



Appendix 3 Recommendations made by Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, January 2025 – March 2026

Tuesday 21 January 2025		
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership - Yearly Review of Effectiveness Report 2023-24		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	The partnership ensures that recommendations from the 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness onwards have an identified partnership lead and an indicative timeframe for completion;	Noted and will be incorporated into business plan 25/26
2	The partnership appends an implementation plan for the recommendations in its 2024-25 annual review of effectiveness; and	Noted and will be created for the business plan agreed for 25/26
3	Herefordshire Council's director of children's services and director of governance and law provide guidance to elected members on their corporate parent responsibilities in the event of a significant incident, or death, concerning a care leaver under the age of 25.	<p>The role of members as corporate parents: The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the council, or is a "qualifying care leaver" (someone who between 16 and 25 and was looked-after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their fourteenth birthday), the council becomes their corporate parent. This means that they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people • encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, • make sure they have access to services • make sure children and young people are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work • promote high aspirations and try to secure the best outcomes for them • prepare them for adulthood and independent living. <p>All councillors and officers are corporate parents. It is therefore every councillor's responsibility to make sure that the council is meeting these duties towards children in care and care leavers. Children can be in care in a range of different settings, with the authority acting as corporate parent to all of them. This includes foster care, children's homes, secure children's homes, young</p>

offender institutions, secure training centres and some types of kinship care. Every councillor and officer within a council has a responsibility to act for those children and young people as a parent would for their own child. Lead members, those on corporate parenting panels, and overview and scrutiny committees will have particular responsibilities, but for all councillors, there is a role of being the “eyes and ears of the community”.

The role of the council in child deaths

The death of a child is a tragedy, and subsequent enquiries / investigations should keep an appropriate balance between forensic and medical requirements and the family’s need for support. There is a strict statutory framework to be adhered to following the death of a child, this is led in Herefordshire by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) under strict legislative guidance, and the Council does not have a role independently in such matters. Statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines child death review partners as “local authorities and any Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) for the local area as set out in the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017”. The HSCP therefore has a legal duty to undertake reviews of serious cases (Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews) where a child has died or suffered serious harm, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. When a child dies, in any circumstances, it is important for parents and families to understand what has happened and whether there are any lessons to be learned. HSCP must make arrangements to review all deaths of children normally resident in the local area and, if they consider it appropriate, for any non-resident child who has died in their area.

Key scrutiny responsibilities in children’s services

Through legislation, scrutiny committees have several critical roles:

- **Examining Children’s Services Performance:** They assess whether local authorities and partners are effectively delivering services such as social care, education, and youth support.
- **Scrutinising Safeguarding Practices:** Ensuring that child protection measures, multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and social work interventions are effective.
- **Monitoring SEND Services:** Reviewing how well councils and health partners implement the SEND reforms and improve outcomes for children with disabilities.
- **Assessing Children’s Health and Well-being Services:** Overseeing the effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), public health initiatives, and early intervention programmes.
- **Reviewing Education and Skills Provision:** Evaluating school performance, alternative provision, post-16 education, and how councils support vulnerable learners.

		<p>Limitations</p> <p>Despite their statutory powers, scrutiny committees have limitations in scrutinising children's services, particularly where other statutory processes are already in place. The Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation outline that scrutiny committees cannot duplicate or interfere with statutory decision-making processes. This restriction affects their ability to intervene in certain cases, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Casework and Complaints: Committees do not have the power to scrutinise individual cases of child protection, SEND disputes, or social care interventions, as these matters are subject to separate statutory complaints and appeals mechanisms, such as the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. • Regulated Inspection Processes: Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Ofsted has a statutory role in inspecting children's services, including safeguarding and SEND provision. Scrutiny committees cannot override or replace the findings of Ofsted or direct the regulatory body's work. • Judicial and Tribunal Matters: Matters that are subject to legal proceedings, such as care proceedings in the Family Court under the Children Act 1989, are beyond the remit of scrutiny committees. They cannot influence court decisions or interfere in ongoing legal cases. <p>Statutory Safeguarding Boards: The Children and Social Work Act 2017 established Local Safeguarding Partnerships, replacing Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Scrutiny committees cannot take over or interfere with the statutory duties of these multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including serious case reviews, which have legal responsibility for protecting children at risk. They can, however scrutinise the safeguarding partnership itself.</p>
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Tuesday 22 July 2025

Herefordshire Children's Services and Partnership Improvement Plan

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	For the executive to ensure that the council's digital, data and technology teams are sufficiently staffed, and properly resourced in the next budget, to ensure that all of the data needs of the children and young people directorate are met.	A review of the council's ICT and Corporate Performance & Intelligence resources to support all Directorate teams will be undertaken as part of development of the council's revenue budget for 2026/27. This review will ensure that resource requirements are prioritised within the context of the funding available and the council's overall financial position.
2	For full Council to debate and commit to the principle of working for a child friendly Herefordshire.	Cllr Fagan proposed her motion at the Full Council meeting on 10 October 2025 which was carried unanimously.

Tuesday 16 September 2025		
Children And Young People's Quality Assurance		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	Herefordshire Council ensures that in quarterly performance monitoring and its annual report of complaints it includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning from compliments • complaints that are declined and the reasons for this and • evidence in case file audits of informal resolutions. 	Recommendations are agreed and will be incorporated into annual report 25/26 and quarterly case audit reports and reflected in summary in the annual report 25/26
Youth Justice		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	Herefordshire Council engage with colleges regarding education and training for those in the youth justice system.	
Tuesday 11 November 2025		
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Yearly Report 2024-25		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	Partnership to consider explicitly reporting what partners learned from children and families and how it influenced policy and practice (you said, we did) in its annual report.	Recommendations are agreed and will be incorporated into annual report 25/26 and quarterly case audit reports and reflected in summary in the annual report 25/26
Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare		
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
1	The Director of Children's Services, through the all-member briefing, to brief elected members on Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare, and on	

	elected members' duties as corporate parents with regard to Prevent.	
2	The Protect and Prepare Board to consider how the specific perspectives and experiences of children and young people can be built into the design and delivery of emergency/civil contingencies exercises	

Tuesday 10 March 2026

ILAC inspection and action plan

No recommendations