiatives	Early help marketplace - Leominster	Danial Webb	3 Dec 25
Evaluate the role of school community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with service manager, Quentin Mee</li> <li>Meeting with school counsellor/school support service</li> </ul>	Simon Cann	Feb 26
Understand how midwives support young parents to be.	Meeting with midwives	Simon Cann	Feb 26
The role of school nurses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with school nurses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="mailto:emma.dewar@wvt.nhs.uk">emma.dewar@wvt.nhs.uk</a></li> <li><a href="mailto:Wendy.Long@wvt.nhs.uk">Wendy.Long@wvt.nhs.uk</a></li> <li><a href="mailto:Nikki.Lawley@wvt.nhs.uk">Nikki.Lawley@wvt.nhs.uk</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Simon Cann	Mar 26
The role of health visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with health visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lyndsey McHardy</li> </ul> </li> <li>“Best Start in Life” strategy</li> </ul>	Simon Cann	Mar 26
Youth clubs overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of youth and sports clubs in Herefordshire</li> <li>Visit to youth club</li> <li>Meeting with youth club attendees</li> </ul>	Simon Cann	April 26

Talk Community and co-ordination of support for universal community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview community support carried out by Talk Community.</li> </ul>	Simon Cann	April 26
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## Report to Cabinet

Topic	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Draft final report	Learning from above meetings	Simon Cann	May 26
Agree final report	Draft report	Task and Finish Group	June 26
Present to Cabinet	Final report	Toni Fagan	July 26