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Sefton Council



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING)

DATE: Monday, 7th November 2022

TIME: 6.30 p.m.

VENUE: Committee Room - Bootle Town Hall, Trinity Road, Bootle, L20 7AE

Member

Councillor
Cllr. June Burns (Chair)
Cllr. Paula Spencer (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Danny Burns
Cllr. Natasha Carlin
Cllr. Leo Evans
Cllr. Judy Hardman
Cllr. Christine Maher
Cllr. Paula Murphy
Cllr. Mike Prendergast
Cllr. Andrew Wilson
Maurice Byrne, Healthwatch
Karen Christie, Healthwatch
Mrs Sandra Cain, Independent
Advisory Member
Stuart Harrison, Diocese
Father Des Seddon, Archdiocese

Substitute

Councillor
Cllr. Robert Brennan
Cllr. Christine Howard
Cllr. Greg Myers
Cllr. John Kelly
Cllr. Iain Brodie - Browne
Cllr. Dave Robinson
Cllr. Jennifer Corcoran
Cllr. Steve McGinnity
Cllr. Tony Brough

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Debbie Campbell, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.

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A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are requested at a meeting where a disclosable pecuniary interest or personal interest arises, which is not already included in their Register of Members' Interests, to declare any interests that relate to an item on the agenda.

Where a Member discloses a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, he/she must withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest, except where he/she is permitted to remain as a result of a grant of a dispensation.

Where a Member discloses a personal interest he/she must seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or staff member representing the Monitoring Officer to determine whether the Member should withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest or whether the Member can remain in the meeting or remain in the meeting and vote on the relevant decision.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 12)

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2022.

4. Integrated Care Systems and Start Well Update (Pages 13 - 26)

Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health

5. Children's Services Improvement Programme (Pages 27 - 70)

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education

6. Performance Dashboard (Pages 71 - 80)

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education

7. Summer 2022 Data (Pages 81 - 84)

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education

- 8. Children's Services Commissioner** (Pages 85 - 114)
Report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education
- 9. Cabinet Member Reports** (Pages 115 - 122)
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer
Appendix B – Update Report of the Cabinet Member – Education – To Follow
- 10. Work Programme Key Decision Forward Plan** (Pages 123 - 140)
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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THIS SET OF MINUTES IS NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL IN".

Overview
& Scrutiny



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Spencer (in the Chair)
Councillors Danny Burns, Hardman, Murphy and
Prendergast

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. M. Byrne, Healthwatch Representative
Mrs. S. Cain, Independent Advisory Member
Ms. M. McDermott, Parent Governor Representative
Councillor Doyle – Cabinet Member – Children's
Social Care
Councillor Roscoe, Cabinet Member – Education

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors June Burns and Christine Maher; Councillor Carlin and her Substitute Councillor J. Kelly; Councillor Evans and his Substitute Councillor Brodie Browne; Ms. Karen Christie, Healthwatch Representative; and Father Des Seddon, Archdiocese Representative.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declaration of personal interest was made and the Member concerned remained in the room during the consideration of the item:

| Member | Minute No. | Nature of Interest |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Councillor Prendergast | Minute No. 18 – Cabinet Member Reports | His wife is a teacher at Rowan High School. |

12. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendment of Minute No. 4 to read as follows, the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022, be confirmed as a correct record:

That it be noted that the Minutes of, **and reports submitted to**, the Improvement Board, in relation to the Children's Services Improvement Journey, have been requested by the Committee.

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13. DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 12 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health) of 6 September 2022, the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Communities) updating on Sefton's strategic approach to tackling domestic abuse, including an overview of the Domestic Abuse Act and work of the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to date. The report set out the background to the matter; an overview of the Domestic Abuse Act; local authority statutory duties within the Act; the roles and responsibilities of the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board; links to other national/statutory guidance; and cross-partnership collaboration.

The Terms of Reference for the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board were attached to the report at Appendix A.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- The main features of the domestic abuse needs assessment.
- Any issues associated with voluntary sector organisations working with domestic abuse victims.
- The possibility of future updates on the matter.
- Monitoring of any delays to interventions.
- Understanding the impact on young victims of domestic abuse and how to offer appropriate support.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

14. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education that updated on progress made and presented the Performance Dashboard for consideration. The report set out details of progress and priorities for the next quarter.

The Children's Social Care Performance Dashboard was attached to the report.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- Reasons why managed teams had not been recorded previously within the Children's Social Care Workforce Report Summary.
- A comparison of managed teams and the commissioning of a team to commissioning a service.
- How managed teams fitted into the process.
- Accountability of managed teams.

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- Concerns that managed teams were outside the Council's direct control.
- Costs associated with managed teams.
- The development of the academy and numbers attained.
- Recruitment to vacancies.
- Any documents provided to the Committee should be circulated in advance of meetings.
- Referrals appeared to be increasing.
- Children In Need (CIN) Plans currently included children with disabilities. This should be differentiated in future Performance Dashboards submitted to the Committee.
- The percentage of overdue Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs).
- The number of Plans currently open.
- Trends in Child Protection (CP) Episodes.
- Trends in Cared for Children (CfC).
- The model used for determining the approach as to how children were put on a Plan.
- The statutory requirement for dental checks for Cared for Children (CfC).

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Performance Dashboard at Annex A be noted;
- (2) the progress made and the priorities for the next quarter be noted; and
- (3) the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education be requested to note the comments of the Committee in relation to the Performance Dashboard and Children In Need (CIN) Plans that currently included children with disabilities, in that this should be differentiated in future Performance Dashboards submitted to the Committee.

15. EARLY HELP SERVICES

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education, that provided an update on the work to review Early Help Services and set out an approach to present to Members of the Committee. The report detailed the background and current position.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following:

- The need to consult with staff and addressing the culture of staff needs.

RESOLVED:

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That the report be noted.

16. EDUCATION EXCELLENCE STRATEGY FOR SEFTON 2022-2027

Further to Minute No. 43 (4) of 15 March 2022, the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director Children's Services (Education), that presented the Education Excellence Strategy for Sefton 2022-2027. The development of the Strategy, together with the proposed next steps in terms of programme development were also set out. The report would also be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 6 October 2022.

RESOLVED:

That the Education Excellence Strategy for Sefton 2022-2027 be received and noted.

17. OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education updating on recent Ofsted Inspection Reports and the work of the School Improvement Team.

The following schools had been inspected and reports received during the Summer term of 2022:

- Holy Trinity Primary School
- Maricourt High School
- St Johns Crossens Primary School
- St Philips Primary School
- Birkdale High School

A Summary of Ofsted Outcomes and Support during Summer 2022 was attached to the report.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- Clarification regarding schools recently inspected.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

18. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer submitting the most recent update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care, and the Cabinet Member – Education, whose portfolios fell within the remit of the Committee.

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The Cabinet Member update report – Children's Social Care, attached to the report at Appendix A, outlined information on the following:

- Children's Social Care
- Youth Justice Service:
 - Performance
- Critical Learning Reviews
- Female Cohort Mapping
- Violent Crime

The Cabinet Member update report – Education, attached to the report at Appendix B, outlined information on the following:

- Education Excellence
- Schools:
 - St Teresa's
 - Sacred Heart
 - Savio
- Exams and Tests
- White Paper – "Opportunity for All"
- School Rebuilding Programme
- Attendance
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Councillors Doyle and Roscoe attended the meeting to present their reports and to respond to any questions or issues raised by Members of the Committee.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- Social work practice approaches adopted.
- Suitable office space for confidential discussions within Magdalen House, Bootle.
- The Early Years and Early Help services. An explanation regarding the closure of buildings associated with services could be sought.
- Reference was made to the Children's Services Improvement Plan that had been considered by Committee members at an informal meeting held on 17 August 2022.
- Concerns were expressed regarding an attempted suicide referred to within the update from the Youth Justice Service and the importance of early intervention was emphasised.
- Reference was made to Minute No. 5 (1) of 5 July 2022 and the decision taken by the Committee to have sight of the Children's Services Improvement Plan.
- Further to Minutes No. 4 and 5 (2) of 5 July 2022, Members asked for an update regarding the possibility of receiving the Minutes of the Improvement Board and the attendance of the Improvement

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Board Chair at a meeting of the Committee. These matters would be discussed at the next meeting of the Improvement Board.

- The mental health toolbox and raising awareness of resources.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care and the Cabinet Member – Education be noted;
- (2) the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education be requested to provide an explanation regarding the possible closure of buildings associated with Children's Services;
- (3) it be noted that the Committee had previously taken the decision to request to have sight of the Children's Services Improvement Plan; and
- (4) the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education be requested to raise the possibility of Committee Members receiving the Minutes of the Improvement Board; and the attendance of the Improvement Board Chair at a future meeting of the Committee, these matters to be raised at the next meeting of the Improvement Board.

19. WORK PROGRAMME KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer:

- reviewing the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2022/23;
- noting the progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group;
- seeking the views of the Committee on the re-establishment of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group;
- seeking the views of the Committee on holding informal briefing sessions during 2022/23, rather than establish a traditional working group;
- identifying any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the latest Key Decision Forward Plan;
- receiving an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- noting the position of the Parent Governor Representatives that sat on the Committee.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23;
- Appendix B – Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review;

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- Appendix C - Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- Thanks were extended to the Committee's Parent Governor Representatives.
- Regarding the possibility of re-establishing the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group, a report could be requested on exam results and performance this year of secondary schools, to ascertain whether there was a need for the working group. Results were requested by school, if possible, and previous reports from 2019 could be used as a template.
- An informal briefing for Committee Members on the Leeds Family Values model was proposed.
- Visits by Committee Members to Children's Services based in Magdalen House, Bootle, could be arranged.
- The reporting of children's health services issues to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted, along with any additional items to be included and agreed;
- (2) progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group be noted;
- (3) previous reports on school performance be provided to the Head of Education and she be requested to submit a report on exam results and performance this year of secondary schools, by school, if possible, in order for the Committee to ascertain whether there is a need to re-establish the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group;
- (4) an informal briefing on the Leeds Family Values model for all Committee Members be arranged in due course;
- (5) visits by Committee Members to the Children's Services Teams based in Magdalen House, Bootle, be arranged in due course;
- (6) the Key Decision Forward Plan for the period 1 October 2022 – 31 January 2023, be noted;
- (7) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (8) the position of the Parent Governor Representatives that sit on the Committee be noted, and thanks be extended to the retiring Parent Governor Representatives.

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Agenda Item 4

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) | Date of Meeting: | Monday 7 November 2022 |
| Subject: | Integrated Care Systems and Start Well Update | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Health and Wellbeing Children's Social Care | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

The report provides the committee with a brief overview of the Integrated Care System development through the Sefton Partnership and provides specific detail on the Start Well Plan and its delivery.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) The Committee are asked to note the contents of the report and provide comment as required.
- (2) The Committee are asked for their ongoing support to the delivery of the Start Well Plan and to receive further updates and reports in due course.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The Sefton Partnership is now operational, and this is a key area of delivery.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Not applicable

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

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There are no direct revenue costs associated with the recommendations in this report.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no direct capital costs associated with the recommendations in this report.

Implications of the Proposals:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): | |
| N/A | |
| Legal Implications: | |
| N/A | |
| Equality Implications: | |
| There are no equality implications. | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: | |
| The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | No |
| Have a neutral impact | Yes |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |
| The contents of the report reflect a neutral impact on the climate emergency. | |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

| |
|--|
| Protect the most vulnerable: Proposals allow a Sefton Health and Care system focus on health inequalities and wider determinants of health |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Proposals allow greater localised control and focus on the needs of the borough of Sefton in the design, delivery and review of Health and Care Services |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: Proposals strength the role of Strategic Commission at a Sefton borough level and encourage greater collaboration for better outcomes. |
| Place – leadership and influencer: Proposals set out the road map for greater local control driven by the Health and Wellbeing Board. |
| Drivers of change and reform: Proposals allow a Sefton Health and Care system focus on health inequalities and wider determinants of health |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Proposals allow for a broader financial |

| |
|---|
| focus on the borough of Sefton for Health and Care services |
| Greater income for social investment: Proposals allow for a broader financial focus on the borough of Sefton for Health and Care services |
| Cleaner Greener: not applicable |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 6992) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 5192) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Contact Officer: | Eleanor Moulton |
| Telephone Number: | 07779162882 |
| Email Address: | eleanor.moulton@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Start Well part of the Sefton Partnership Delivery plan. The report also details some key developments since the last report

2. Background

2.1 The 1st of July saw the formal establishment of the Sefton Partnership.

This is as a result of the Royal assent given to the Health and Care Act 2022 in April of this year. The Act introduces significant reforms to the organisation and delivery of health and care services in England. The main purpose of the Health and Care Act is to establish a legislative framework that supports collaboration and partnership-working to integrate services for patients. Among a wide range of other measures, the Act also includes

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targeted changes to public health, social care and the oversight of quality and safety.

2.2 At the heart of the changes brought about by the Act is the formalisation of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). ICSs are partnerships that bring providers and commissioners of NHS services across a geographical area together with local authorities and other local partners to collectively plan health and care services to meet the needs of their local population. Locally this is the establishment of the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System. This solidifies the move away from the old legislative focus on competition to a new framework that supports collaboration.

2.3 Each ICS is now made up of two parts: an Integrated Care Board (ICB) and an Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). ICBs will be tasked with the commissioning and oversight of most NHS services and will be accountable to NHS England for NHS spending and performance. ICPs will bring together a wider range of partners, not just the NHS, to develop a plan to address the broader health, public health, and social care needs of the population. ICSs have the potential to reach beyond the NHS to work alongside local authorities and other partners to address the wider determinants of health.

2.4 A key premise of ICS policy is that much of the activity to integrate care and improve population health will be driven by organisations collaborating over smaller geographies within ICSs, often referred to as 'places', and through teams delivering services working together on even smaller footprints, usually referred to as 'neighbourhoods'. This means the disestablishment of the previous Clinical Commissioning Groups. Unlike previous reforms, which have over specified at a local level, the Act gives local leaders flexibility in how they setup these more local arrangements. Locally this has led to establishment of the Sefton Partnership as approved by Sefton Council Cabinet on the 23rd of June 2022. These new arrangements took effect on the 1st of July 2022.

2.5 On the 29th of July the Department of Health and Social Care issued guidance detailing the requirement for each Integrated Care System to publish an Integrated Care Strategy. This is required by December 2022. This means Sefton Partnership must deliver its own place plan by the end of October.

2.6 Our Place plan will include the life course thematic approach to Start Well, Live Well, all Age and Age Well.

2.7 The Sefton Partnership is collaborative forum who role it is to enable the delivery of integrated population health and care services in Sefton. The Partnership aims to make recommendations by consensus to the ICB or other relevant statutory body. A Partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding was approved through the Cheshire and Merseyside ICB in September and signed by the following partners. This agreement has been recognised as good practice and shared across the 9 Places/Local Authority areas which make up the Cheshire and Merseyside ICS.

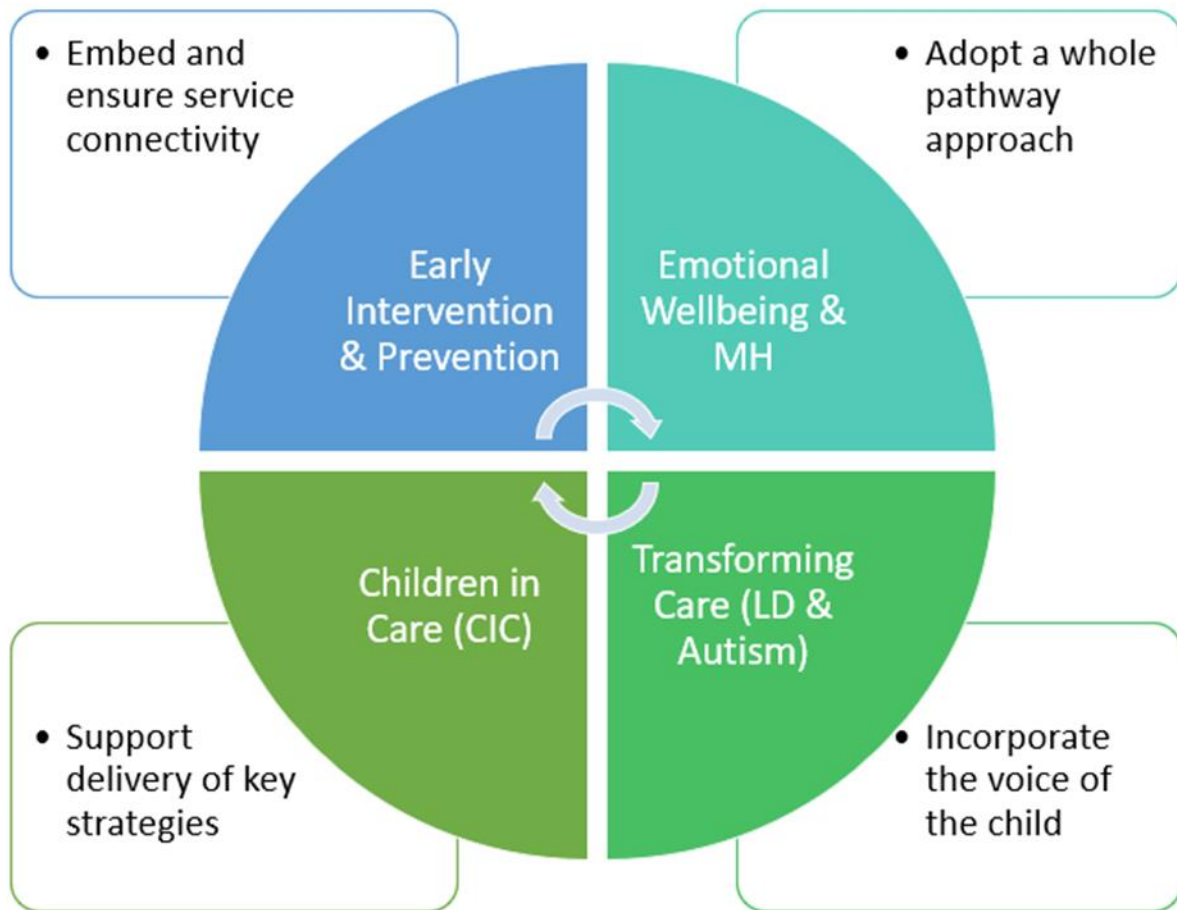
- Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Southport And Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust
- Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
- Southport and Formby PCN and South Sefton PCN.
- Health Watch
- Sefton Council for the Voluntary Sector
- One Vision Housing.
- Sefton Council
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board.

It can be found at the Health and Care section of our Website.

3. Start Well Overview

3.1 The plan was developed through an inclusive co-produced process to map current priorities across the age range, alongside contract information and Governance structure. This has been overseen by the Executive Commissioning Group and delivered by a leadership group consisting of Commissioners and Providers across the Sefton system. Work was then undertaken to refine by theme into 4 core elements and their delivery areas owned by system partners

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3.2 Each area has been refined since last presented to the board as reflected in the following figures:



Early Help - Intervention & Prevention



- Voice of the child, parents and families underpins all work in the EIP priority
- Key projects to be progressed include:
 - i. Re-commissioning of 0-19 service
 - ii. Development of Children's Living Well Sefton (LWS) service offer and support the wider CVS offer through wider partnerships
 - iii. Roll-out of Practise Hope self-harm training across primary care and links with broader ORCHA developments
 - iv. Best start in life developments, including BABS service and links with perinatal offer
 - v. Continued roll-out of MHSTs
 - vi. Emphasis on more children meeting developmental milestones at age 2 to 2.5, with a literacy focus
 - vii. Expansion of IAPT service for 16+



Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health



- Voice of the child, parents and families underpins all work in the Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health priority:
- Key projects to be progressed include:
 - i. Early intervention within the context of enhanced therapeutic support
 - ii. Launch of multi-agency gateway review meetings to support children and young people at risk of potential tier four admission
 - iii. Launch of the Integrated Care Framework pilot
 - iv. Supporting the implementation of the nine North West CAMHS review recommendations locally within Sefton, including a partner-endorsed "alternatives to hospital" pathway
 - v. Expanding the digital offer

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Transforming Care



Voice of the child, parents and families underpins all work in the Transforming Care priority:

To improve access to services and support for CYP with learning difficulties and autism

Drive forward and deliver work around All Age Autism.

Ensure full impact of the DST and Key Worker model supporting the roll out of Intensive Support Teams whilst focusing on delivering improved performance and quality.



Children in Care (CIC)



Voice of the child, parents and families underpins all work in the CIC priority:

The Strategic redesign of a local offer for placements in Sefton on an integrated basis (procurement under way)

Maximise assets such as designated nurse model – ensuring links to work through the Corporate Parenting Board

Deliver the required contributions to improvements needed as highlighted by Ofsted with the development of dedicated pathways

Continue to work on improving the timeliness of Health Assessments for our Children

4. Next Steps

4.1 Start well is now defined as a clear programme of work and the Start Well Group have now progressed to focus on tangible delivery with programme support. The group continues to have strong engagement and leadership from across Health, Social Care and providers with membership extended to include Voluntary sector representation.

4.2 Discussions continue around streamlined governance within the newly established Partnership: landscape. Commitment to reducing duplication wherever possible is there, however the maintenance of a dedicated Emotional Health and Wellbeing Partnership board remains and ongoing discussion on how the Early Help Partnership aligns alongside Children Social Care improvement infrastructure needs further consideration as this emerges. This Sefton programme will ensure it picks up key interdependencies with the Beyond Programme Board and any other key pieces of work across the Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.

5. Key updates

5.1 Alder Hey service development and improvement.

A key part of the group is our provider colleagues from Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust who have shared the following key areas of progress;

Sensory OT

In January 2022, the Sefton Community Occupational Therapy Service was commissioned to deliver a new service offer to upskill universal services and promote early identification and implementation of intervention of generic sensory strategies promoting integration and inclusion for children and young people. In the first 6 months of operation, the Occupational Therapy service have provided Sensory Training for 22 schools in Sefton, training 509 education staff with 100% of staff reporting that the training will have a positive impact on the way they work with children and young people in schools – feedback included “the most useful training we've had.” The OT service have also provided 18 parent workshops, providing training for 113 parents with 88% of parents reporting that they feel confident that they can use the strategies from the workshop with their child. Training for other professionals working in Sefton including School Nurses, Early Help Practitioners has also been delivered, with a further two training sessions planned for the end of the year. To support the training and workshops, the OT service also provides drop-in sessions for parents and professionals. In the first 6 months, 52 parents and 37 professionals have utilised the drop ins, with positive feedback that needs have been met in this session or signposting and referrals on utilised.

SPOT (Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy)

The SPOT service continues to operate in Sefton, providing multi-disciplinary assessment and review for children under 3 years of age who have complex needs and require two or more therapies to assist with developmental progress. SPOT also holds review clinics with a Consultant Neurodevelopmental Paediatrician, known as Complex Needs Clinics. In addition to the assessment and review clinics, SPOT also run group sessions within community settings at 'Jakes' and 'Dobbies' which allow families to attend with their child, have access to support and advice from therapists, work on goals and targets through play and sensory experiences and meet other parents.

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Sefton Integrated Early Years Speech Language and Communication Pathway

We have been commissioned to support the Early Years Sector with early identification and intervention of early language delay. This is being delivered through visiting Private and Voluntary Institutions to develop and support language champions to embed the WellComm Tool to screen and provide high quality intervention at a targeted level. We also provide Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) surgeries to enable early years practitioners easy access to an SLT to gain advice and strategies and ensure appropriate and timely referrals are made. ELKLAN 0-3 Programme is delivered to practitioners as well as providing the ELKLAN Communication Friendly Setting Award to settings.

Positive feedback has been received from Early Years Professionals using the advice line and the course:

“I like being able to talk to an SLT about a child, when I am unsure what to do next. It has given me so much confidence.”

“I now find that I can tell more easily which children to refer, and as I know more ideas of what to do with the children, there are some I don't need to refer”.

“having done the course I now know the small changes and progression for expressive language and I was able to give details to parents. They were really pleased and we could spot changes as the child progressed”

“the most useful and interesting information in the play session was about sequencing in play to help them to sequence in language. This has put into perspective why some children who I work with tend to struggle, and how we can support their language within their play”

“After the course I have started using books at every available opportunity as an invaluable tool”

Speech and Language Therapy Duty Line / Website

All parents and professionals can access advice and guidance by contacting the SLT service directly by phone or email to talk through any concerns, questions they have about individual children. Many of these queries seek clarification on the appropriateness of referral, as well as requesting ideas and strategies that they can implement at home or in their settings. Advice sheets and leaflets can be sent out, and also accessed on the Alder Hey website including having these in audio function in many different languages to support families where written English is not understood.

5.2 Sefton Council Commissioning Update

The Council has commenced tendering arrangements for a framework or purchasing system for children who need to be cared for in a residential placement. There has been significant work over the last few months to develop and strengthen relationships with providers. The arrangements will be

predicated initially on the securing of residential Care and fostering capacity alongside a menu of wraparound services required to support children who need this level of care through its life journey into adulthood.

We aim to ensure that we work with likeminded providers who will support our children to be happy, healthy, and secure in their childhood and through collaboration and a partnership approach offer the best opportunities to meet their potential in adult life.

The plan is to encourage innovation in delivery, promote partnership working and mutually ensure pathways are in place at a local level to meet the needs of our children.

The new arrangements will be established January 2023, and will deliver the following vision and aims:

- Local homes for local children which enables sustainable and positive outcomes. We would expect that providers on this PDPS will notify the homes team of any vacancies in the first instance to ensure bed spaces are not empty and the matching process can commence at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Right home; right location; right time; right price
- Operational and strategic relationships with providers to encourage investment in the market locally and to grow social capital within the borough of Sefton
- Greater flexibility and innovative commissioning and provision including the exploration of alternative and new models of delivery
- Commissioners and Providers working collaboratively across traditional service boundaries to improve outcomes for children, support step down avoid drift and plan for adulthood
- Ensure that wraparound services support the pathway through care for children in Sefton.
- Unlock our natural assets to support the future growth of provision in Sefton

A bid has been made to the Children's Homes Capital Fund, Department of Education, the bid looks to ask for funding to repurpose a derelict LA asset into a high-quality children's home that allows more Sefton CLA needing residential care to be placed within Sefton itself, and doing this with a new, innovative not-for-profit provider that will recycle any surplus into local preventative projects to ultimately assist Sefton's early help strategy. If successful, the Committee will be provided with further information.

5.30 – 19 service recommission

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 sets out a local authority's statutory responsibility for commissioning public health services for children and young people aged 0 to 19 years (up to 25 with SEND). This includes all families with babies to be offered 5 mandated health visitor reviews before their child reaches 2 and a half years old.

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The national Healthy Child Programme (HCP) provides a framework to deliver an effective early intervention and prevention public health programme based on a model of 'progressive universalism'. The 0 to 5 element of the Healthy Child Programme is led by health visiting services and the 5 to 19 (up to 25 with SEND) element is led by school nursing services. Together they provide place-based services and work collaboratively across the Children's Partnership where needed. The universal reach of the Healthy Child Programme provides an invaluable opportunity from early in a child's life to identify families that may need additional support and children who are at risk of poor outcomes.

The existing contract for the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme (HCP) provided by MerseyCare NHS Foundation Trust is due to expire on 31st March 2023, following an out of contract extension. In line with existing procurement legislation, the service is in the process of being recommissioned, to be fully operational by 1st April 2023.

Modernisation guidance for the National 0-19 (up to 25 with SEND) Healthy Child Programme was published in March 2021, with a full national specification due by the end of the year. 'Universal in Reach – Personalised in Response, the model is designed around 4 levels of service, providing community, universal, targeted and specialist levels of support.

The service has been respecified to reflect the modernisation HCP, in collaboration with Sefton Children's Partnership, reporting progress into Start Well and Collaborative Commissioning. The specification is fluid and will be adapted to meet national and local transformation agendas.

5.4 Health Commissioning updates

Early Intervention and Prevention

Building Attachments and Bonds Service (BABS)

The successful pilot which was launched in January 2022, offers a new Parent Infant Mental Health Service across Sefton to vulnerable families, specifically pregnant women, new parents and their partners, who struggle with their emotional wellbeing and/or other vulnerabilities.

Joint funding to extend the pilot until the end of March 2023 has been agreed by the Executive Commissioning Group, pending a formal review of the pilot and consideration of future investment.

Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)

As part of the national roll out of the teams, Sefton has fully implemented 2 MHSTs which are supporting 40 local schools and colleges. The programme is being managed and delivered by Alder Hey across both Sefton and Liverpool. Funding for a third team has been secured which will be implemented from January 2023 and will support a further 20 schools (including all secondary schools, colleges and Special Schools), expanding MHST coverage to over 50% of Sefton schools. Plans for the implementation of the third team are underway and being overseen by the Sefton MHST steering group, which includes representation across Sefton's Emotional Health Partnership.

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health - CAMHS review

Following the outcomes of the Northwest CAMHS review, all 'places' across the Cheshire and Merseyside ICS have been directed to develop a local action plan using a 'Logic Model' approach, to map existing provision, identify gaps and agree the actions required by the local system to progress.

Using this framework, the Sefton Emotional Health Partnership has been working collaboratively to develop the local plan, which will be reviewed by the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Board on 11 October 2022.

Framework for Integrated Care (FiC): vanguard

This new Psychology led model aims to work with CYP who are at risk of being criminally and/or sexually exploited and their families (ages 13 – 19). It will embed an enhanced case management and trauma informed, strengths-based approach through training, consultation, assessments and interventions to the most vulnerable CYP with complex needs across Sefton. It is to be an integrated offer and should enhance existing provision including CAMHS and NHSE Liaison and Diversion.

Implementation plans for this new service offer across North Mersey are progressing well. Recruitment to the new staff team is ongoing and a Complex Needs Lead for Sefton has been appointed who is meeting with colleagues and services across the system to develop and embed the required systems and processes.

Gateway meetings

As part of the 'New Models of Care' framework, the Gateway Meeting process is being implemented across Cheshire and Merseyside ICS, with oversight and support of Cheshire and Wirral Partnerships NHS FT. The meetings and associated processes are being implemented 'at place' to support the local system-wide management of children and young people at high risk of escalating mental health, to prevent a hospital admission or placement breakdown.

Including senior representation from Social Care, Education and Health, the Sefton system held its introductory Gateway meeting in September and will be meeting again in early November to progress implementation plans locally. This will also focus on alignment with the existing Dynamic Support Database systems and processes, which supports high risk children and young people with LD and/or autism.

Transforming Care (LD and Autism)

ASD/ADHD pathway developments:

ASD post diagnostic Pilot - delivered across Sefton and Liverpool by third sector providers Advanced Solutions and Alder Hey, this pilot which is currently funded by Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care monies and was due to conclude at the end of October 2022.

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Based on the evaluation of the pilot, which evidences the impact and value of the support for young people and their families, Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership has agreed to extend funding for the programme until the end of March 2023.

ASD Community Network programme

This was previously funded through National Lottery Funding and provided by third sector providers Advanced Solutions, this 'open access' drop-in support offer has been much valued by Sefton families.

Although funding ended in September 2022, Sefton Place is considering a bid for Cheshire and Merseyside 'Beyond Programme' funding, which offers up to £50K for projects that support and improve outcomes for children and young people with Learning Disabilities, Difficulties and Autism. Closing date for bids is 21 October 2022. Future decisions and arrangements for recurrent funding for both elements of support will be prioritised as part of 2023/24 Sefton Place and joint/commissioning funding discussions.

Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care developments:

ASD scoping - to understand provision and developments across the 9 individual Cheshire and Merseyside 'places', the TCP is undertaking a current autism scoping exercise using the NHS Long Term Plan ambitions as a benchmark.

To support local developments in this regard, Sefton Place commissioners have meetings in place with partners to map the current local neurodevelopmental offer so that gaps can be identified, to inform pathway development across the local system and wider ICS developments.

ASD dashboard development – to improve and standardise data, intelligence and reporting, initial discussions have commenced on the development of a Cheshire and Merseyside ICS Autism dashboard

Key Worker programme

Recruitment to this new service has commenced. Interviews have been held for the Key Worker Manager post and the 3 Key Worker roles and informal offers have been made. It is anticipated that staff will be in post before January 2023.

The service will provide enhanced support to children, young people and families with LD and/or ASD who are at high risk of a hospital admission and who sit on the Sefton DSD. The team will be employed by Sefton Place but will actively work across the system.

6 Conclusion

This is a critical time for Start well and the benefits of approaching challenges as a system are becoming clear demonstrated in the key updates above. The Partnership is asked to note the contents and provide steer and comment as appropriate.

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| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) | Date of Meeting: | Monday 7 November 2022 |
| Subject: | Children's Services Improvement Programme | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director of Children's Services | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Children's Social Care | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | N | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | N | | |

Summary:

This report updates members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) on progress made against the Children's Improvement Plan.

Recommendation(s):

(1) Note the progress made and consider the priorities for the next quarter

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

For members of the Committee to consider progress made to date.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

NA

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no direct revenue implications with this report. Members will be aware that there is significant financial pressure in the service within the current year in respect of agency costs and accommodation costs. Remedial action plans have been presented and approved by Cabinet and Council. Work will continue during the current year on budget monitoring within the service and any additional financial pressure or additional

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expenditure will need to be met from savings elsewhere within the Council. The Council's next three year Medium Term Financial Plan will take account of this Improvement Programme and the resources required to support it; this will be informed by the Director of Children's Services

(B) Capital Costs

There are no direct capital implications with this report.

Implications of the Proposals:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|------------------------|---|---|---|
| <p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): To support the implementation of the Family Valued model the Council has been approved to receive £3m. To date £447k has been received.</p> <p>Following a successful bid to the Department for Education a further £300k has been approved to support the implementation of the Social Work Academy.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Legal Implications:</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Climate Emergency Implications:</p> <p>The recommendations within this report will</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Have a positive impact</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a neutral impact</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a negative impact</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> </table> | | Have a positive impact | N | Have a neutral impact | Y | Have a negative impact | N | The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Y |
| Have a positive impact | N | | | | | | | | |
| Have a neutral impact | Y | | | | | | | | |
| Have a negative impact | N | | | | | | | | |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Y | | | | | | | | |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

| |
|--|
| <p>Protect the most vulnerable: The Improvement Programme seeks to deliver change across Children's Services whose activity protects and supports those children and young people who have complex care needs.</p> |
| <p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Children's Services work with partners to support families in need of support and improve resilience.</p> |
| <p>Commission, broker and provide core services: Children's Services work with partners to support families in need of support and improve resilience.</p> |
| <p>Place – leadership and influencer: The Council will take a lead role in work with partners to deliver change in Children's Services.</p> |
| <p>Drivers of change and reform: The Council will work with partners to deliver change in Children's Services.</p> |

| |
|--|
| |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: NA |
| Greater income for social investment: NA |
| Cleaner Greener NA |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.6989/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5189/22) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

The Executive Director Children's Service and Education and his leadership team engage with partners across Sefton with regard to the Improvement Programme.

The voice of children, young people and their families will be integral to delivering change.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Contact Officer: | Jan McMahon |
| Telephone Number: | Tel: 0151 934 4431 |
| Email Address: | jan.mcmahon@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

Appendix A Improvement Plan

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Member of the Committee will recall that the Children's Improvement Programme comprises of four themes;

- Quality - Ensuring the right staff are in the right place at the right time to deliver a consistent standard of good quality safeguarding services to children and families.
- Improving Implementation of Learning - Using what we know and learn to continuously improve and enhance the services we deliver for children and families.
- Improving Tools - Ensuring we have the right tools to enable the workforce to deliver good quality services for children and families.
- Improving Strategic Partnerships - Effective partnership working to enable the delivery of common goals and a high quality multi-agency response for children and families.

1.2 A phased approach is being taken to delivering change and this report updates on progress made against Phase 1 of the Improvement Plan and priorities for the next quarter. The Council will take the learning from Monitoring Visits to inform future phases of the Improvement Plan to drive the improvement needed to make a difference for children, young people and their families.

1.3 Feedback from the Ofsted's Regional Director recognises the initial phase of the Improvement Plan as

“laying the foundations to support improvement and is appropriately focused on the areas for improvement identified at the inspection, as well as wider service improvements and provides clear measures to monitor progress. The plan is thorough, detailed and demonstrates engagement with partners and the wider council.”

1.4 Work on the Improvement Plan activity continues to progress at pace, with grip being demonstrated at both a service and organisational level. The following section of this report highlights progress made and the Improvement Plan at Appendix A confirms the current status of activity as at the end of September 2022. Officers track progress against the Improvement Plan alongside the Performance Dashboard (that appears elsewhere on this agenda) and Service Plans progress.

2. Progress

Quality

- 2.1 A key priority has been ensuring a stable and experienced leadership team is in place to lead the change and develop a consistent standard of good quality services to children and families. All members of the leadership team are now permanent staff members.
- 2.2 All eleven Service Manager posts have now been recruited to on a permanent basis.
- 2.3 The Social Work Academy is now live and twenty two team members have been recruited to the Academy. Permanent appointments have been made to the Service Manager and Team Manager posts. Members of the Academy will benefit from protected caseloads.
- 2.4 Work has continued on rolling out the Family Valued Model with restorative practice and management oversight training being delivered. Further training will include assessment, planning and recording which will with the new Practice Standards and Quality Assurance Framework strengthen practice over time. The Leadership team are working hard to embed these mechanisms across Children's Services and to put in place processes that will provide assurance that practice standards are improving.
- 2.5 The Targeted Family Support Team is now live and this is a key element of the improvement work needed to improve the support to those families who do not require statutory Social Care. This team offers an intensive 12 to 20 week programme of support to families who need extra support.
- 2.6 The Family Time Team is also up and running. This team, working closely with Social Workers, ensures that for families going through court processes that their time together is beneficial, engaging and as fun as possible.
- 2.7 Young people have named the Complex Safeguarding team SPACE – Sefton Protection & Child Exploitation. This is a joint initiative with colleagues from Health. The team takes a trauma informed, responsive and supportive approach to working with young people to address the longer term issues associated with child exploitation.
- 2.8 Considerable progress has been made with the review of the Care Experienced Service Care to ensure processes and practice are robust, safe and in the young person's interests.

Improving Implementation of Learning

- 2.9 The complaints processes and procedures have been reviewed, with young people contributing to the design of infographics for staff, children and young people outlining the process.

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- 2.10 At the time of writing this report analysis is underway of the feedback received through the staff survey. The survey has provided the Children's workforce with a real opportunity to identify improvements which would make a real difference and therefore help provide a better service for the children, young people and families of Sefton. Once the analysis is complete the key findings of the survey will be shared with Trade Unions and staff and work will commence on developing an action plan.
- 2.11 During October staff celebrated Practice Week an opportunity to learn from and celebrate good practice, listen to the views of staff and families and that will help us shape future phases of the Improvement Plan.

Improving Tools

- 2.12 Performance Dashboards are now available to the Leadership team, Service and Team Managers through Power BI. This means that Officers have accurate and timely data and intelligence available to them.
- 2.13 Staff now have access to Tri-X, an online tool which stores policies and procedures. Staff have also received training in using this tool.
- 2.14 The Public Law Outline (PLO) sets out the duties Local Authorities have when thinking about taking a case to court to ask for a Care Order to take a child into care or for a Supervision Order to be made. Work is underway to improve the processes and timeliness of this area of work.
- 2.15 Work is well underway on the gap analysis of business processes and policies.
- 2.16 Financial planning- regular monthly budget monitoring has taken place and the outcome of this together with the assumptions that underpin it as signed off by the service. Work has commenced between the Finance team and the Executive Director of Children's Services as to the budget assumptions for the next 2 financial years to align the Improvement Plan and required resources to deliver that to the Medium Term Financial Plan. This has focused on potential accommodation costs (either external or provision of accommodation by the Council) and agency costs that maybe required over and above the budgeted for staffing costs. The outcome of this work is signed off by the Executive Director of Children's Services.

Improving Strategic Partnerships

- 2.17 Electronic Personal Education Plans (PEP) have been implemented. Training has been delivered with half termly online hubs (twilight sessions) are in place to provide ongoing training and support for designated teachers to ensure that practice is inclusive. Fortnightly drop in surgeries are in place providing ongoing training and support to Social Work teams to ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEP) are an integral part of the care planning process.
- 2.18 The work to progress the recommissioning of the Sefton Placements Framework is on track. Young people with care experience have informed the service

specification and the tender was released in October 2022 with award due to take place in January 2023.

- 2.19 The Commissioning team are continuing with market engagement and development work.
- 2.20 An independent Scrutineer has identified that there is work to do to strengthen the Safeguarding Children Partnership. Over the next twelve months the Executive Director of Children's Services will work closely with Health and Police colleagues to strengthen this partnership and ensure that there is grip and that partners are working together to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm and neglect and that their welfare is promoted.

3. **Priorities for the Next Quarter**

3.1 Over the next few months the priorities are

- Continued recruitment of permanent workforce
- Considering staff survey feedback and developing an action plan
- Embedding new Practice Standards
- Further development of Data Warehouse
- Training in the use of Power BI
- Review of Business Support
- Review of In house Fostering and care experienced offer.

3.2 Officers are preparing for the

- Ofsted Monitoring Visits
- North West ADCS Peer Challenge 2022/23 in December
- North West PLO & Private Proceedings Peer Review in January 2023

3.3 Following the first Monitoring Visit the Improvement Plan will be reviewed and Phase 2 of the plan developed.

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Sefton Council 

Children's Improvement Plan Phase 1



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Foreword

Working together to improve services for children, young people and their families

Welcome to our Improvement Plan.

We recognise the change needed to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in Sefton. We know that we cannot deliver sustainable change without working together with our wider partners across Sefton. Organisations from the public sector, schools, voluntary, community and private sector will need to work side by side to provide the support that our children and young people and their families need. It is our collective responsibility to ensure we create the right conditions for vulnerable children and young people to thrive.

We also know that there is a lot to do and so we are taking a phased approach to our improvement journey. Phase 1 will focus on getting the conditions right to facilitate improvement and lay down the foundations for continuous improvement in practice, embed a strong Corporate Parenting ethos and most importantly value the voices of children, young people and our workforce in the development and delivery of future plans.

Given the breadth and depth of the change required four main themes for improvement have been identified, Improving Quality, Improving the Implementation of Learning, Improving Tools and Improving Strategic Partnerships. The partnership Improvement Board will oversee the delivery of the Improvement Plan. Progress will be monitored to make sure that practice meets the 'good' standard set out by the Ofsted framework, that this improvement is sustained and has a positive impact on the life chances of children and young people.

The Lead Members for Children's Services will lead key decisions and the Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services and Safeguarding) Committee will provide ongoing oversight and challenge.

Performance management and audit arrangements will ensure that quantitative and qualitative information is available to measure the progress that we are making in improving our child protection arrangements and will inform further action. The plan identifies specific areas of improvement, such as Child exploitation, which will have individual and more detailed action plans which will be brought to the Improvement Board on occasion to track progress.

The Four Themes of Improvement

1. Improving Quality

Ensuring the right staff are in the right place at the right time to deliver a consistent standard of good quality safeguarding services to children and families.

- 1.1 The Workforce
- 1.2 Practice Standards and Quality Assurance Framework
- 1.3 Ofsted Specific Concerns

2. Improving Implementation of Learning

Using what we know and learn to continuously improve and enhance the services we deliver for children and families.

- 2.1 Feedback from families, children and young people, staff and partners
- 2.2 Internal and external audits
- 2.3 Research

3. Improving Tools

Ensuring we have the right tools to enable the workforce to deliver good quality services for children and families.

- 3.1 Technology & IT systems
- 3.2 Management and Performance Information
- 3.3 Effective, user friendly systems & processes that support the task
- 3.4 Corporate Services & Organisational Support







4. Improving Strategic Partnerships

Effective partnership working to enable the delivery of common goals and a high quality multi-agency response for children and families.

- 4.1 Corporate Parenting
- 4.2 Local Safeguarding Partnership
- 4.3 Corporate Services
- 4.4 Strategic Commissioning
- 4.5 Schools and settings

RAG Rating

Progress Status

-  Action complete
-  Action not yet completed, but on track and will be completed by milestone
-  Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover
-  Action not on track, risk to implementation
-  Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated
-  Business As Usual Activity

Priority 1 – Improving Quality



Our overall aim for this priority area: Ensuring the right staff are in the right place at the right time to deliver a consistent standard of good quality safeguarding services to children and families.

How we plan to improve this area of significant weakness

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--|------------|---|--|---|--|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1.1 A skilled, professional, competent workforce with adequate capacity to deliver high quality service to our Children and Young People. Enabling a culture in which professional accountability is evident, leadership is strong, and practice is purposeful. | 1.1.1 | There is adequate capacity and flexibility within the workforce to deliver high quality services to Children and Young People. That staff remain committed to Sefton and feel that they can develop a fulfilling career. | Develop and agree Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy and develop an Action Plan that supports delivery of the strategy. | We will see an increase in employees accessing quality training and recognise the value of professional development. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action complete | September 2022 | People Strategy and Action Plan |
| | | | Develop and deliver a targeted recruitment drive for senior managers and leaders. | We will be a committed, permanent team of senior leaders with a strong background of excellent practice to support and lead the delivery of our Improvement Plan to deliver the change needed in core areas of social work practice including assessment, planning, and management oversight. | Children's Assistant Directors & HR | Action complete | September 2022 | |
| | | | Recruit a Participation Officer. | There will be resource available to ensure the views of children, young people and families are heard and help to shape service development, design and delivery. | Assistant Director of Help & Protection | Action complete | March 2022 | |
| | | | Recruit Service Manager for Targeted Early Help Service. | There will be resource available to ensure good management oversight of the Targeted Early Help Service. | Assistant Director of Help & Protection | Action complete | October 2022 | |
| | | | Recruit Principal Social Worker. | There will be leadership resource available to manage the hub for quality assurance and learning activities generated from it, as well as all bespoke practice improvement activity. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action complete | July 2022 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|--|---|--|---|----------------|----------------------|
| | | | Recruit Practice Improvement Managers. | There will be resource available to provide the hub for quality assurance and learning activities generated from it, as well as all bespoke practice improvement activity. | | Action not yet completed, but on track | November 2022 | |
| | | | Recruit Deputy Virtual Headteacher | There will be leadership resource available to support the delivery of our Improvement Plan to deliver the change needed in Education. | Virtual Headteacher | Action complete | September 2022 | |
| | | | Recruit to vacancies across Children Services. | <p>There will be sufficient capacity and stability across the workforce to secure a timely and appropriate response for children and young people.</p> <p>There will be a reduced reliance on agency workers.</p> <p>Turnover of staff and the vacancy rate will reduce.</p> <p>Social Workers will have a manageable caseloads and children will receive a timely, consistent service to meet their needs, including outside of normal office hours.</p> <p>Feedback from audits will evidence that managers will have sufficient capacity to oversee and support practice so that services can be delivered effectively.</p> <p>Feedback from children and families is that they have developed long-term, trusting relationships with their Social Worker.</p> | Executive Director of Children's Services | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| | | | Develop and ensure a monthly review of the Children's Social Care workforce profile. | Senior leaders will be aware of, and respond appropriately to caseloads within the teams how ASYE staff are deployed and supported appropriately risks associated with vacancies skill, capacity and resource gaps | Assistant Directors Children's Social Care with HR | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | April 2023 | |
| | | | Undertake a review of Business Support capacity within Children's Social Care. | The review will recommend changes for consideration. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action not yet completed, but on track | November 2022 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|--|---|--|--|--|----------------|--------------------------|
| | | | Consider the recommendations from review of Business Support capacity within Children's Social care and implement required change. | There will be a Business Support team that supports the service to deliver good practice and monitor performance. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action not yet completed, but on track | February 2022 | |
| | | | Co-locate Children's Services teams into one building with open planned spaces with areas for learning and a space for children and young people. | Staff will feedback that leadership is visible and approachable and that there is improved working across teams. Children and young people will feel welcome in the workplace. | Executive Director of Children's Services | Action complete | September 2022 | |
| | 1.1.2 | All individual staff have the appropriate knowledge, skills and support to enable them to undertake their work in an effective way and to a good standard. | Develop a business case for a Social Work Academy for social workers, managers, and leaders that will deliver a focused Children's Social Care Workforce Development programme. | The Department for Education will receive a robust bid that will seek support and finance to deliver the Social Work Academy. | Executive Director of Children's Services | Action complete | June 2022 | Social Work Academy Plan |
| | | | Develop and deliver a Social Work Academy for Social Workers, managers, and leaders that will deliver a focused Children's Social Care Workforce Development programme. | There will be role specific training and development opportunities (e.g., management training), informed by Performance Development Reviews and maintained focus on continuous professional development for Social Care Practitioners. The Social Care workforce is suitably qualified and accredited to deliver high-quality services to children and their families. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYEs) will be supported throughout their accredited year through protected caseloads and robust supervision. There will be a decrease in number of ASYEs leaving Sefton after their first year. Surveys will demonstrate that staff feel there are good opportunities within Sefton and a positive and supportive culture is being developed. | Assistant Director Help and Protection | Action complete | September 2022 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|---|---|--|----------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| | | | Review and update the Supervision Policy. | The policy will ensure that staff receive the appropriate support and training needed to deliver effective safeguarding services to families. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action complete | July 2022 | All Service Plans |
| | | | Launch the Supervision Policy. | Leaders and managers will understand what good supervision looks like. | | Action complete | July 2022 | |
| | | | Monitor that all staff receive regular, individual supervision as set out in the Supervision Policy. | Case file audits will identify there is an effective management footprint and supervision on case files preventing drift and delay. Surveys will demonstrate that staff feel supported within their role to deliver effective services for children young people and their families. Improved workforce stability. | | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| | | | Leaders and managers will use the Performance Development Review process to identify individual areas for professional development and plans implemented to address training and development needs. | Surveys will demonstrate that staff feel that their training and development needs are recognised and have opportunities to develop so enabling them to deliver effective services for children young people and their families. The Learning & Development Team will work with leaders and managers to identify ways that training needs and development opportunities are met. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |



| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|---|------------|--|---|--|--|---|----------------|---|
| <p>1.2 Practice Standards & Quality Assurance Framework</p> <p>Social care case work will be focused, timely and appropriate for the current situation within the family.</p> <p>The views of children and families will be taken into account in all of our work.</p> <p>Social work interventions are evidenced clearly, coherently and in a meaningful way.</p> <p>There are clear processes in place to support families to access the appropriate service at the appropriate time.</p> <p>The quality of all plans is at least consistently good.</p> | 1.2.1 | <p>To improve the consistency in quality of good social work practice, and improve adherence to Children's Social Care procedures and 'Working Together'</p> <p>Improve the quality, consistency and timeliness of case recording.</p> | Develop new Practice Standards. | There will be an agreed Practice Standards document with supporting training materials in place. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action complete | September 2022 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| | | | Launch new Practice Standards. | The workforce will understand what the expected standard are. | | Action complete | September 2022 | |
| | | | Develop and deliver training to maintain a focus on improving the quality of case recording in Social Care. | The workforce will be trained in Practice Standards. | | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | October 2022 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|--|---|---|---|----------------|---|
| | | | Monitor Practice Standards and put in place any identified training requirements. | <p>Case file and thematic audits will demonstrate the variability of quality of Children In Need plans will be reduced.</p> <p>Plans will be SMART, reflect the views of the family and child(ren) and evidence multi-agency engagement in the plan.</p> <p>Children and young people plans will have specific actions with clear timescales.</p> <p>Compliance with Child Protection procedures will be evidenced through case file and thematic audits.</p> <p>Visits to children will be responsive to need and risk, and that are purposeful, including life story work.</p> <p>Child Protection visits will be accurate, timely and risk assessments conducted on any visits out of timescale.</p> <p>Re-audit of S47 and Strategy Discussions will evidence improved recording, compliance with process increased multi-agency engagement.</p> <p>Commissioning of placements will be better informed.</p> <p>There will be evidence that the quality of practice improves the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families.</p> | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance Principal Social Worker | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | Ongoing | |
| | | | Review the Quality Assurance Framework ensuring it is aligned with the journey of children and families through the services they receive, experience and the outcomes achieved. | The Quality Framework drives practice improvements and improved outcomes for children and young people. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action complete | September 2022 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| | | | Communicate the Quality Assurance Framework to the Children's Social Care workforce and partners. | The workforce and partners will understand what good looks like. | | Action complete | September 2022 | |
| | | | Identify an appropriate improvement partner. | Partner will support the Council to improve the overall performance of Children's Services by providing peer support to embed the use of best practice models. | Executive Director of Children's Services | Action not yet completed, but on track | October 2022 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan | | | |
|---|------------|--|--|--|---|--|--|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| 1.3 Address Ofsted Specific Concerns To address specific areas of practice concerns highlighted in OFSTED inspection reports | 1.3.1 | To ensure that there is appropriate support in place for the Local Area Designated Officer | Undertake a review of the capacity required to support the activity of the LADO. | Appropriate support will in place to ensure that related work is progressed to required timescales and there is robust management oversight. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action complete | June 2022 | | | | |
| | | | Monitor and Quality Assure LADO investigations. | Case file audits will identify that the timescales for LADO investigations and recording is timely. | | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | | | | |
| | 1.3.2 | To improve the response disabled children and their families. | Review and redesign the Children with Disability (CWD) operating model and practice approach. Deliver specific safeguarding training for the Children with Disabilities team. | Review and redesign the Children with Disability (CWD) operating model and practice approach. | Children, young people and their families will feel engaged in the review process. A CWD Improvement Plan will be put in place and progressed. | Assistant Director Help and Protection | Action not yet completed, but on track | | December 2022 | | |
| | | | | Deliver specific safeguarding training for the Children with Disabilities team. | Quality assurance will identify improvements in timescales for assessments. Staff working in the Children with Disabilities team will be able to identify safeguarding concerns and take appropriate action. | | | | | | |
| | | | | Review Children with Disability (CWD) commissioned activity taking account of the Needs Assessment. | Children, young people and their families will feel engaged in the development of the Commissioning Action Plan. A Commissioning Action Plan will be developed and progressed. | | | | | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | January 2023 |
| | | | | Deliver the Children with Disability (CWD) Commissioning Action Plan. | Commissioned activity will meet local need and improve outcomes for children and young people. | | | | | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing |
| | | | | Monitor feedback from children, young people with disabilities and their families. | Feedback from children, young people and their families will be positive and clearly visible in service improvement, redesign and commissioning activity. | | | | | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing |
| | 1.3.3 | To improve the response to vulnerable children including for children at risk of exploitation, those who go missing from home and education. | Establish a partnership working group to review and redesign the approach to children at risk of exploitation and those who go missing from home and care. | Partnership Working group in place and children at risk of exploitation, those who go missing from home and care and education. Action Plan created. | Assistant Director Help and Protection | Action complete | May 2022 | | Assessment and E-TAC Service Plan | | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|---|--|--|--|---|---------------|---|
| | | | Work with partners, including schools, to deliver the children at risk of exploitation, those who go missing from home and care Action Plan. | There will be an appropriate response from a team around the child to working with Child Exploitation and Missing. Quality assurance will identify that children/young people are safe. | | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | November 2022 | |
| | 1.3.4 | To embed relational and restorative practice across Children's Services. | Establish Family Valued Board and agree timetable for implementation of Leeds Family Valued (FV). | The implementation of the Leeds Family Valued model will have robust oversight. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action complete | May 2022 | Leeds Family Valued Implementation Plan |
| | | Launch Leeds Family Valued approach to Children's Services teams. | The workforce will be aware of Leeds Family Valued (FV) ideas and practice approaches. | Action complete | | May 2022 | | |
| | | Develop a Leeds Family Valued Implementation Plan for approval the Sefton Stronger Together Board. | There will be a clear plan to deliver the Leeds Family Valued Model of practice. | Action complete | | July 2022 | | |
| | | Launch Leeds Family Valued approach to Partners. | Partners will be aware of Leeds Family Valued (FV) ideas and practice approaches. | Action complete | | September 2022 | | |
| | | Monitor the delivery and impact of the Leeds Family Valued approach. | There will be a decrease in the number of children and young people entering care and being placed on Child Protection plans. There will be wider system benefits delivered such as improved attendance in schools. | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | | Ongoing | | |
| | 1.3.5 | To ensure that there is a range of domestic abuse services in place for children, victims and perpetrators based on local need and the workforce is aware of these and how to access them | Identify need associated with domestic abuse to ensure the domestic abuse response is sufficiently prompt and robust in all cases and there are appropriate specialist services in place. | Needs assessment produced and understood by partners. | Executive Director (People) | Action complete | July 2022 | Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership plan |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|--|--|---|---|---|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | Refresh Domestic Abuse Strategy taking account of the Needs Assessment and changes in legislation as outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act (2021). Develop an Action Plan to underpin the delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy. | Partnership wide workshop held to contribute to the Domestic Abuse Strategy and to develop the priority areas for the action plan. There is a range of domestic abuse services in place for children, victims and perpetrators based on local need and the workforce is aware of these and how to access them. Service user voice and feedback shows services meet the needs of children, victims and perpetrators. | | Action not yet completed, but on track | November 2022 | |
| | | | Monitor the delivery and impact of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan. | Regular discussions about performance and progress against the action plan at the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and challenge made to agencies where progress is not sufficient Performance information, including service user voice and feedback, shows victims and children are kept safe and the behaviour of perpetrators is appropriately challenged. | | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| | | | Review Children's Services commissioned activity relating to domestic abuse. | There will be clear pathways for those children and families affected by domestic abuse. Commissioned activity will meet need and accessibility to support will improve. | Joint Sefton NHS Place Director and Executive Director Social Care and Health | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | January 2023 | Integrated Commissioning Plan |
| | | | Communicate the Children's Services commissioned domestic abuse offer to the Social Care Workforce. | Quality assurance will identify a reduced level of drift and delay in relation to domestic abuse. | | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | February 2023 | |
| | 1.3.6 | To improve the support to those families who do not require statutory social care. | Create a working group and Action Plan to implement a Targeted Early Help Service to support those families who do not require statutory Social Care. Launch the Targeted Early Help Service. | There will be resource available to drive forward the required change. The workforce will be aware of Targeted Early Help Service and practice approaches. | Assistant Director Help and Protection | Action complete | May 2022 | Targeted Family Support Service Plan |
| | | | | | | Action complete | September 2022 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| | | | Monitor the impact of the Targeted Early Help Service. | <p>The role of the Lead Professional will be developed.</p> <p>There will be evidence of reduced referrals to the MASH, fewer families entering statutory social work and Children In Need numbers will reduce</p> <p>Feedback from families will demonstrate that the targeted early help support improved their lived experience.</p> | Assistant Director Help and Protection | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| | 1.3.7 | To equip the workforce with a toolkit that ensures that the Transition planning for young people approaching adulthood is robust. | <p>Create a working group and Action Plan to implement the Striving to be Thriving Framework</p> <p>Launch the Striving to be Thriving Framework to Foster Carers and Children's Social Care Managers.</p> <p>Rollout Striving to be Thriving Framework.</p> <p>Introduce a Resettlement Passport.</p> | <p>There will be resources available to deliver the Action Plan.</p> <p>Managers are equipped with and make use of a toolkit.</p> <p>The workforce will be equipped with a toolkit that ensures that the Transition planning for young people approaching adulthood is sufficiently robust.</p> <p>Foster Carers will be aware of the Resettlement Passport and the value that it adds.</p> <p>Young people will be prepared for and have the skills needed to live independently in a tenancy.</p> | <p>Corporate Parenting Officer</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Officer</p> <p>Children's Social Care Managers</p> <p>Assistant Director Cared for Children</p> | <p>Action complete</p> <p>Action complete</p> <p>Action complete</p> <p>Action complete</p> | <p>March 2022</p> <p>March 2022</p> <p>September 2022</p> <p>November 2022</p> | Transitions and Care Experienced Service Plan |



| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|---------------|---|
| | 1.3.8 | To improve the access to care experienced support for those young people who are entitled to receive it. | <p>Undertake a review of Care Experienced Service and develop an action plan for Planning for Leaving Care to ensure processes and practice are robust, safe and in the young person's interests.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the support available for care experienced young people with the wider children's workforce.</p> | <p>Young people will be involved in developing their plan.</p> <p>Every 16-year-old will have a Pathway Plan by the time they are 16 and 3 months. A resettlement passport will be in place to support them to become ready for independent living.</p> <p>Care experienced young people will have the skills and confidence they need to progress to adulthood successfully at a pace that is right for them.</p> <p>Young people will have an increased understanding of the decision-making process.</p> <p>Partners and the wider childrens workforce will be aware of the support available for care experienced young people and be able to signpost young people to support and associated materials.</p> | Assistant Director Cared for Children | Action not yet completed, but on track | April 2023 | Transitions and Care Experienced Service Plan |
| | | | Implement the care experienced young people Offer webpage and co-produce supporting materials with young people. | Care experienced young people will feel safe and supported and know where and who to go to for advice and help. | Assistant Director Cared for Children | Action not yet completed, but on track | October 2022 | |
| | | | Promote the Care Experienced Offer webpage and supporting materials to young people. | Care experienced young people will feel safe and supported and know where and who to go to for advice and help. | Assistant Director Cared for Children | Action not yet completed, but on track | October 2022 | |
| | | | Planning for care experienced young people will be reviewed. A separate Action Plan and working group will be created to address factors such as the role of the PA and the Local Offer. | Care experienced young people will be supported to transition into a positive adult life. | Assistant Director Cared for Children | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | February 2023 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | The Actions We Are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|---|--|---|--|---|----------------|---|
| | 1.3.9 | To ensure that all children are in the most appropriate accommodation and legal status. | Review all section 20's currently open within the system. | Children and their families will be working with the LA in the most appropriate legal framework. | Assistant Director Help and Protection | Action complete | September 2022 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| | | | Review all children and young people currently placed in external accommodation. | Children and young people will be in the most appropriate accommodation. | Assistant Director Cared for Children | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | October 2022 | |
| | | | Review all children and young people currently placed with parents. | The principles that informed the decision to place a child or young person on a care order with their parent will be reviewed and if required appropriate action taken. | | Action complete | October 2022 | |

Priority 2 – Implementation of Learning



Our overall aim for this priority area: Using what we know and learn to continuously improve and enhance the services we deliver for children and families.

How we plan to improve this area of significant weakness - Please note that these actions should be considered with 1.2 above

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | RAG Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--|------------|---|---|--|--|---|----------------|---|
| 2.1 Feedback from families, staff and partners shapes how and what services we deliver, both at an operational and at a Strategic level. | 2.1.1 | There is unambiguous evidence of how feedback from families, staff and partners has influenced and shaped the delivery of operational and strategic services. | Commence the delivery of thematic, practitioner engaged audits. | Audit will be impact focused, calibrated to Ofsted gradings and with a viable percentage moderated. Feedback from families is sought as part of the auditing processes. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action complete | June 2022 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| | | | Engage all managers and staff in auditing across the service with practice improvement team co-ordinating, supporting moderating. | There will be increased evidence that impactful QA is informing practice and improving outcomes for children and families' Staff surveys will identify a positive learning culture. | | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | January 2023 | |
| | | | Ensure that practice and processes actively seek feedback from children and families in relation to new or revised processes or practice approaches and considered in full. | Feedback from families is recorded and evidence of the impact of feedback can be seen in case file audits and at service management team levels. Processes / systems / working practices will be adjusted appropriately in response to feedback from families. Families will receive a response to their feedback. | | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | June 2023 | |
| | | | Review the complaint procedure and processes. | The review will identify recommendations for changes to processes and policy if required. | | Action complete | September 2022 | |
| | | | Consider the recommendations of the review of the complaint procedure and processes and implement required change. | There will be an improvement in the timeliness of response to complaints. There will be evidence that complainant feedback information, compliments and suggestions have influenced service developments and improvements. | | Action not yet completed, but on track | December 2022 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | RAG Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|--|--|---|--|---------------|---|
| | | | Review trends and themes from complaints | There will be evidence that that the Council responds appropriately, effectively and quickly to areas for development. Themes / trends influence service delivery and culture. | Children's Services Leadership Team | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| | | | Undertake a themed audit of Foster Carer Supervision. | We will understand the baseline and identify opportunities for improvement, including training requirements, system developments and performance reporting. | Service Manager Fostering | Action complete | May 2022 | Fostering Service Plan |
| | | | Develop and deliver a series of briefings for Social Workers aimed at improving the quality, frequency, recording and performance reporting of Foster Carer Supervision. | There will be evidence that we learn from good practice as themes and key learning points can be tracked through social work supervision and into frontline practice. | | Action complete | October 2022 | |
| | | | Move to monthly Foster Carer Supervision and monitor quality and performance. | There will be regular review and supervision of Foster Carers. Managers will be assured that the welfare of children is sufficiently safeguarded. Foster Carers will benefit from appropriate training and development. The timeliness of annual Foster Carer Reviews will improve. | | Business As Usual Activity | November 2022 | |
| | | | Schedule engagement activity with staff and establish feedback channels. | Staff will be invited to a series of engagement events and are able to provide feedback via a number of channels. | Principal Social Worker | Action complete | June 2022 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| | | | Undertake baseline staff survey and share outcome with workforce. | Leaders and managers will have a baseline that enables them to consider and inform the priorities for change from a workforce and cultural perspective. Actions are identified to effect change. | Executive Director of Children's Services | Action not yet completed, but on track | October 2022 | |
| | | | Monitor feedback from staff. | Staff surveys will demonstrate that the feel included in shaping change. There will be evidence of how suggestions from operational staff have positively impacted on service development and improvement. | Principal Social Worker | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | RAG Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|---|---|---|---|--------------|---|
| | | | <p>Senior Leadership Team will continue to attend key meetings / briefings with stakeholders to maintain focus and communication about Safeguarding issues, including:</p> <p>Sefton Association for Primary and Secondary Heads</p> <p>Partnership Safeguarding meetings</p> | <p>Stakeholders will receive timely communication / updates regarding safeguarding issues</p> <p>improved shared understanding of safeguarding priorities across services and organisations</p> | Children's Senior Leadership Team | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| | | | <p>Review the participation offer for cared for children and young people.</p> | <p>Cared for Children and Young People will have a place and channels to have their voice heard.</p> | Assistant Director Cared for Children | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | January 2023 | Cared for Children Service Plan |
| | | | <p>Undertake survey to families of children and young people with disabilities.</p> <p>Analyse the feedback received (see 1.3.2)</p> | <p>Children, young people and their families will feel engaged in the development of the service.</p> | Assistant Director of Help & Protection | Action not yet completed, but on track | October 2022 | Children with Disabilities Service Plan |
| | | | <p>Undertake Annual Pledge Survey.</p> <p>Analyse the feedback received.</p> | <p>Children, young people and their families will feel engaged in the development of the service.</p> | Assistant Director Cared for Children | Action not yet completed, but on track | October 2022 | Cared for Children Service Plan |
| | | | <p>Consider feedback from cared for and care experienced young people.</p> | <p>Feedback from families is recorded and evidence of the impact of feedback can be seen in case file audits and at service management team levels.</p> <p>Children, young people and their families will feel engaged in the development of the service.</p> | Assistant Director Cared for Children | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | Cared for Children Service Plan |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are Taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | RAG Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|---|------------|---|---|--|--|---|----------------|---|
| 2.2. Audit frameworks are effective and there is evidence that learning from audit improves practice and influences service delivery. | 2.2.1 | Case file auditing is undertaken regularly by the appropriate managers, recorded correctly and evidence of common theme's identified and actions plans to address deficits are implemented. | Implement learning from external case file auditing (tracking the child's journey) and multi-agency thematic audits to improve the consistency and quality of safeguarding practice Delivery of the Thematic Audit Programme with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ priority service areas ■ vulnerable groups of children ■ specific risk issues | Audits will be completed in line with guidance. Themes from case file audit will influence future thematic audit programmes. Evidence of case file audit and follow up actions will be recorded on ICS case files. Learning from case file audit will improve operational social care safeguarding practice. Case file auditing will address areas for improvement in terms of assessments. Implement a 'case file audit action tracker'. Evidence of impact of audit will be collated at service level, and any outstanding actions can be monitored. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | March 2023 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| | | | Develop Performance dashboards for and report to Children's Leadership team to consider progress and learning from audits on a monthly basis. | Evidence of learning from case file audits is captured consistently and systematically, and actions plans address service deficits in a timely way. The Children's Leadership team will understand its effectiveness and recognise good practice. The Children's Leadership team will use this information to drive improvement where required. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | July 2023 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| | | | Develop and implement an audit framework for Early Help Services. | Learning from audit will improve practice within Early Help Services. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | July 2023 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| 2.3 Research improves practice and influences service delivery. | 2.3.1 | Appropriate staff regularly undertake research, and there is evidence of learning and actions plans to implement changes identified. | Identify resources and research methods. | There will be evidence of where research has influenced service delivery. | All Senior Leadership team | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | September 2023 | All Service Plans |

Priority 3 – Improving tools



Our overall aim for this priority area: Ensuring we have the right tools to enable the workforce to deliver good quality services for children and families.

How we plan to improve this area of significant weakness

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan | |
|---|------------|---|--|--|---|--|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 3.1 IT systems are fit for purpose and user friendly. LCS solutions are considered to support and enable consistent and effective social work practice. | 3.1.1 | To identify where processes and the system need to be changed to improve case management. | Commission a diagnostic of the Front Door. | The report will present the Council with recommendations for consideration. | Executive Director of Children's Services | Action complete | June 2022 | MASH and EDT Service Plan | |
| | | | Progress actions agreed following recommendations identified by diagnostic of the Front Door. | Capacity and supporting processes which will be aligned to other Improvement Plan activity. | | Business as Usual Activity | Ongoing | | |
| | | | Review of information sharing agreement. Review processes and systems in relation to consent sought in MASH, child in need, section 20. | Information will be shared to ensure transparency where appropriate. Practitioners will understand and apply practice standards in a timely manner. To ensure compliance with GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. | Assistant Director Corporate Resources | Action complete | September 2022 | | |
| | | | Commission a diagnostic of the Liquid Logistic system. | Pathways on the LCS system will be clear and understood by all. | | Action complete | August 2022 | | All Service Plans |
| | | | Complete a gap analysis of business processes and policies. Map the child's journey. | The gap analysis will be reviewed and prioritised and appropriate process and policies put in place. There will be comprehensive understanding of the end to end business process within Children's Social Care from a child's perspective. | | Action not yet completed, but on track | December 2022 | | |

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| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|---|------------|---|--|---|--|---|----------------|---|
| | | | Consider the output of the diagnostic of the Liquid Logistic system and plan the implementation of required changes. | The system will support good practice and create more capacity for social workers to spend time with families. | Executive Director of Children's Services | Action not yet completed, but on track | October 2022 | |
| | | | Review current training and support arrangements for LCS. | Practitioners and managers will have an improved understanding of the LCS system and be able to use system efficiencies to help them in their day to day work There will be a range of flexible training and support options available to practitioners that can be accessed around their day to day roles. Procedure and guidance documents will be user friendly. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action complete | September 2022 | People Strategy Action Plan |
| 3.2 Social Care Managers have access to appropriate, live management and performance information in a format that is meaningful and useful for managing resource, shaping service planning and addressing risks and issues in a timely way. | 3.2.1 | To ensure that the Leadership and Management teams have regular Performance Management meetings with accurate and timely data and intelligence available to them. To ensure that Cabinet Members receive accurate and timely performance reports enabling them to monitor improvement and understand current challenges. | Develop and launch a bespoke 'Team performance summary' tool for social care teams, Service Managers and Assistant Directors. Develop and launch a bespoke dashboard for elected members. | There will be a dashboard in place that is tools used to monitor performance and enable leadership and management to measure, monitor, and manage the key activities and processes. . | Executive Director of Children's Services | Action complete | September 2022 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |
| | 3.2.2 | To ensure that senior leaders have clear line of sight on children and young people most at risk. | Develop and embed processes and governance arrangements that track the journey of children and young people. | There will be evidence of strong Transition planning and timely escalation into the Public Law Outline (PLO), as appropriate, which is reviewed and enhanced on a regular basis when circumstances change Times for Public Law Outline length of time on Child Protection Plans will be more appropriate for the needs of children and young people. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | October 2023 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|---|------------|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---|
| 3.3 Social Care workforce has access to current policies. | 3.3.1 | The workforce will have access to trusted procedures that underpin social care practice and Safeguarding Partnership Board responsibilities, promoting the best possible outcomes for children and young people. | The Children's workforce will have access to online procedures. | Surveys will demonstrate that the Social Care workforce values access to online procedures to protect children who are at risk of harm. Safeguarding partners will have access to trusted procedures. | Assistant Director Cared for Children | Action complete | September 2022 | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Plan |



Priority 4 – Improving Strategic Partnerships

Our overall aim for this priority area: Effective partnership working to enable the delivery of a high quality multi-agency response for children and families.

How we plan to improve this area of significant weakness

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|---|------------|--|--|--|---|--|------------|---------------------------------|
| 4.1 The Council and partners are ambitious, aspirational and active Corporate Parents | 4.1.1 | To ensure that elected members, employees and partner agencies will be aspirational and ambitious for cared for children and young people and care experienced young people supporting them to make a success of adult life. | Embed and strengthen the collective responsibility of elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care, educational standards and safeguarding for the children who are cared for. | <p>Elected members, Council employees, and partner agencies will have a shared understanding of their duties as Corporate Parents and are active, strong and committed in this role.</p> <p>There will be evidence of strategic and operational change that focuses on implementing change that will improve outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting ethos will be embedded across the Council and partner agencies.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Board will continually explore and implement opportunities to improve outcomes for cared for children and young people and their carers.</p> <p>Children and young people in care and care experienced young people will be clear about what they can expect to receive from their Corporate Parents.</p> | Assistant Director Cared for Children Lead Member Children's Social Care | Action not yet completed, but on track | April 2023 | Cared for Children Service Plan |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|--|---|---|---|----------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | Review the Virtual School and Virtual School Governing Body. | <p>There will be a network in place to track the progress of and promote the educational attainment of cared for children wherever they are located.</p> <p>The Virtual School and governing body will work with others to raise standards and improve educational outcomes for children and young people.</p> | Executive Director of Children's Services | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | April 2023 | Virtual School Service Plan |
| | | | Improve school admission processes and application procedures for cared for children to prevent unnecessary school moves and ensure that cared for children attend good and outstanding schools. | <p>There will be fewer moves between schools for cared for children.</p> <p>Outcomes and stability will improve for cared for children.</p> | Assistant Director for Education | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| | | | Implement electronic Personal Education Plans (PEP) and associated quality monitoring. | <p>There will be evidence that the quality of Personal Education Plans has improved.</p> <p>New data analysis tools will help to identify specific areas for improvement and high achievement.</p> <p>Attainment data will be captured termly and where progress is not being made Education Co-ordinators will work with schools and other key partners to understand what barriers are hindering progress.</p> <p>Success will be celebrated via certificates and vouchers.</p> | Assistant Director for Education | Action complete | September 2022 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|---|---|----------------------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | Provide ongoing training and support to schools and School Governors to ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEP) are implemented and practice is inclusive. | <p>There will be evidence that Personal Education Plans capture the voice of the child, their attainment, progress and educational needs.</p> <p>There will be evidence that Personal Education Plans demonstrate a robust plan of intervention.</p> <p>There will be evidence that the Virtual School is working with the Inclusion Team to influence school policies.</p> <p>There will be evidence that School Governors understand their role as Corporate Parents.</p> <p>Attendance will improve and fixed term exclusions will reduce.</p> | Assistant Director for Education | Business As Usual Activity | September 2022 onwards | |
| | | | Provide ongoing training and support to Social Work teams to ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEP) are an integral part of the care planning process. | <p>There will be evidence that the Social Care workforce is aspirational and ambitious for cared for children.</p> <p>Social Care workforce will understand the power of education on improving the lived experience and life chances of young people.</p> | Assistant Director for Education | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| | | | Track and monitor education, employment and training for years 11 and 13. Implement required changes to reduce NEET figures and improve outcomes for young people. | There will be fewer young people who are NEET. | Assistant Director for Education | Business As Usual Activity - annual monitoring | Ongoing | |
| | | | Work with education and training providers to ensure that their offer to young people meets their needs and interests and leads to progression. | <p>Fewer young people will drop out of provision and outcomes will improve.</p> <p>Attendance will improve and fixed term exclusions will reduce.</p> | Assistant Director for Education | Business As Usual Activity - quarterly monitoring | Ongoing | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|--|---|---|--|------------|---|
| | | | Promote Council, partner and local business apprenticeships to care experienced young people. | There will be opportunities for cared for young people to become apprenticeship ready and volunteers. Care experienced young people will be aware of and have access to apprenticeship opportunities. | Executive Leadership Team | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| | | | Launch a Caring Business Charter. | Local businesses will sign up to a Caring Business Charter that improve employment and career options and opportunities for care experienced and other vulnerable young people. Care experienced and other vulnerable young people will have access to employment and training opportunities. | Service Manager for Care Experienced Young People | Action complete | July 2022 | |
| | | | Celebrate the achievements of cared for children and young people. | Children and young people will know that their achievements are recognised. | Council and partners | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | Cared for Children Service Plans |
| | | | Monitor the performance of NHSE/I in conjunction with Public Health England, dentistry pathway for referral of cared for children. This will include the Designated Nurse escalating any issues identified. | There will be evidence of dentistry visits in children's records. There will be escalation of delays in provision. Cared for children and young people will have prompt access to dentistry services. | Joint Sefton NHS Place Director and Executive Director Social Care and Health | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | Commissioning |
| | | | Develop the Emotional Health & Wellbeing pathway. Share the new pathway with the Social Care workforce. | There will be evidence of use of the Children & Young people Mental Health and Emotional Well Being needs Assessment in commissioning activity. The Social Care and school workforce will have a good knowledge of the Emotional Health & Wellbeing support offer and pathway. There will be a reduction in drift and delay as cared for children and care experienced young people will have timely access to less urgent support. | Joint Sefton NHS Place Director and Executive Director Social Care and Health | Action not yet completed, but on track | April 2023 | Emotional Health & Wellbeing Partnership. |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--|------------|---|--|---|--|---|--------------|---------------------------|
| | | | Update the Emotional Health and Wellbeing toolkit and share with schools and Social Care workforce, | The Social Care and school workforce will have a toolkit that can support them to sign post children and young people and their families to the support that is needed. | Director of Public Health | Action not yet completed, but on track | October 2022 | |
| 4.2 That the improvements in practice are supported by the Local Safeguarding Partnership. | 4.2.1 | That partner agencies provide active support where required to the achievement of the Improvement Plan. | Review the effectiveness of partnership arrangements. | There will be evidence of effective multiagency contributions to improving outcomes for children and young people. | Sefton Safeguarding Partnership Scrutineer | Action not on track, risk to implementation | January 2023 | Partnership Business Plan |
| | | | Develop an Action Plan an implement the changes identified by the review of the effectiveness of partnership arrangements. | There will be evidence of good communication, information-sharing and the application of thresholds and, where appropriate, ensure that escalation processes are followed. | Assistant Director Safeguarding Review & Quality Assurance | Action not on track, risk to implementation | July 2023 | |
| | 4.2.2 | Partner are aware of private fostering responsibilities. | Raise awareness of responsibilities in relation to private fostering across the partnership. | <p>There will be a written statement, which sets out the duties and functions in relation to private fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out.</p> <p>The wider children's workforce will understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of privately fostered children.</p> <p>The Council will be notified about privately fostered children living in Sefton.</p> <p>Private foster carers and parents of privately fostered children will have access to receive advice and support to assist them to meet the needs of privately fostered children; privately fostered children are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted.</p> <p>The Council will monitor the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering.</p> | Assistant Director Help and Protection. | Action not yet completed, but on track | March 2023 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--|------------|--|--|--|--|---|------------|-------------------------|
| 4.3 Corporate Services, systems and mechanisms contribute directly to enabling good social work practice and the delivery of effective Safeguarding services in Sefton | 4.3.1 | To ensure that the development of partnership Vision 2035 is aspirational for vulnerable children and young people. | Agree the timeline to develop the partnership Vision 2035 and strengthen the Council's Core Purpose. | There will be an agreed timeline to develop Vision 2035 and the Council's Core Purpose will be strengthened. | Cabinet | Action complete | July 2022 | |
| | | | Ensure that the planning and consultation processes associated with the development of the partnership Vision 2035 are aspirational for vulnerable children and young people. | All partners will be aspirational for vulnerable children and young people. The voice of vulnerable children and young people will be strong in the development of Vision 2035. Vision 2035 will be developed so that children and young people grow up in a place where they feel at home, where they feel they belong, and where they and their families can thrive. | Chief Executive | Longer-term action not yet started. No risk to implementation currently anticipated | March 2025 | |
| | 4.3.2 | Finance and performance will actively support Children Services in delivering effective services, and support budget reviewers and holders in managing limited resources effectively and efficiently within the current climate. | Adequate resources and tools will be allocated to support budget holders and budget reviewers in managing budgets and resources. Budget holders/ reviewers will understand their responsibilities, be accountable and be able to manage budgets effectively. Areas of risk / pressure / under spend will be flagged immediately. Forecast Budget outturns linked to key cost drivers will be accurate thus enabling. effective service planning both in year and in support of multi-year budget planning. | Within the service, Budget holders/ reviewers will have access to professional advice and support in the area of financial management. | Executive Director for Corporate Resources and Customer Services | Action not yet completed, but on track | April 2023 | |
| | | The recruitment of staff will be efficient; newly appointed staff will be able to start in post in a timely way. | Children Services managers will work alongside the Recruitment team to continue to develop a robust process for ensuring the recruitment process for new staff runs smoothly without delay. | Recruiting managers will progress local actions and work with the Recruitment team to ensure no unnecessary delay in new employees starting their new roles. | Chief Personnel Officer | Activity progressing, some issues but realistic plans in place to recover | April 2023 | ITrent Development Plan |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--|------------|--|--|--|---|---|------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Legal Services will actively support Children Services in delivering effective safeguarding services | Adequate resources will be allocated to support care proceedings and associated legal advice. | The Children's Services team will have access to professional Legal advice and support. A clear and efficient dialogue will be led by Children's Services to ensure proceedings progress in a timely manner. | Executive Director for Corporate Resources and Customer Services | Actions not yet completed, but on track | Ongoing | |
| | 4.3.3 | Scrutiny arrangements for Children's Services are robust and effective. | Review the frequency of Overview and Scrutiny of Children's Services and Safeguarding. | Overview and Scrutiny of Children's Services and Safeguarding will be scheduled to meet on a regular basis to review progress. | Executive Director of Children's Services | Action complete | July 2022 | |
| | | | Identify and deliver additional training for members of Overview and Scrutiny committees. | Scrutiny arrangements for Children's Services are robust and effective. | Chief Executive | Actions not yet completed, but on track | April 2023 | |
| | | | Improve Opposition party involvement in Children's Social Care. | The two Leaders of the main Opposition parties will attend the Corporate Parenting Board. | Executive Director of Children's Services | Business as Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| Commissioned services provide sufficient care and support to meet the needs of children and young people and enable continuous improvement in order to increase the positive outcomes achieved | 4.4.1 | Partnerships between, Children's Services, Health, Public Health, Education, Housing and commissioners are strengthened, roles and contributions from partners are clearly understood and outcomes for children and young people are achieved. The Social Care and Early Help workforce can access the right quality and type of service to meet the needs of the children and young people they support. | Establish a Strategic Commissioning Plan and Executive Commissioning group with wide representation from all partners including housing, health providers, Cheshire and Merseyside NHS Integrated Care Board, Public Health. | The will be a clear plan with clear lines of accountability and timescales for the Executive Integrated Commissioning Group to monitor progress. All activity and reporting has clear oversight of the Executive Sponsor (Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education). | Joint Sefton NHS Place Director and Executive Director Social Care and Health | Action complete | July 2022 | Integrated Commissioning Plan |
| | | | Integrate the Strategic Commissioning function between the NHS and Council. | | | Action not yet completed, but on track | April 2023 | |
| | | | Rewrite and publish the Sufficiency Strategy. | Local providers can easily identify areas where they can contribute to delivery and meet the wide-ranging needs of cared for children and young people. | Action Complete | July 2022 | | |

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| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|--|--|--------------------------|--|----------------|----------------------|
| | | | Develop and agree the Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan. | The will be a clear plan with clear lines of accountability sand timescales for the Executive Integrated Commissioning Group to monitor progress. | | Action complete | September 2022 | |
| | | | Improve market engagement and management. | There will be provider forums where commissioners meet with providers to share strategic plans and priorities. There will be co-designed service specifications co-produced with children and young people in our care. Local providers will be working with the Children's workforce to improve outcomes for children and young people. | | Business As Usual Activity | Ongoing | |
| | | | Recommission the Sefton Placements Framework. | There will be a Pseudo dynamic purchasing framework in place based on the child's journey. There is a high quality local offer able to meet the needs of Children and Young People that works seamlessly with wrap around services. Provision will be suitable, fully assessed and there will be sufficient placements to meet the assessed needs of cared for children and care experienced young people. | | Action not yet completed, but on track | January 2023 | |
| | | | Implement the Voice of the Child Strategy to ensure meaningful co production of new service specifications. | Children and young people are integral partners in the redesign and recommissioning of services Service specifications reflect the voice of the child. | | Action complete | September 2022 | |
| | | | Establish a Youth Inspectors team to work with commissioners to identify service improvements that will in turn improve standards of care. | A Team manager will co-ordinate a team of young people with care experience to review and monitor services alongside commissioners Place young people at the heart of inspecting and quality assuring services The views and experiences of care experienced young people will inform commissioning activity. | | Action not yet completed, but on track | January 2023 | |

| The Outcomes We Are Aiming For | Action Ref | Objective | Actions we are taking | How we will know it has worked | Responsible Lead Officer | Rag Rating | Milestones | Detailed Action Plan |
|--|------------|---|--|--|---|--|--------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | Launch e-learning for Technology Enabled Care. | Social Workers and Early Help workers know what TECS options are available and when best to prescribe them for the children and young people they are working with. Children, young people and their families benefit from Technology Enabled Care. | | Action not yet completed, but on track | October 2022 | |
| | 4.4.2 | To establish the options available for consideration with regards to the in house children's homes. | Explore the options for delivering in house provision. | A report will be produced that identifies the options available for consideration. | Executive Director of Children's Services | Action not yet completed, but on track | March 2023 | Cared for Children Service Plan |
| 4.5 Schools and Settings provide the care and support to meet the needs of children and young people and improve life chances. | 4.5.1 | To ensure that children and young people have a sense of belonging in schools and other settings. | Develop a Belonging Strategy and Action Plan for schools and settings. | There will be an agreed strategy and action plan that aims to ensure that children and young people have a sense of being somewhere where they can be confident that that they will fit in and feel safe in their identity. | Assistant Director of Education | Action not yet completed, but on track | June 2023 | Inclusion Service Plan |

Appendix A:

Sefton's Improvement Notice

| Ofsted Improvement Measures | Objective & Actions that seek to address measure: |
|---|---|
| Caseloads and management oversight so that children receive a timely, consistent service to meet their needs, including outside of normal office hours | 1.1.1, 3.2.1 |
| The quality of assessments, plans and planning, including transition planning and timely escalation into the public law outline (PLO), which is reviewed and enhanced on a regular basis when circumstances change. | 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 3.2.2 |
| Visits to children are responsive to need and risk, and that are purposeful, including life story work. | 1.2.1, 1.2.2 |
| The response to vulnerable children including for children at risk of exploitation, those who go missing from home and care, disabled children, children living in private fostering arrangements, and homeless 16 to 17-year-olds. | 1.2.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.3.4, 1.3.5, 1.3.6, 1.3.9, 2.1.1, 2.2.1 |
| The response to allegations against professionals | 1.3.1 |
| The educational attainment and attendance of children in care, and the education, employment and training of care leavers. | 1.1.1, 4.1.1 |
| The performance and quality assurance arrangements to support practice improvements, including managers, conference chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) oversight and challenge | 1.2.1, 1.2.1, 3.2.1 |
| The access to care leaving support for those young people who are entitled to receive it. | 1.3.8 |
| Systems and resources to provide a safe, coherent and integrated service which makes children safer and improves children's outcomes. | 3.1.1 |
| The practice relating to securing parental consent prior to information sharing in multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) | 1.2.1 |
| The provision of suitable, fully assessed and sufficient placements to meet the assessed needs of children in care and care leavers. | 4.4 |
| The urgency and robustness of the child protection response, including strategy meetings and child protection conferences | 1.1.1, 1.1.2 |
| The embedding of corporate responsibility across the council and partners to safeguard children and meet the needs of children in care and care leavers. | 4.1 |
| The timely access to emotional and mental health support and dentistry for children and young people | 4.1 |

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Appendix B:

Children's Services Focused Visit March 2021

| Ofsted Improvement Measures | Objective & Actions that seek to address measure: |
|--|---|
| Timely application of the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline where risks for children are not reducing through child protection planning. | 1.2.1 |
| The effectiveness of case supervision and the monitoring of children who are subject to child protection planning, including those children in the preproceedings process, to prevent drift and delay. | 1.1.2, 1.2.1 |
| What needs to improve in this area of social work practice | |
| The quality assurance arrangements and senior management oversight of social work practice. | 1.2.1 |
| The strategic and operational focus on achieving change and reducing risk for vulnerable children, including disabled children and care leavers. | 2.1, 2.2, 3.2. 4.1, |
| Capacity in social work teams and the number of children on social workers' caseloads. | 1.1.1 |

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Appendix C:

Joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency response to children's mental health in Sefton September 2019

| Ofsted Improvement Measures | Objective & Actions that seek to address measure: |
|---|---|
| The mental health needs of children in the borough are fully understood and addressed, with a particular focus on avoiding drift and delay and more effective service commissioning | 4.1, 4.4.1 |
| There is improvement in communication, information-sharing and the application of thresholds and, where appropriate, ensure that escalation processes are followed | 4.2.1 |
| Child protection procedures are followed to protect children who are at risk of harm | 2.2 |

Agenda Item 5

Agenda Item 6

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) | Date of Meeting: | Monday 7 November 2022 |
| Subject: | Performance Dashboard | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education | Wards Affected: | All |
| Portfolio: | Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

The report provides an overview of the September performance dashboard.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) Members are asked to consider the performance dashboard.
- (2) Note the intention to share education data at the next meeting.
- (3) Consider the cycle of performance reporting with a recommendation of rotation of Children's Social Care, Education and Health performance.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

For Members of the Committee to consider the performance data that relates to CSC.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

None.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no direct revenue costs associated with the recommendations in this report.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no direct capital costs associated with the recommendations in this report.

Agenda Item 6

Implications of the Proposals:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None | |
| Legal Implications: None | |
| Equality Implications: There are no equality implications | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | No |
| Have a neutral impact | Yes |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

| |
|---|
| Protect the most vulnerable: The performance dashboard gives an overview of Children's Social Care performance in the context of our improvement journey. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Children's Services work with partners to support families in need of support and improve resilience. |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: Children's Services work with partners to support families in need of support and improve resilience. |
| Place – leadership and influencer: The Council will take a lead role in work with partners to deliver change in Children's Services. |
| Drivers of change and reform: The Council will work with partners to deliver change in Children's Services. |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A |
| Greater income for social investment: N/A |
| Cleaner Greener N/A |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD. 6994) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD. 5194) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

N/A

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Contact Officer: | Martin Birch |
| Telephone Number: | |
| Email Address: | martin.birch@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

Performance Dashboard

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The performance dashboard presents a monthly snapshot of performance data across Children's Social Care.
- 1.2 The format of the performance dashboard has recently been developed and is a key aspect of Children's Services improvement plan.
- 1.3 The dashboard provides an overview of key aspects of the Child's journey and is broken down into the following categories:
 - Contacts and referrals- this gives an indication of the volume and numbers of contacts made into the service (MASH- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and those which progress onto a Child and Families assessment.
 - Children subject to Child In Need Plans- includes those children who have started and ended their Child In Need plan
 - Children Subject to Child Protection Plans- includes those children who have become subject to a Child Protection plan, those who have ended a plan and had a previous plan.
 - Children who become cared for- Includes data on the numbers of children who have come into care and children who are care experienced.
 - Workforce- provides an overview of our workforce data including vacancies and agency placements.
- 1.4 An overview of Septembers data is found in the appendices. The following narrative provides an overview for the 4 categories:

Contacts and referrals: contacts have increased in September which aligns to schools opening back up. This has resulted in more contacts being progressed to a Child and Family assessment. Repeat referrals are reducing slightly but will

Agenda Item 6

need to be monitored for trends in the next coming months. The creation of TFS and the level of need change is anticipated to show an improvement in this trend in the coming 12 months.

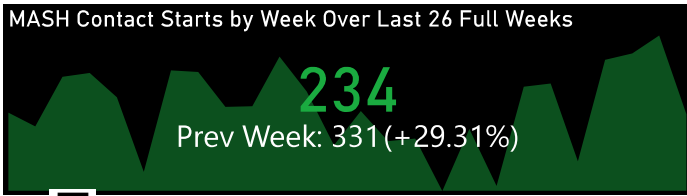
Child In Need: There has been a steady decrease of Child In Need plans over the last 3 months. This is due to the number of children who start on a Child In Need plan remaining fairly static and the numbers of children where plans have ended, have increased.

Child Protection (CP): Child Protection numbers have continued to decrease, this is due to a number of children's CP plan ending and fewer children being made subject to a CP plan. Percentage of ICPCs (Initial Child Protection Conferences) remain at 100%. Percentage of CP plan for a second or subsequent time (within 24 months) has steadily decreased in the last 3 months.

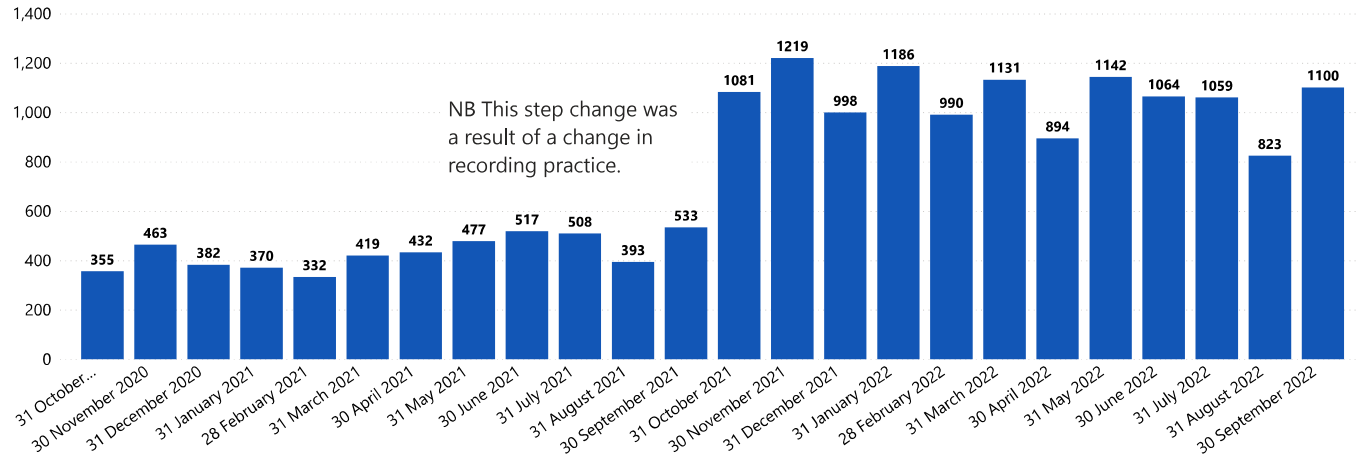
Cared for Children: There has been a steady decline of children who have become cared for in the last 4 months, this is due to the number of children who have ended care compared to the number of children who have become cared for. Children who are NEET (not in education or employment) has increased last month and remained stable in September.

Workforce: narrative provided within the performance report.

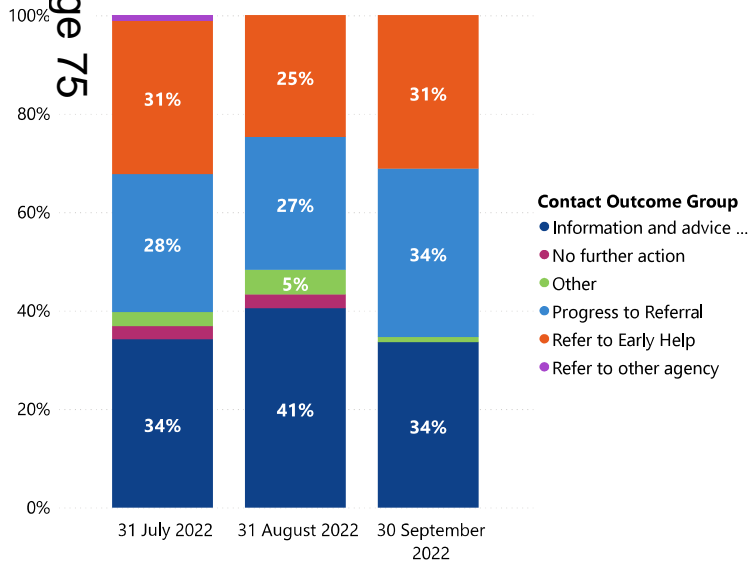
Contacts



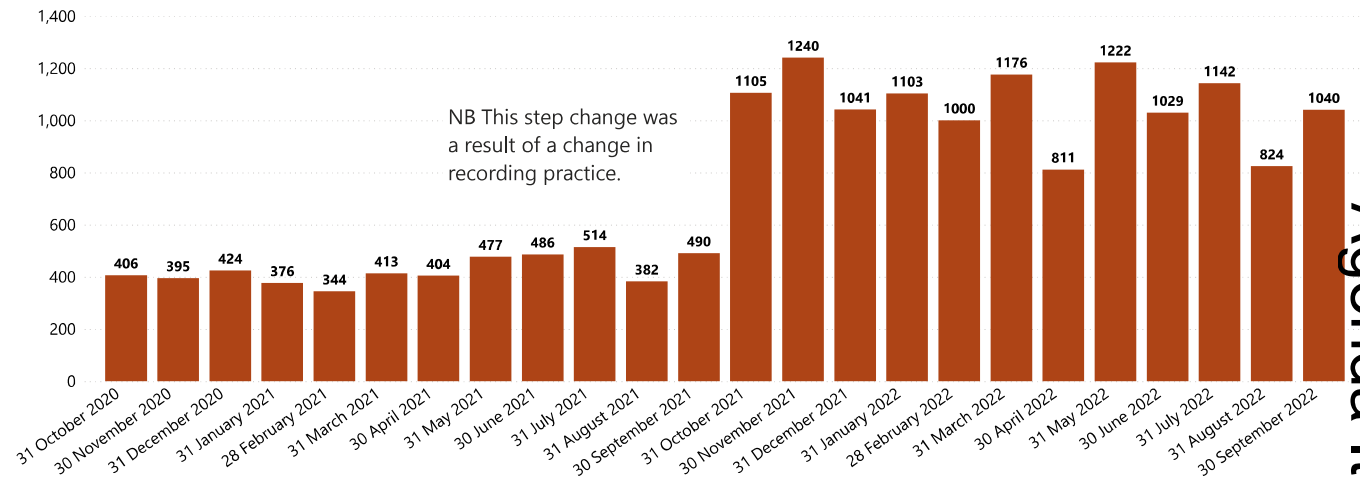
Contact Starts Monthly



Contact Outcomes - Percentage (Previous 3 Full Months)



Contact Ends Monthly

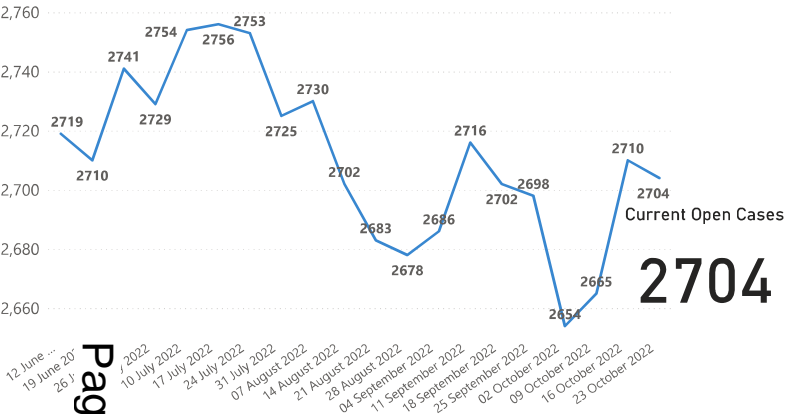


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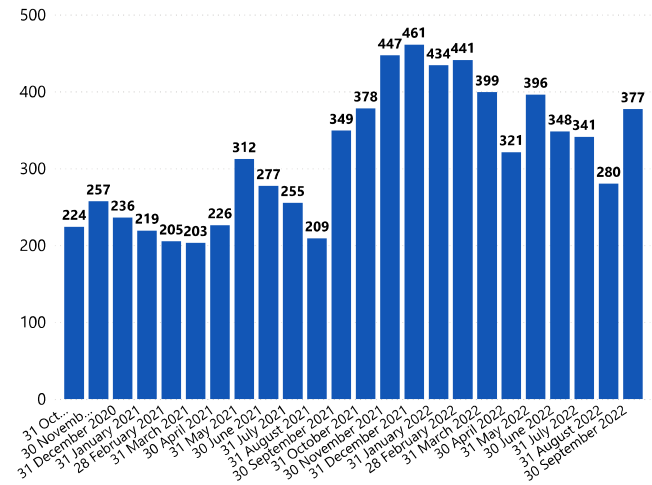
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Referrals

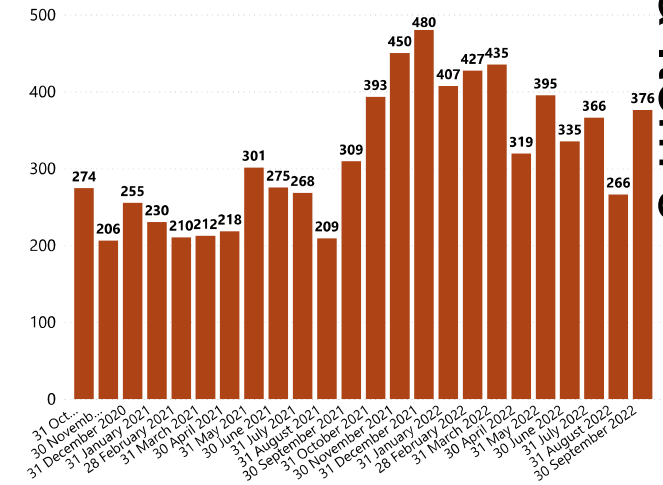
Open Cases at Week End (Core CSC Teams)



Referral Starts Monthly

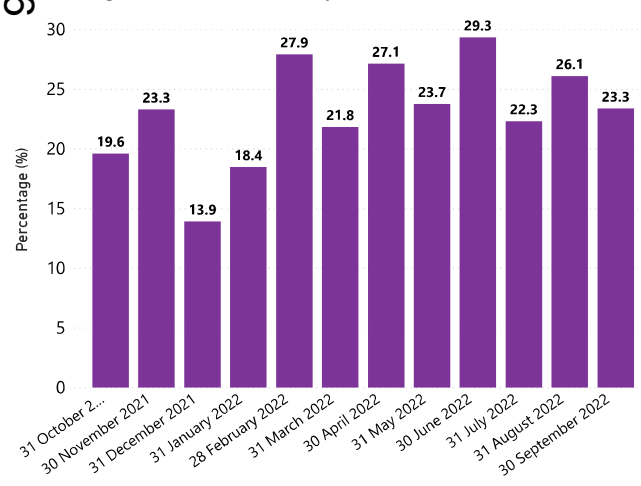


Referral Ends Monthly

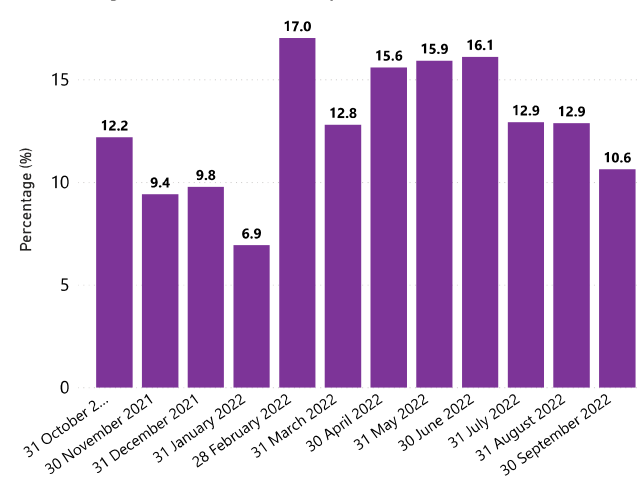


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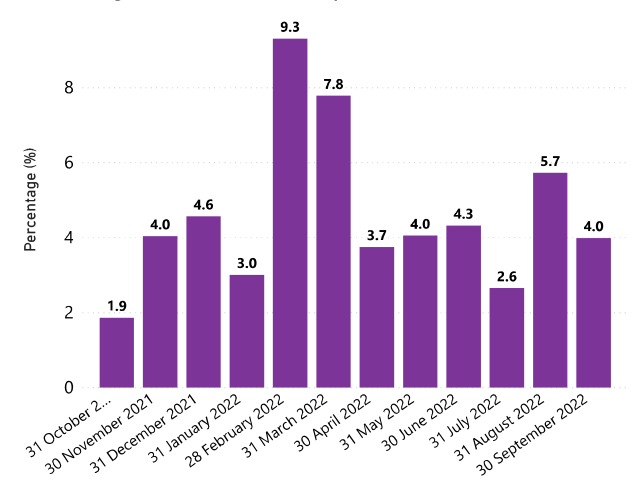
Percentage of Cases with a Repeat Referral Last 12 Months



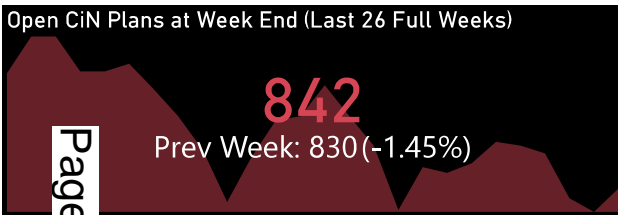
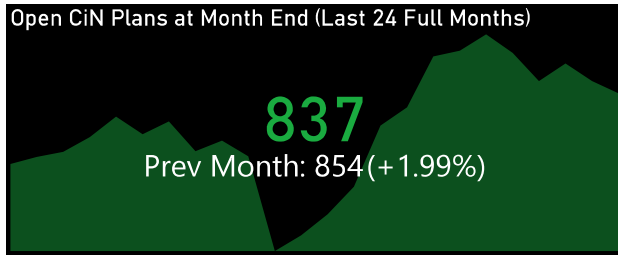
Percentage of Cases with a Repeat Referral Last 6 Months



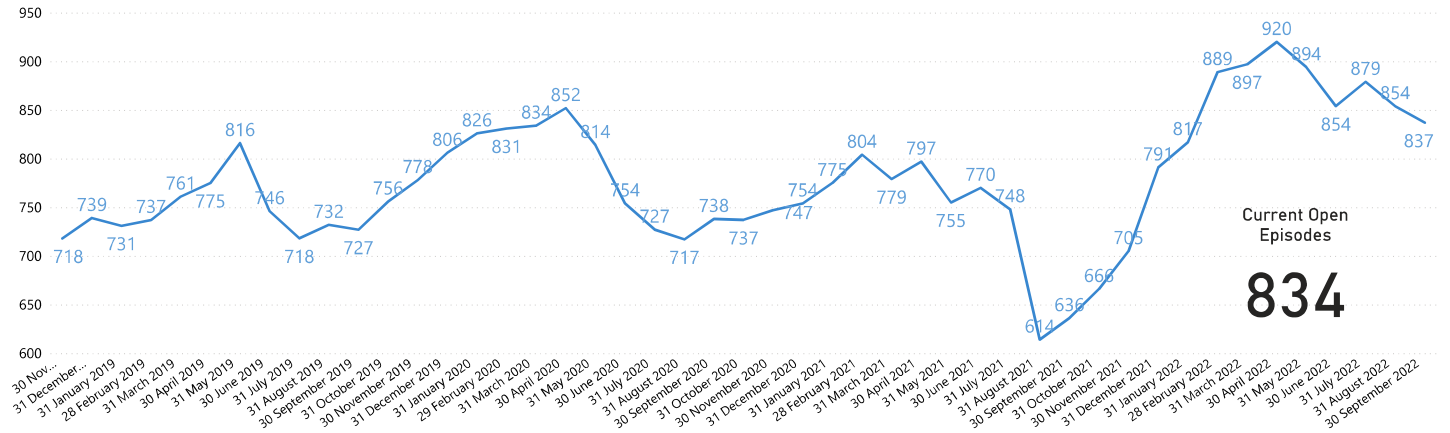
Percentage of Cases with a Repeat Referral Last 3 Months



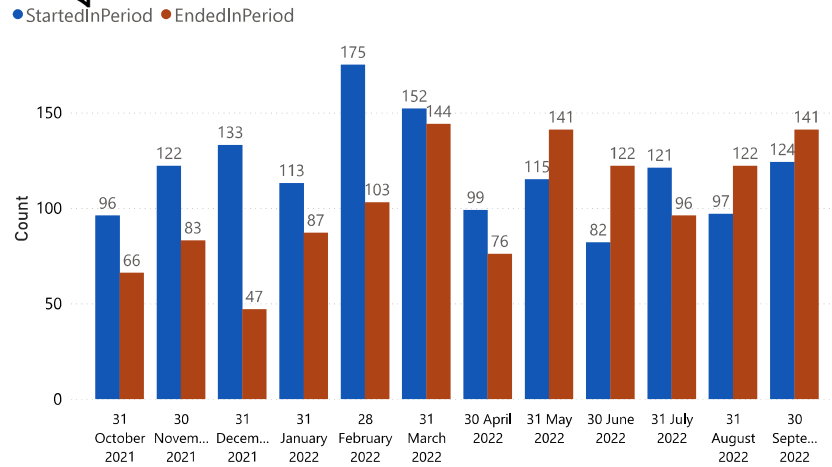
Child In Need (CiN) Plans



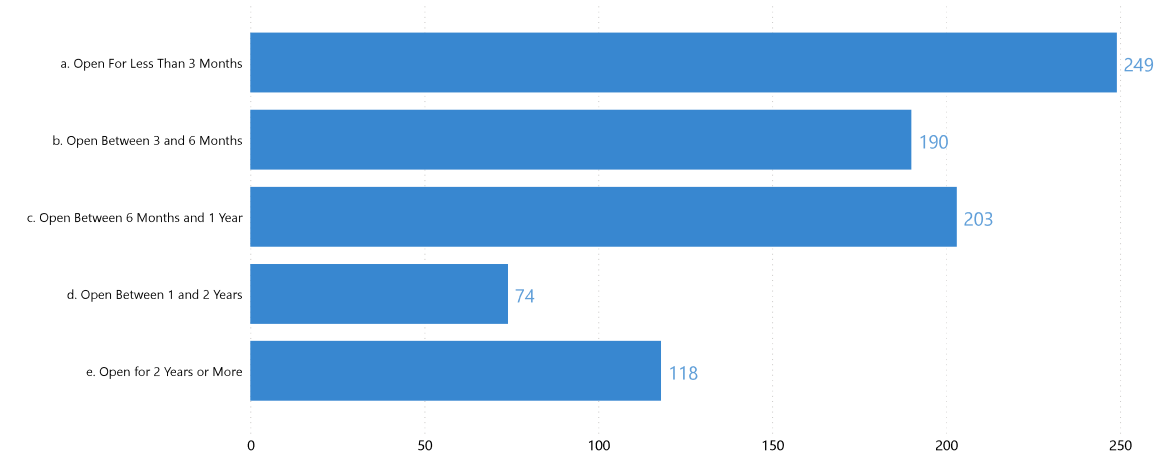
Open CiN Episodes by Month Over Last 4 Years



CiN (Episode) Starts & Ends in Month

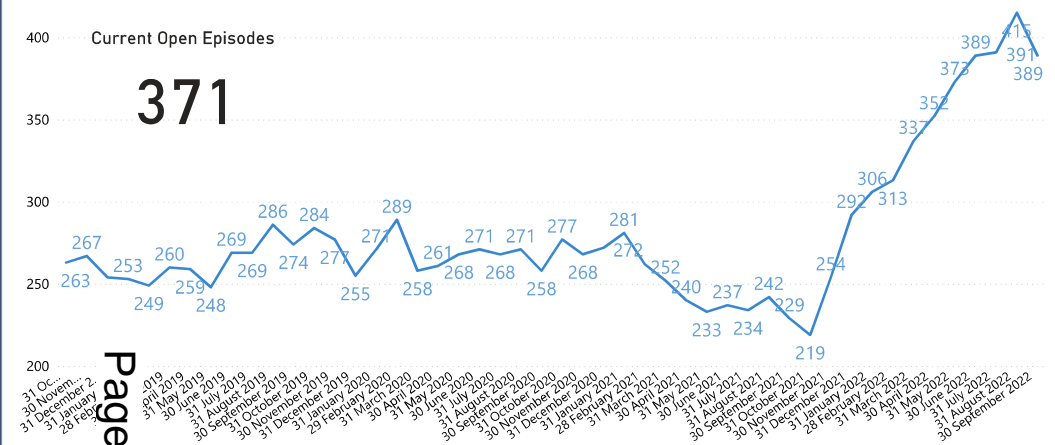


Length of Time CiN Episodes are Currently Open for

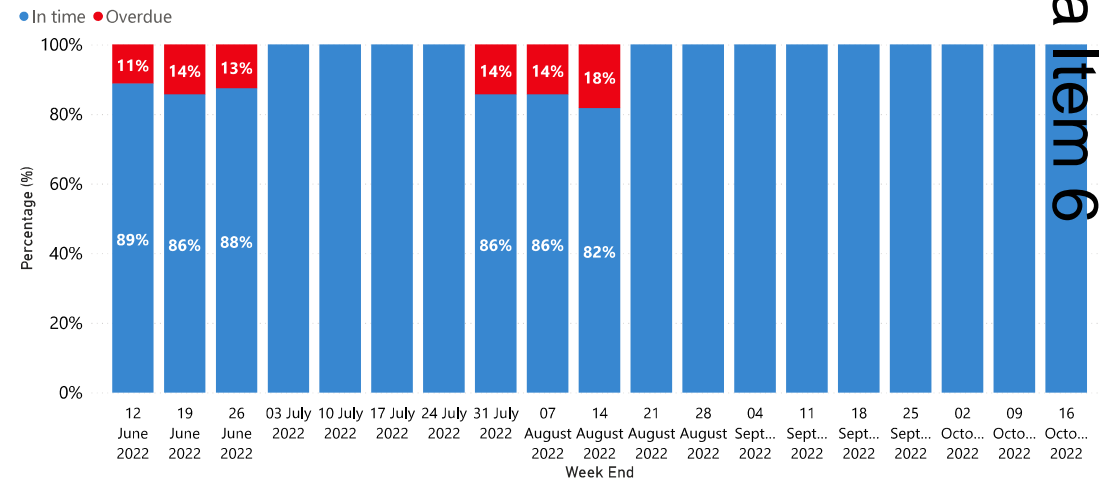


Child Protection (CP) Episodes - Trends

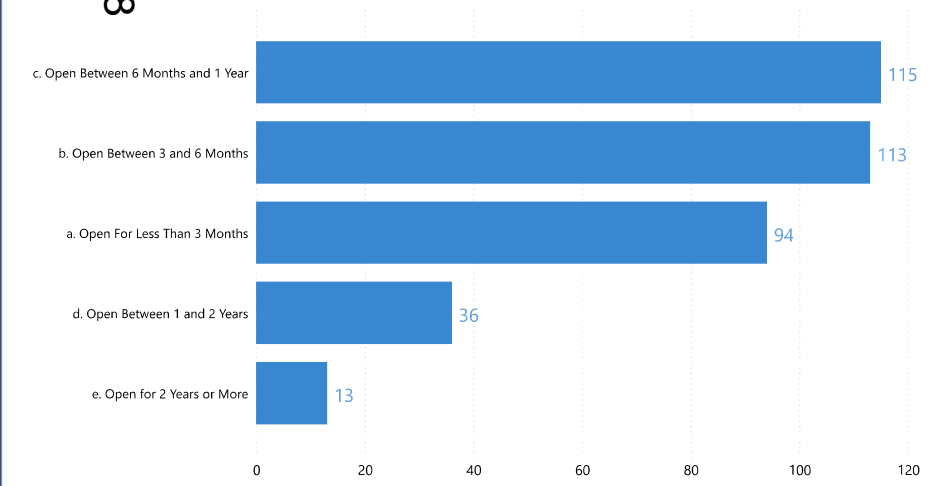
Open CP Episodes by Month Over Last 4 Years



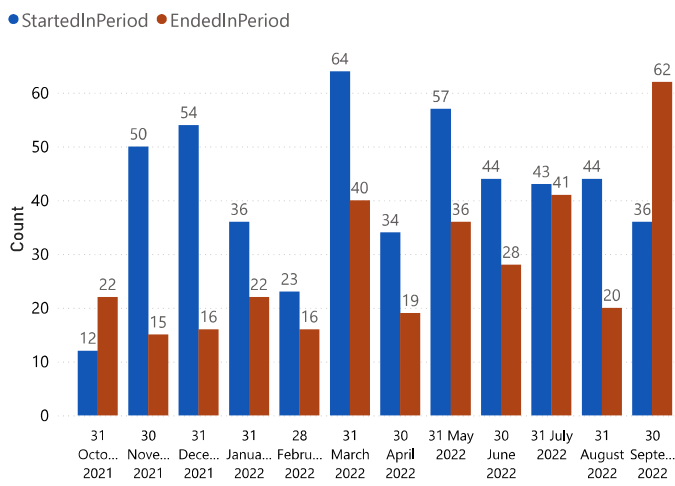
Percentage of ICPCs in Timescale by Week End



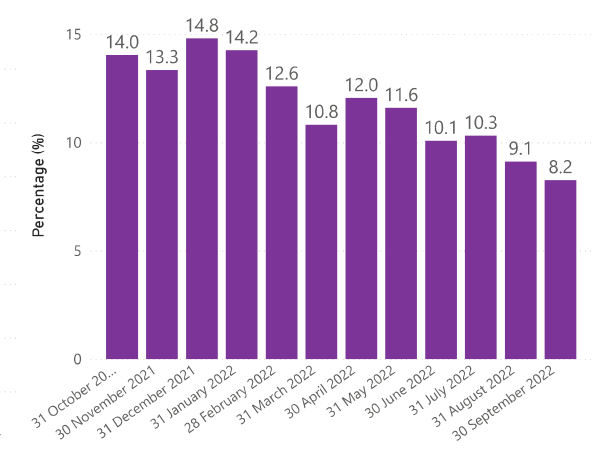
Open CP Episodes by Month Over Last 4 Years



CP Plan (Episode) Starts & Ends in Month

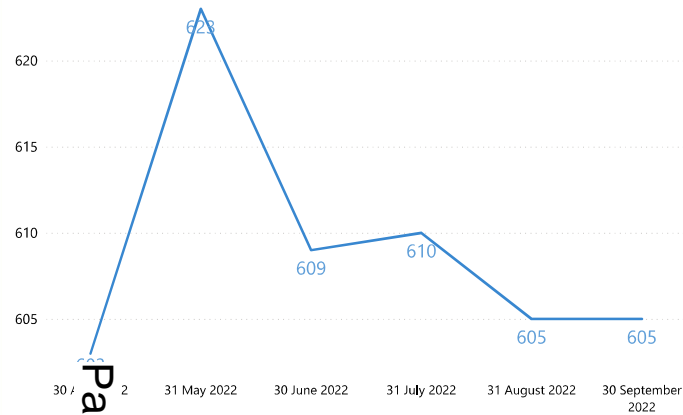


Percentage of Plans Starting in Previous 12 Months with a Previous Plan within 24 Months At Start



Cared for Children (CfC) - Trends

Open CfC Episodes by Month End



Current Open Episodes

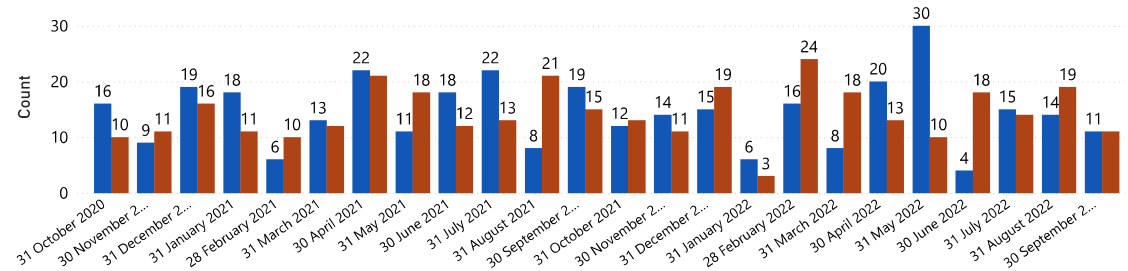
607

CfC number rates per 10,000

112.20

CfC Episode Starts & Ends in Month

StartedInMonth EndedInMonth



Care Experienced

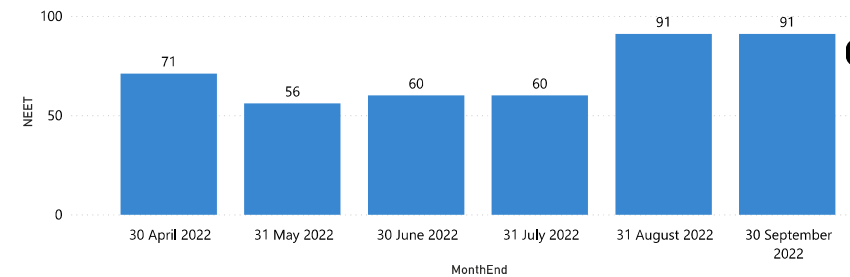
Current Activity Status

| Category | Count | Percent |
|---|------------|---------------|
| In Education, Employment, or Training (EET) | 87 | 46.8% |
| NEET - Illness or Disability | 20 | 10.8% |
| NEET - Other | 60 | 32.3% |
| NEET - Pregnancy/Parenting | 14 | 7.5% |
| Not Recorded | 5 | 2.7% |
| Total | 186 | 100.0% |

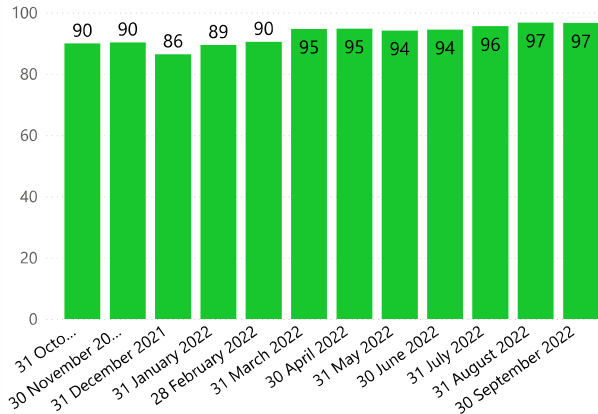
Current In Touch Status

| Category | Count | Percent |
|---------------------|------------|---------------|
| Within Last 91 Days | 130 | 69.9% |
| Over 91 Days Ago | 53 | 28.5% |
| No In Touch Date | 3 | 1.6% |
| Total | 186 | 100.0% |

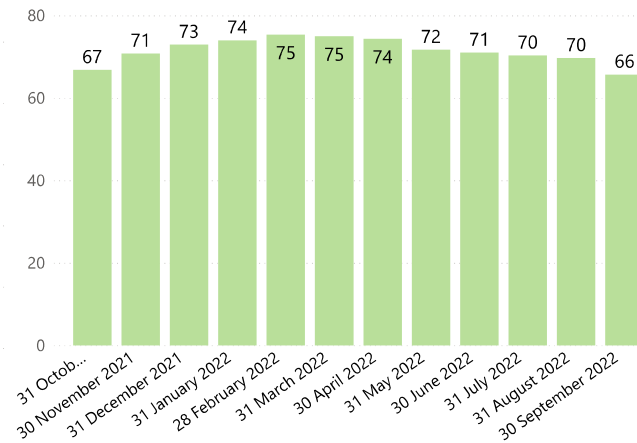
NEET Cases Last 6 Months



Meeting the Statutory Requirements for Health Assessments All Ages (% CfC +12m)



Meeting the Statutory Requirement for Dental Checks (%)



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| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) | Date of Meeting: | Monday 7 November 2022 |
| Subject: | Summer 2022 Data | | |
| Report of: | Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education) | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Cabinet Member - Education | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) on summer 2022 test and examination data.

Recommendation(s):

That the report be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To appraise the Committee of developments.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Not applicable.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Not applicable.

(B) Capital Costs

Not applicable.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

None

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| | |
|---|-----|
| Legal Implications: None | |
| Equality Implications: There are no equality implications. | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | No |
| Have a neutral impact | Yes |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

| |
|---|
| Protect the most vulnerable: Not applicable. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Not applicable. |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: Not applicable. |
| Place – leadership and influencer: Not applicable. |
| Drivers of change and reform: Not applicable. |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable. |
| Greater income for social investment: Not applicable. |
| Cleaner Greener: Not applicable. |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD. 6995) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD. 5195) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Contact Officer: | Tricia Davies/Jacqui Patterson |
| Telephone Number: | 07813544809 |
| Email Address: | tricia.davies@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In summer 2022 testing in primary schools i.e. phonics, KS1 SATS, mental maths test and KS2 SATs resumed.
- 1.2 It is worth noting that the tests the children sat at the end of year 6 where those that should have been administered in summer 2019 when children had had a full 7 years of education.
- 1.3 Primary results will not be published this year but will provide an overview of the impact on pupils of the pandemic.
- 1.4 The primary data will not be finalised until the end of October 2022
- 1.5 The exams at GCSE and A Level resumed in summer 2022 with some modifications e.g. Exam boards provided advance information about the focus of the content of the exams for all GCSE, AS and A level subjects except GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography.
- 1.6 Although the data for GCSE and A Levels will be published it is difficult to compare with the last three years. In 2019 young people had not had a disrupted education; in 2020 the results were determined by computer generated assessments and in 2021 they were teacher assessed.
- 1.7 The GCSE data will be published at the end of October 2022 and the A level results in February 2023

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2. Current Position and Next Steps

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 27 September 2022, requested a report on exam results and performance this year of secondary schools, in order for the Committee to ascertain whether there is a need to re-establish the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group and this report sets out a summary of the position to date and further data will be presented to the Committee as and when it is published and becomes available.

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| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) | Date of Meeting: | Monday 7 November 2022 |
| Subject: | Children's Services Commissioner | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

To outline the role of the Children's Services Commissioner for Sefton and the final report.

Recommendation(s):

To note and comment upon the content of the report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Not applicable

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Not applicable at this current time and further budget consideration will be considered in the budget setting process in 2023 for 2023/24.

(B) Capital Costs

Not applicable

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

Not applicable

Legal Implications:

Non identified as the Commissioner has not recommended any material change to the way services are delivered.

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| | |
|---|-----|
| Equality Implications: | |
| There are no equality implications. | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: | |
| The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | Yes |
| Have a neutral impact | N/A |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

| |
|---|
| Protect the most vulnerable: The Improvement Programme seeks to deliver change across Children's Services whose activity protects and supports those children and young people who have complex care needs. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Children's Services work with partners to support families in need of support and improve resilience. |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: Activity within the Improvement Programme considers the Children's Commissioned activity. |
| Place – leadership and influencer: The Council will take a lead role in work with partners to deliver change in Children's Services. |
| Drivers of change and reform: The Council will work with partners to deliver change in Children's Services. |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A |
| Greater income for social investment: N/A |
| Cleaner Greener: N/A |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD. 6993) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD. 5193) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Contact Officer: | Martin Birch |
| Telephone Number: | |
| Email Address: | martin.birch@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

The Commissioner's report is attached

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Department for Education appointed the Commissioner on 22 May 2022, the Commissioner undertook a review of Children's Service from June 2022 to September 2022.
- 1.2 Sefton has been found to be 'inadequate' across all of the key judgements in the ILACS inspection conducted in February 2022 by Ofsted and in the formal report published in March 2022.
- 1.3 There is a presumption in cases of persistent or systemic failure that children's social care services will be removed from local authority control in order to bring about sustainable improvement, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. In line with the recommendations set out in the Ofsted report of children's social care, published 9 May 2022, the Children's Services Commissioner for Sefton is expected to take the following steps:
 - To issue any necessary instructions to the Council for the purpose of securing immediate improvement in the Council's delivery of children's social care; to identify ongoing improvement requirements; and to recommend any additional support required to deliver those improvements.
 - To bring together evidence to assess the Council's capacity and capability to improve itself, in a reasonable timeframe, and recommend whether or not this evidence is sufficiently strong to suggest that long-term sustainable improvement to children's social care can be achieved should operational service control continue to remain with the Council.
 - To advise on relevant alternative delivery and governance arrangements for children's social care, outside of the operational control of the Council, taking account of local circumstances and the views of the Council and key partners.
 - To report to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State by the end of September 2022.

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- 1.4 The Commissioner has concluded that the Council should retain its services and will not be required to form a separate Trust, or for another Local Authority to take over its services and have its services removed. There are compelling reasons for this including the new senior leadership team and it would be a distraction from the core work now been undertaken in delivering the improvement plan. The Council and its partners however recognise that there is still much to do. A summary of the commissioner's report is highlighted below, pulling out the salient points for further discussion.
- 1.5 The Council was of the view that the OFSTED Inspection would be widely and extensively critical and this was evidenced by the significant requests for funding to Full Council and Cabinet during 2021, by the OFSTED pandemic visit in March 2021, and reinforced by the introduction of a DfE Advisor.
- 1.6 The Council welcomes the recommendations and it is noted that many of the issues raised were also identified by OFSTED when they visited a few months earlier.

Key Issues:

- 2.1 The Council has responded swiftly to the outcome of the 2022 inspection, creating additional leadership capacity. Additional capacity has been created at Assistant Director and Service Manager level and the new post holders are also talented and experienced as individuals.
- 2.2 Senior leaders have a core foundation task to develop and implement a coherent improvement plan, a performance and quality framework and operational strategies built from a clearly articulated vision which are visibly defined in team plans and individual appraisal, creating the 'golden thread' of everyone having a key role in improvement. These are very significant foundations of improvement which need to be relentlessly driven, and further pace to the implementation will need to occur over the next 6 to 9 months.
- 2.3 Although the Council is experiencing recruitment difficulties in some areas, some very good staff have remained, and they are highly committed and keen to make the improvements.
- 2.4 Staff report a more positive experience of organisational culture since the new senior team have been in place, citing more visibility of leaders and a culture of openness. This is a key foundation for onward improvement. Nevertheless, recruitment remains a major challenge, with over reliance on agency staff and 'managed service' teams. However, a clear workforce strategy is now agreed and further improvements to the terms and conditions of staff are currently being considered. Sefton is not alone in this situation, with many Councils throughout England reporting challenges with recruitment and retention and neighbouring Councils experiencing similar problems.
- 2.5 Not all the workforce have yet been sufficiently skilled and developed, and they are now dealing with very complex legacy cases and this was also raised by OFSTED and the improvement plan addresses the mechanisms to address these matters.

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- 2.6 The work being supported by Leeds City Council on the Family Values approach is very positive, giving a good value-driven basis upon which good relational practice can thrive. However, this is a framework and not a practice model, and current work shows elements of various previous models still apparent in casework. Following the funding received from the DfE staff training sessions have been extensive and are addressing these concerns.
- 2.7 It is acknowledged that many assessments are still descriptive and lack critical thinking and analysis, and many of the children's plans require improvement, and this was clearly evidenced by OFSTED. However, plans are in place to improve and monitor this and some evidence is emerging of improvements, but as stated this will take time to improve.
- 2.8 There is a variation in practice around safeguarding strategy discussions, where police and other partners attend these are much better quality, but police are often not in attendance, and some strategy meetings are just the social worker and team manager. There is a need for additional learning across the workforce in understanding the guidance. Leaders and partner agencies are aware of these deficits, and work is now underway at pace to address these. As stated by the Commissioner good work has taken place around revising practice standards, and leaders recognise that previous work.
- 2.9 The SEND service has recently experienced a further decline in performance, with significant challenges in respect of staffing and the increase in the number requests for EHCP's. Plans are in place to address the performance issues and additional capacity has been secured to strategically oversee the work of the Local Area Partnership and to improve the operation of the SEND Service.
- 2.10 There are areas of work beyond quality of practice which need significant additional and specialist capacity in order to drive the pace and quality of sustainable improvement. These include quality assurance, performance management, project management, business support and commissioning and resources have been secured to make these improvements.
- 2.11 The Council has commissioned an external review of the LiquidLogic system, to improve performance management systems and dashboards and the actions arising from this are being driven at pace.
- 2.12 The quality assurance arrangements have been underdeveloped and plans are in place to improve this position, which are articulated in the improvement plan.
- 2.13 OFSTED also highlighted the improvements that were required regarding supervision and management oversight and the department has taken steps to address these and senior Leaders have a much better grip on the key issues and actions have now been taken to address these areas and are highlighted in the improvement plan.
- 2.14 The Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review in May 2022 recognised the need for further work on good governance for members and made recommendations regarding the need for greater scrutiny of plans at a Corporate and administration level and the Council has strengthened its Overview and

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Scrutiny functions by meeting on a new six weekly cycle, strengthened its Corporate Parenting Board; and plans will be further developed for training in 2023. In addition, the Cabinet Member responsible for children social care has undertaken 'training' and provided with peer support. The Cabinet Member is also a very visible Politician.

- 2.15 Regarding the Safeguarding Partnership, the department is taking steps to improve these areas.
- 2.16 There has been some fragmentation of services across the Council, and good work has taken place to realign youth offending and targeted services into the single Children's Services Directorate, and the Committee are aware that the early help service will transfer into the department in the near future and this will improve progress in achieving streamlined integrated services which actively prevent the need for high-cost, low impact services.
- 2.17 The Improvement Board is chaired by an experienced effective former DCS, and revised terms of reference and governance have been agreed to refine it to a manageable level with tight targets and criteria to monitor and refocus on accountability across the partnership for delivery and impact.
- 2.18 The Improvement Plan is a work in progress, and intensive work is currently being undertaken to refine it and the Committee are aware that OFSTED have signed off the improvement plan.
- 2.19 The Council is very open to support from other authorities and agencies, embracing Peer Review, formal support from Leeds City Council and other elements of support and advice from the sector. The Council will review the improvement support being offered and streamline this to a single suitably qualified and resourced Sector Led Improvement Partner or improvement partner arrangement with a strong Local Authority or Trust alongside the Leeds input and the Council will confirm how it intends to do this.
- 2.20 Since 2016/17 the Children's Services budget for Social Care has increased in value from £32.5m to £52.069m in 2022/23. This reflects investment in the budget for commissioned accommodation and investment in staffing resources to support the service, further additional and recurrent resource beyond the original investment to secure sustainable improvement will be considered by Council as it sets its budget in 2023/24.
- 2.21 The Council in addition to this Academy is now actively progressing the evaluation of options for the provision of its own Children's Care homes within the borough and as part of the financial evaluation will also be developing bids for DfE funding to support capital and set up costs and initial operating costs.

Recommendations to Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

1. A Commissioner should remain with oversight for the foreseeable future to ensure the pace and momentum is not lost and services fail to progress.
2. A medium-term financial plan should be developed which commits to recurrent additional investment for a three-to-five-year improvement programme.

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3. Review the Council's market position within the region and sub-region regarding pay and benefits for new and existing staff.
4. Refresh the terms of reference and membership of the Improvement Board.
5. Develop a scheduled programme of review of progress at each stage of the improvement journey critical friend/peer review/Ofsted monitoring visits as a means of triangulating progress and reassuring leaders and citizens that progress is on track. Ensure that all forms of monitoring are reported through the Improvement Board.
6. Review and streamline improvement support to include an experienced sector led improvement partner (SLIP) or an improvement partner arrangement with a strong LA or Trust in addition to the Leeds City Council support.
7. Develop a cultural shift strategy throughout the Council to include internal communication, external communication and marketing plans.
8. The work to revise and triangulate the Improvement Plan, the performance and quality framework and the practice improvement programme should continue at pace, with each being completed and shared by the end of October 2022. This should include the publication of a fully owned Improvement Vision.
9. Review team and service planning so it makes a more coherent offer for staff.
10. Complete the shift in resources so that all relevant services are urgently co-located within CSD and urgently review the early help offer to ensure its preventative capacity is maximised.
11. Undertake a systems analysis of the child's journey through services, including modelling short- and medium-term financial implications of improvement.
12. Maintain a relentless focus on the quality of practice, including commissioning an immersive 12-month practice learning programme for all practitioners and managers and a programme of regular supported learning events.
13. As part of the practice learning programme, include comprehensive modules around supervision, decision-making and management oversight for managers, and secure places on national practice supervisors' training.
14. Demonstrate key evidence of political ownership of children's services i.e., fully articulated vision and profile of children's service is clearly set out in key LA and partnership strategic documents including Sefton 2030 and the children's JSNA and is clearly visible within their buildings.
15. Ensure that children and young people's voice, engagement and co-production with families is a central tenet of LA and partnership strategies, including Sefton 2030 and the Children's JSNA.
16. Safeguarding partnership to review any outstanding SCRs and LLRs and establish a timetable for completion and where appropriate, publication.

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17. Safeguarding Partnership Scrutineer to prepare a report on work undertaken so far and its impact.
18. Map current governance arrangements for children's services across the partnership to ensure a whole-system 'golden thread' approach which prevents overlap and inconsistency.
19. Elected Members to receive additional training and support to ensure they know how to effectively discharge their duties supported by the LGA.
20. Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board has representatives from across the political spectrum to ensure that responsibilities are everyone's business and consistency in compliance with statutory corporate parenting responsibilities and local standards as set out in the pledge.
21. Continue the work to develop local residential care provision and ensure sufficient investment to support this.



Department
for Education

Delivery of Children's Services in Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

**Report for the Secretary of State for
Education**

September 2022

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Introduction: The Role of the Commissioner

The Department for Education appointed the Commissioner on 22 May 2022, the Commissioner undertook a review of Children's Service from June 2022 to September 2022.

Sefton has been found to be 'inadequate' across all key judgements in the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) conducted in February 2022 by Ofsted and in the formal report published in May 2022. This is part of several years of decline in the quality of services locally. There is a presumption in cases of persistent or systemic failure that children's social care services will be removed from council control in order to bring about sustainable improvement, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. In line with the recommendations set out in the Ofsted report of children's social care, published 9 May 2022, the Children's Services Commissioner for Sefton is expected to take the following steps:

- To issue any necessary instructions to the Council for the purpose of securing immediate improvement in the Council's delivery of children's social care; to identify ongoing improvement requirements; and to recommend any additional support required to deliver those improvements.
- To bring together evidence to assess the Council's capacity and capability to improve itself, in a reasonable timeframe, and recommend whether this evidence is sufficiently strong to suggest that long-term sustainable improvement to children's social care can be achieved should operational service control continue to remain with the Council.
- To advise on relevant alternative delivery and governance arrangements for children's social care, outside of the operational control of the Council, taking account of local circumstances and the views of the Council and key partners.
- To report to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State by the end of September 2022.

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Executive summary and recommendations to the Secretary of State for Education

Whilst the Council has made a good start to its improvement work through new leadership arrangements, readiness to accept support, the start of a cultural shift and sound actions to construct its improvement programme, its progress remains hampered by workforce challenges, quality of practice, which is still not good enough, and as yet ineffective and unaligned improvement mechanisms. The means and mechanisms for delivering sustained improvement are not yet secured.

In the next six to nine months there needs to be significant additional pace to the improvement work and a much greater grip to support building traction and momentum. Improvement planning and investment need stronger focus on medium- and long-term sustainability to give assurance to local leaders and citizens, along with the Department and Ofsted that improvements will embed beyond the initial improvement activity.

In considering the next phase of intervention and potential directions, whilst there is evidence that trusts can make an impact and engage a workforce in a new start which is attractive, at this juncture this would be time consuming and would further delay improvements in my view because it would distract from the core work of improvement. Whilst not entirely disregarding this as a possible future option, dependent on progress, there is a need to allow time for the new leadership team to bed in and be supported to bring about the changes required. I would also argue there is not a need to look at another council to take over the running of children's services for similar reasons I am not, therefore, making recommendations for alternative delivery models at this stage. However, there is still some way to go before I would be confident the Council can make the huge transformations required without continued specialist sector support and focused oversight from the Department. The Council will now benefit from a series of Ofsted Monitoring Visits, and these should be seen as part of the learning and improvement cycle, driving progress on establishing these foundations, and measuring impact at each visit.

In addition to this over-arching recommendation regarding delivery model, a series of detailed improvement recommendations have also been made to the Council, and these are reproduced in the section titled recommendations to Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.

The Local Authority Area: Sefton

Sefton is a metropolitan borough of Merseyside, and its local authority is Sefton Council. Sefton was formed, following the Local Government Act 1972, on 1 April 1974. It was an amalgamation of the former county boroughs of Bootle and Southport, and from the administrative county of Lancashire, the municipal borough of Crosby, the urban districts of Formby and Litherland, and part of the Rural District of West Lancashire. It also formed part of the then new county of Merseyside. The Borough consists of a coastal strip of land on the Irish Sea and extends from the primarily industrial area of Bootle in the south to the traditional seaside resort of Southport in the north. In the south-east it extends inland to Maghull. Sefton has an approximate area of some 155km². The district is bounded by Liverpool to the south, Knowsley to the south-east, and West Lancashire to the east. Sefton is one of six councils that make up the Liverpool City Region (LCR). Since 1 April 2014 some of the Borough's responsibilities have been pooled with neighbouring authorities within the metropolitan area and subsumed into the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The combined authority has effectively become the top-tier administrative body for the local governance of the city region with the leader of Sefton Council, along with the five other leaders from neighbouring local government districts, taking strategic decisions over economic development, transport, employment and skills, tourism, culture, housing, and physical infrastructure. The Borough has a number of nationally and internationally important attractions including: the Aintree Grand National, Anthony Gormley's Another Place at Crosby Beach, the Southport Flower Show, the National Musical Fireworks Championship, the Southport Air Show and regular major golf tournaments hosted at Royal Birkdale Golf Club¹.

The Cabinet is comprised of the Leader of the Council and nine Cabinet Members of the Council, each has responsibility for a defined service area (portfolio). Within the budgetary and policy frameworks set by the full Council, the Cabinet is responsible for carrying out almost all the Council's functions in delivering services to the community. In May 2021 new arrangements for Cabinet Member roles regarding Children's Services were introduced, with the introduction of specific roles of Cabinet Member, Education, and Cabinet Member, Children's Social Care.

In its entirety, Sefton is in the most deprived fifth of English Local Authorities, with 27 of the 189 Sefton Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) being in the top 5% nationally (17 of these being in South Sefton). However, other parts of the Borough, particularly in the middle and north, are some of the least deprived areas, with seven LSOAs (six of which are in north Sefton) were in the least deprived 5% of areas nationally. Sefton has a low proportion of residents from minority ethnic groups, with 95% of the population being White British, higher than rates seen across Liverpool City Region 92%, the North West 87% and England 79% (9.8%).

¹ <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/1061/seftonpeopleandplaceprofile.pdf>

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Sefton has a population of approximately 275,899, 23.7% of the population is 65 years old or over (65,463); it is ranked 24th out of 309 local authorities for the number of residents aged 65 or over. Approximately one in five residents are aged under 18 (54,098). Projections show the overall numbers of young people 0-19 will remain relatively stable over the next two decades, though with significant inter-age group variation.

18% of children and young people under the age of 19 in Sefton are living in low-income households, a similar picture to the national picture at 18.2%, though lower than the regional figure which is 22.4%.

21.3% of pupils attending a Sefton school are eligible for Free School Meals; this is 0.5% higher than the national figure of 20.8% and 3.5% lower than the regional North West figure of 23.8%.

5.8% of pupils educated in Sefton have English as an additional language, compared to 15.3% in the Northwest and 19.2% nationally.

15.2% of pupils educated in Sefton are recorded as special educational needs (SEN), of these 3.2% of pupils have a formal SEN education, health and care (EHC) plan in place and 11.8% of pupils are recorded as receiving SEN Support.

According to the school census of January 2021, there were 40,056 children and young people aged 2 to 18 years who are educated in 103 Sefton state funded, maintained nursery, primary, secondary, sixth form, special schools, and pupil referral units (PRUs). There are three Further Education establishments catering for 16- to 19-year old key stage 5 students. 9% of primary schools and 61% of secondary schools have converted to academies.

In February 2017 Sefton had 436 Cared for Children, by February 2022 this had risen to 619 and from this point the numbers have been maintained. There are currently 2698 Children in Need and 398 children on child protection plans. The table below provides current actuals and comparative rates per 10,000 children of population for children under the age of 18. The rates of Children in Need, Child Protection and Cared for Children are significantly higher than the England, North West and statistical neighbour averages.

Table 1: Actual and rates per 10,000 for Children in Need, Child Protection and Care for Children

| | 20/09/2022 | Sefton 20/09/2022 | ENG* | SN* | NW** |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----|------|
| Children in Need | 2698 | 498 | 321 | 360 | 381 |
| Child Protection | 398 | 74 | 41 | 47 | 49 |
| Cared for Children | 615 | 114 | 67 | 49 | 97 |
| | | | Rate per 10,000 | | |

Source: *Latest published rates for ENG and SN are 2021

Source: **Latest available figures for NW Q4 are 2021/22

The challenges as described by Ofsted

The quality of provision and outcomes for children, young people and families has seen a continuous decline in recent years. A worrying Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in September 2019 (published December 2019) raised concerns around partnership working, front door arrangements and commissioning, and a Focused Visit in March 2021 (published May 2021) highlighted concerns around key areas of social worker capacity, managing safeguarding risks and quality assurance arrangements. Although the Council responded, a combination of funding challenges and an unsettled period involving interim leadership fettered effective progress and led to further legacy issues. Whilst the Council were aware of this challenging environment, there was some optimism about some progress having been made and although there was anticipation of a likely critical inspection in February to May 2022, the extent of the overall failure and the bleak inspection report (published in May 2022) was not anticipated and in discussion, the Leader expressed determination to do “everything in his power” to turn the situation around.

The inspection found serious and systemic failings across all aspects of Social Care provision and recognised this as part of a trajectory of deterioration since 2016. Key concerns included the following findings:

- Council responses to children in need of help and protection in Sefton are inadequate due to serious and widespread failures in safeguarding children. Throughout help and protection services, there is drift and delay in children having their needs met in part due to insufficient workforce capacity and lack of management oversight and challenge. This results in highly vulnerable children remaining at risk of significant harm.
- The Council and Senior Leaders have not sufficiently understood these failures or taken the necessary actions to improve services for children.
- The fragmentation and dispersal of a wide range of Children’s Services across the Council has not enabled the Council, Leaders and Senior Managers to have an effective oversight of Children’s Services. As a result, shortfalls identified in and since 2016 have not been systematically addressed to make a difference to children, and poor practice previously identified is still present.
- This inspection has identified both serious and widespread failures in core areas of social work practice including assessment, planning, and management oversight. There is insufficient capacity across the workforce to secure a timely and appropriate response for children. As a result, some children are left with inadequate protection, and experience delays in having their needs met, including the need for timely permanence.

The report is clear that current concerns identified were not a short-term dip or ‘eye off the ball’ situation but were persistent and enduring over several years and that work to address them had been ineffective, thus further embedding the elements which have in turn compounded failure.

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In my view front line staff recognised this more readily than local leaders, and there was anticipation among them of a poor outcome from the inspection.

Staff said:

“The inspection outcome didn’t come as a shock, since 2017 we’ve lost so many experienced good staff because the structure didn’t work. ASYE’s were left with heavy caseloads because of the churn of staff”.

Young people too had been dissatisfied with their experience of services.

A care experience young person said:

“I’ve had a good experience with the Leaving Care Service but some of my friends complained that they were fed up with having to repeat their story too many times because a different worker would turn up each month”.

This experience of having multiple workers is borne out across all case types seen as part of this analysis.

Methodology

This analysis has been conducted over the period from June 2022 to September 2022. My work as Commissioner has included the following:

- Review of policy and practice documentation,
- Analysis financial information, inspection reports, improvement reports and data,
- Meetings with local leaders, including politicians from the administration and opposition parties, senior leaders in the Council and partner agencies and meetings with front line staff,
- Meeting with young people in receipt of services,
- Letters from parents and carers of families in receipt of services,
- Audit of current case files and review of current quality assurance arrangements,
- Review of the current improvement plan and the arrangements for its implementation and oversight,
- Observation of the Improvement Board.

During this review I have also benefitted from discussions with the Improvement Advisor, with colleagues from the Department for Education and Ofsted. I am grateful for the time people have given to engage and express their views, which has greatly assisted in gaining an understanding of the strengths and challenges in Sefton. I have been welcomed and ably supported throughout.

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Key Issues

Although the inspection recognised some early indications of improvement, for example around strengthening the voice of the child, it considered these to be not yet secure or embedded. This raises a key issue for the Council in terms of its capacity to deliver sustainable improvement over time; the experience of initial improvement after the 2019 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) inspection, followed by further deterioration is indicative of this, and the analysis presented in this report seeks to explore the long-term capacity required to make the shift towards sustained investment and improvement.

Having reviewed this history and trajectory, there is clear evidence in my view that services had deteriorated since 2016 and the Council had lost sight of their responsibilities to effectively monitor services. Ineffective governance, poor performance management arrangements and quality assurance processes meant that senior leaders were not aware of the quality of services provided or how resources were being allocated and delivering impact. Current arrangements around these core elements of improvement, and the traction so far gained have formed key considerations around progress, pace and capacity for continuous and sustainable improvement.

The Council has responded swiftly to the outcome of the 2022 inspection, creating additional leadership capacity and appointing a new Executive Director of Childrens Services (DCS) with extensive experience in children's social care as an Assistant Director (AD), including turning around a failing service. Additional capacity has been created at Assistant Director level and the new post holders are also talented and experienced as individuals. Although this team is clearly working hard and are developing good proposals for the machinery of improvement, including the remediation of the failure in core functions, they will need to coalesce into an effective force for fully implementing and tracking these actions, and for leading the cultural shift required to embed them into the new business as usual. These leaders will need to give relentless direction and clarity of expectation to the workforce to lift the sense of feeling overwhelmed by the improvement work and the additional demands brought by an ineffective system. There is, for example, a strong culture of non-compliance which has become a custom and practice coping strategy, and it is critical that the existing workforce are supported in lifting themselves out of this and ensuring that new recruits, and especially those newly qualified, are not absorbed into it. An example of this is that following feedback on case concerns after the audit work in this review, senior leaders acted immediately to set out actions to address these; however, these expectations were not met by managers and practitioners, and the mechanisms to track these required actions were not there, leading to unacceptable drift in the required responses, some of which related to children's safety.

Senior leaders have a core foundation task to develop and implement a coherent improvement plan, a performance and quality framework and operational strategies built from a clearly articulated vision which are visibly defined in team plans and individual appraisal, creating the 'golden thread' of everyone having a key role in improvement.

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These are very significant foundations of improvement which need to be relentlessly driven, and further pace to the implementation will need to occur over the next 6 to 9 months.

Although the Council is experiencing recruitment difficulties, some very good staff have remained; despite having borne the burden of a lack of a permanent workforce prior to the inspection, they are highly committed and keen to make the improvements, and there is strong evidence of them bouncing back, with morale largely being good, despite the challenges.

Staff report a more positive experience of organisational culture since the new senior team have been in place, citing more visibility of leaders and a culture of openness, describing the DCS and ADs as 'walking the walk' and putting social work at the forefront of their minds when presenting information. The open-door policy is a clear shift away from the interim model which was limited in impact and creating an 'us and them' experience for some frontline staff and managers.

Staff said:

"It felt like the past senior managers had stopped listening to us and we could see things unravelling, leaders just kept out of the way until it was too late to make changes".

"We've been impressed with the approach taken by DCS and his team – more open, visible and approachable".

"It feels more safe than it has for a long time, managers are listening and available, it's beginning to feel like a good place to work again".

These are very positive gains for the leadership to have made, in gaining the trust of a weary and demoralised workforce increasing their professional confidence and their sense of being valued. This is a key foundation for onward improvement. Nevertheless, recruitment remains a major challenge, with over reliance on agency staff and 'managed service' teams. As is often the case with long term failure, the workforce has not yet been sufficiently skilled and developed, and they are now dealing with very complex legacy cases which also result from previous safeguarding failure.

There are constructive plans in place to recruit to new key roles, such as the practice development social workers and the Social Work Academy staff, plus new experienced Heads of Service are joining the Council in September, but recruitment in the region is highly competitive and the council will need to review its market position in terms of pay rates and benefits for existing staff.

The plans to develop the Social Work Academy are very positive, demonstrating a commitment to quality practice learning. It is not yet clear what the implementation

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timescale will be, and what benefits are expected and when, for example impact on caseloads, and this needs to be made explicit. However, the depth of poor practice goes across the workforce, and not just those who are new to the social work profession, and the Council will need to significantly extend its practice learning programme.

The work being supported by Leeds City Council on the Family Values approach is very positive, giving a good value-driven basis upon which good relational practice can thrive. However, this is a framework and not a practice model, and current work shows elements of various previous models still apparent in casework. The appointment of the new Principal Social Worker in August 2022 is a positive step, and the post holder will need to bring consistency and much greater quality to practice delivery. Again, clarity of expectation around practice quality is key. Family work, and social work in particular is a highly technical function, underpinned by a complex legal framework, and examination of current practice shows major deficits in knowledge and application in these areas:

- Assessments are still descriptive and lack critical thinking and analysis. They have no hypothesis and do not use research evidence to enhance critical analysis. A lack of curiosity and deep exploration of available information is apparent, with a snapshot approach and taking headlines and face value of information, focusing only on the present. A major area for learning and development is to assist staff in understanding how family history, including parents' own experience of being parented informs powerful repeating patterns and family scripts which influence current risks and strengths, and the likelihood of long-term sustainable change. Assessment do not currently consider what life will be like for a child in 3, 6, or 10 years, and importantly, how good enough parenting of a baby will translate into managing adolescence.
- Children's plans are still often poor, they lack purpose, actions are not clearly attributable nor are completion dates evident in most cases. Actions are generally not linked to bespoke outcomes for an individual child; standard statements are often included, which could apply to any child. The generalised nature of outcomes makes it difficult to see what difference has been made. Many plans have elements of drift, some of which impact on the safety and life chances of the child. The governance around planning is therefore not effective in driving plans forward. In implementing plans, in many instances, case records do not reflect that staff understand the purpose of statutory visits and the importance of core groups and Child in Need meetings.
- There is a variation in practice around safeguarding strategy discussions. Where police and other partners attend these are much better quality, but police are often not in attendance, and some strategy meetings are just the social worker and team manager. In a small number of cases, strategy discussions have not been held when an incident warranted it, but in the main there is a good response in planning around incidents and concerns.

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- There is still variation in practice relating to young people who go missing and are vulnerable to exploitation. Whilst there is evidence of risk assessments, there are also examples where practitioners were too easily reassured around risks reducing, and not always live to picking up new signs of potential risk.
- There is a need for additional learning across the workforce, for example there are gaps in knowledge and understanding of the law and associated regulations. Areas identified include very limited understanding of the Public Law Outline, placement regulations, the Southwark Judgement, connected carers and Regulation 24 and S38(6), viability assessments and court procedures. The quality of court reports is sometimes poor, with challenges from the court about not meeting timescales, and reports which do not demonstrate the rationale for orders sought. This impacts on the Council's reputation with the Family Court and raises the issue of quality assurance and sign off, from social work managers and the legal team.

Leaders are aware of these deficits, and work now needs to move at pace to address these. Good work has taken place around revising practice standards, and leaders recognise that previous work to simply distribute new policy and practice materials will not deliver the required take up, compliance and quality shift which is required. Engagement events with staff and young people are planned in September to finalise the standards, and a 'practice week' is planned for October, but the Council will need to facilitate an immersive practice learning programme for staff to ensure that the knowledge base is firm, and that staff are confident about the application of the new standards. There is still work to do to ensure that a suitable repository for policies and procedures exists. Although the Safeguarding Partnership has published some policies and procedures, the 'Tri-ex' system of operational practice procedures is not yet fully functional, and the work with staff and young people in September and October will need to have pace and depth to deliver this key aspect of supporting good quality work which meets statutory requirements. Recent work to reinvigorate corporate parenting is positive, and this will need extensive Council wide political and corporate ownership.

A comprehensive Practice Learning Programme to encompass core aspects of practice, including a supervision component, should be planned into the coming 12 months to build in a culture of a learning organisation which learns together and creating a reliable set of competences from which to build. The learning culture can be further embedded through protected time for team learning and development, for example through a monthly 'Stop the Clock' protected learning time approach.

The SEND Continuous Improvement Board (SENDICIB) was introduced in 2019 in response to an Improvement Notice. This is a partnership board, led by the Council, committed to delivering the actions that will improve the lives and life chances of Sefton's children and young people with SEND. The Improvement Notice was lifted in July 2021 and the Local Area is committed to continuing with SENDICIB and associated subgroups. The DfE noted, "the evidence from the review demonstrates the significant progress Sefton and partners has made and its success in addressing and embedding

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the improvements identified in Ofsted's/Care Quality Commission (CQC) revisit in 2019. Leadership has improved its operational oversight, the workforce is dedicated and engaged in delivering quality outcomes, there is improved partnership working and there is a collective commitment across the Council to improve and achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEND.”

However, the service has recently experienced a further decline in performance, with significant challenges in respect of staffing and the increase in the number requests for EHCP's. Plans are in place to address the performance issues and additional capacity has been secured to strategically oversee the work of the Local Area Partnership and to improve the operation of the SEND Service. Since 2019 the Council has invested significant capital into existing schools in the Borough which will create additional places and reduce the need for Out of Borough places plus additional revenue in excess of £400k in staffing.

In light of the new SEND Inspection framework the partnership is preparing to review the current Improvement Plan to ensure that it reflects the national evaluation criteria. A key area of focus in the coming months will be the continued engagement with families. The experience of improvement and then decline in service quality in this service area demonstrates the need for relentless focus on sustained improvement, so that good gains are not lost, and the learning from this experience should be applied to the overall improvement approach.

There are areas of work beyond quality of practice which need significant additional and specialist capacity in order to drive the pace and quality of sustainable improvement. These include quality assurance, performance management, project management, business support and commissioning.

Limited progress has been made on developing performance management systems and dashboards in part due to limited resources available. The Council has commissioned an external review of the LiquidLogic system, and the actions arising from this now need to be driven at pace, alongside work to deliver a reliable dashboard to support managers and to deliver credible and timely reporting on performance.

The quality assurance arrangements are significantly underdeveloped and do not have sufficient resources to deliver this core function. The resource around case audit is currently outsourced to three auditors, and the approach is insufficiently focused on quality and learning to drive the improvement required. These auditors undertake all of the case audit work in children's social care; therefore, the volumes are low, and this does not afford the Council with reliable assurance around quality of practice. It also feeds a culture of quality assurance not being owned by operational staff. The current plan to appoint the practice development workers is currently capped at two and this will coincide with the ending of the contracts with the external auditors. The Council needs much greater capacity for this function, including the extension of auditing function into the whole of the management cohort, and sufficient administrative capacity to drive audit function and the tracking, analysis and reporting which will support the learning and

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assurance cycle. The existing quality framework, completed in 2018 had sound elements of quality assurance practice, including the involvement of all managers in case auditing. In recent years, the implementation of this has changed, removing this key function from managers in response to workload levels. This was a retrograde step and has contributed to a system-wide failure around assurance and quality. Work is currently under way to develop a new performance and quality framework; exemplar materials on effective frameworks have been shared with the Council and this work needs to be completed at pace. The new framework will require the appropriate level of funding to ensure that it is effective.

There is not yet an effective line of sight to give leaders the day-to-day and thematic assurance that children are being safeguarded and that improvement work is progressing at pace with tangible results and impacts. This was an observation by Ofsted, and it now needs greater urgency on implementation. At the operational level, supervision and management oversight are poor; supervision frequencies do not meet policy requirements and the quality of supervision is not driving challenge and the delivery of improved outcomes for families. Management oversight is sporadic and recording of this is often poor, meaning that key decision-making can lack clarity and direction. Low levels of supervision often mean that there is a delay in case closure, and this can inflate caseload levels, where workers hold cases which have limited or no activity. There is a requirement for observations of practice, but it is not clear how frequently this takes place, and with what outcomes; further work needs to take place to formalise and capture this activity, then aggregate findings as part of the quality framework. An extension of the case audit function to all managers and leaders, including senior leadership, the Chief Executive and the Lead Member would significantly strengthen the line of sight, particularly if triangulated with engagement and co-production with children, young people and families, use of young inspectors and programmes of member visits to teams, projects and settings. This reliable direct knowledge would enhance scrutiny functions for members.

The Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review in May 2022 recognised the need for further work on good governance for members and made recommendations regarding the need for greater scrutiny of plans at a Corporate and Administration level. Whilst an approach has been made to another Council to support this work, the implementation of the recommendations needs greater pace, including a mapping of the current governance structures within the Council and across partnerships and how they link along with respective role expectations. There are several 'scrutiny' arrangements which are not adequately embedded to offer effective challenge to senior officers or the partnerships, this needs to be strengthened as a matter of priority.

This work would ensure no overlap and duplication and a systemic whole system approach that links back to an overarching vision for partnership and Council. Regarding the Safeguarding Partnership, it is not clear that revised arrangements for the Safeguarding Scrutineer are delivering impact; there have been no published serious case reviews (SCR) since 2020, the latest annual report is still to be published and there has been no obvious scrutiny of the Improvement Board by the Scrutineer. The

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partnership appears weak and lacks the gravitas to hold partners to account. A review of the existing arrangements needs to be undertaken as a matter of urgency to ensure the multi-agency oversight arrangements provides value and meets its statutory obligations.

Further work needs to take place to build effective strategic and operational partnership working. Progress is being made with joint working arrangements with police, though there are still some inconsistencies in practice as described above. Schools, colleges and health partners need to be included in implementing more effective and informed commissioning arrangements, including developing a children's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) and commissioning strategy.

Challenges remain in relation to how services are structured. One observation from Ofsted was how the Lead Professional role is underdeveloped, and although there is a good breadth of early help provision, it is not yet clear how effective these services are in preventing escalation of need into targeted and statutory services. The levels of Children in Need and Cared for Children per 10,000, which are well in excess of all comparators, suggest that there could be much better connectivity and targeting across services to achieve this. A key issue has been the fragmentation of services across the Council, leading to inconsistencies in thresholds and limited collective management oversight. Good work has taken place to realign youth offending and targeted services into the single Children's Services Directorate, but some services, such as Early Help, remain outside of this, and I believe this will continue to hamper progress in achieving streamlined integrated services which actively prevent the need for high-cost, low impact services. In discussion, some Early Help staff acknowledged things can be disjointed as they were not always 'in the loop' given that they sat outside children's services.

Partners would benefit from a systems analysis of the child's journey through services, understanding where communication, joint thresholds and workflow are most effective for families in improving outcomes, and for agencies in delivering value for money. Whilst there is a good breadth of early help services, and good library and leisure facilities clearly reaching out to families, a key area for exploration is the extent to which these effectively prevent the need for more targeted or statutory services, this is not yet explicit in the partnership's vision of the whole system.

The Improvement Board is starting to bring effective support and challenge, but this was much less visible prior to inspection. It is chaired by an experienced effective former DCS, but it needs refining to manageable level with tight targets and criteria to monitor and refocus on accountability across the partnership for delivery and impact.

The Improvement Plan is a work in progress, and intensive work is currently being undertaken to refine it. There are some strengths in this plan, it is a manageable length, and there is good grouping of thematic issues. There are some sound and timely actions around baselining, creating an agreed and unequivocal platform from which to chart progress. However, there are some issues of focus and granularity to consider. A key issue is that the plan does not yet create sufficient 'grip' in terms of driving pace and having effective tracking and reporting. Actions and outcomes are expressed in general

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rather than specific terms, creating difficulty in pinpointing progress and lack of clarity about what can be expected as a result of actions, and when they can be signed off. There is a strong emphasis on compliance, and whilst this is important, especially at this phase of embedding the foundations of improvement, the plan needs much greater emphasis on quality of practice and intended outcomes for families, rather than outputs for agencies. The plan could be strengthened by setting out and promoting Sefton's vision for improvement, giving a clear message around improvement ambitions, timelines and the phasing around what is expected to be achieved by when. This will assist in managing expectations, driving pace and showing clarity around what has to happen in terms of foundation-building before partners can progress to broader ambitions. The plan in its current form does not yet do justice to the Council's clear ambitions around engagement, participation and co-production.

The critical piece of strategic work is to triangulate the Improvement plan with the practice improvement requirements and the governance and quality assurance arrangements, ensuring efficient cooperation across these three foundations of the improvement mechanism. All of this needs to be under the aegis of a wholly owned partnership vision for services to, and outcomes for, children, young people and families.

The Council is very open to support from other authorities and agencies, embracing Peer Review, formal support from Leeds City Council and other elements of support and advice from the sector but it needs to be more transparent and use its existing scrutiny arrangements more effectively and welcome challenge instead of taking a more cautious approach to openness and sharing performance. This growth in support has been organic, and the presence of multiple offers of advice and help can overwhelm leaders and operational staff both in terms of time required and in sometimes conflicting advice. This has meant that some recommendations, for example from the Peer Review have not yet been implemented, and leaders need time to consider which advice best meets Sefton's needs, and then the time to get on with implementing it. At this stage it would therefore be helpful to review the improvement support being offered and streamline this to a single suitably qualified and resourced sector led improvement partner (SLIP) or improvement partner arrangement with a strong council or trust alongside the Leeds City Council input.

Since 2016/17 the Children's Services budget for Social Care has increased in value from £32.5m to £52.069m in 2022/23. This reflects investment in the budget for commissioned accommodation and investment in staffing resources to support the service. Although additional resources have been made available to support improvement, this work now needs additional pace and rigour, and this will require further additional and recurrent resource beyond the original investment to secure sustainable improvement. The increase in financial investment was from a low baseline after austerity measures, and at a point where the service was already in embedded failure. The additional demands which have arisen through the pandemic, through local need and through ineffective systems are likely to further increase through current cost of living pressures and the legacy costs of demand arising from previous failure. It is my view that Children's Services are therefore exponentially disadvantaged in meeting the gap

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between need and provision, with the additional opportunity costs of this intense improvement programme.

During the current year the Council has taken two further reports to its Cabinet and Council detailing the financial pressure within the service that has been caused by increases in agency staffing rates, the need to use 'managed teams' of social workers due to the lack of suitably skilled staff in the market (and in the agency market) and the significant increase in cost of individual accommodation that have been experienced since March 2022. This is estimated at nearly £10m and the Council has had to make difficult financial decisions including prioritisation and the one-off use of reserves to support a remedial plan. Also, within this current year, the Council reports that it has directed significant existing resources to work solely in support of Children's Services and its improvement- this financial cost covers dedicated support from communications, legal, finance, HR, Strategic Support with the project management and planning being undertaken by the Assistant Director for Strategic Support.

Whilst the Council is cognisant of the feedback from the Chair of the Improvement Board that 'good children's services deliver good value for money', it has expressed that no further flexibility remains and any further pressure will need to be met by reductions in other Council services.

Work is ongoing at present between the DCS and the Finance team on the financial resources that will be required in the next two financial years. Again, this is focused on investment in staffing via the Social Work Academy, budget requirement for agency staff and provision for further increases in the accommodation budget. This work is planned to be refined over the coming months in advance of the Medium-Term Financial Plan being presented in the autumn of 2022 in a context of there being no savings or efficiencies plans to be delivered by Children's Social Care during this 2-year period as opposed to the rest of the Council. This work would be enhanced by modelling the likely costs arising from legacy cases and the impact of the improvement work; for example, the likely recalibration of the system, with children moving to services which can effectively meet their needs and risks can in the short-term lead to an increase in costs. Typically, this might include more children moving into the care system, or moving from Child in Need to Child Protection plans. Likely increases in the care population in particular need to be modelled along with projections on the resulting increase in responsibilities around care experienced young people under the Leaving Care regulations.

Although the Council reflects that there is a demonstrable track record of the provision of additional investment to support the DCS as issues arise, the work to quantify the recurrent investment needs to be accelerated, to ensure more strategic medium-term approach to move away from high-cost low impact services, and to reduce the risk of a 'firefighting' approach. A timely determination of this will build confidence among stakeholders of a comprehensive approach to sustainable improvement. Without such investment, the Council will struggle to provide the improvement capacity required to address the very significant changes required. The Council reports that it would welcome further DfE financial support on both a revenue and capital basis.

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In terms of current DfE support the Council is currently working with the Leeds Family Valued Programme and has been awarded over £3m to support this work and is receiving financial support from the DfE for its Social Work Academy. The Council, in addition to this Academy, is now actively progressing the evaluation of options for the provision of its own Children's Care homes within the borough and as part of the financial evaluation will also be developing bids for DfE funding to support capital and set up costs and initial operating costs.

The Council is also actively engaged with the department on current thinking around the future treatment of high needs deficits and is to start on the delivering better value programme. The treatment of the current deficit which is forecast to reach £15m at the end of the current financial year is being treated as a designated schools grant (DSG) issue and it is the clear view of the Council that this should remain the case as anything other than this will impact upon general fund financial planning. The Council clearly states that there are not reserves within the Council to meet this. The Council's engagement with both the Department and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has been proactive and has been welcomed by both departments in terms of supporting understanding of the issues faced by councils and the options that could be available.

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Recommendations to Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

1. A Commissioner should remain with oversight for the foreseeable future to ensure the pace and momentum is not lost and services fail to progress.
2. A medium-term financial plan should be developed which commits to recurrent additional investment for a three-to-five-year improvement programme.
3. Review the Council's market position within the region and sub-region regarding pay and benefits for new and existing staff.
4. Refresh the terms of reference and membership of the Improvement Board.
5. Develop a scheduled programme of review of progress at each stage of the improvement journey critical friend/peer review/Ofsted monitoring visits as a means of triangulating progress and reassuring leaders and citizens that progress is on track. Ensure that all forms of monitoring are reported through the Improvement Board.
6. Review and streamline improvement support to include an experienced sector led improvement partner (SLIP) or an improvement partner arrangement with a strong Council or Trust in addition to the Leeds City Council support.
7. Develop a cultural shift strategy throughout the Council to include internal communication, external communication and marketing plans.
8. The work to revise and triangulate the Improvement Plan, the performance and quality framework and the practice improvement programme should continue at pace, with each being completed and shared by the end of October 2022. This should include the publication of a fully owned Improvement Vision.
9. Review team and service planning so it makes a more coherent offer for staff.
10. Complete the shift in resources so that all relevant services are urgently co-located within CSD and urgently review the early help offer to ensure its preventative capacity is maximised.
11. Undertake a systems analysis of the child's journey through services, including modelling short- and medium-term financial implications of improvement.

12. Maintain a relentless focus on the quality of practice, including commissioning an immersive 12-month practice learning programme for all practitioners and managers and a programme of regular supported learning events.
13. As part of the practice learning programme, include comprehensive modules around supervision, decision-making and management oversight for managers, and secure places on national practice supervisors' training.
14. Demonstrate key evidence of political ownership of children's services i.e., fully articulated vision and profile of children's service is clearly set out in key Council and partnership strategic documents including Sefton 2030 and the children's JSNA and is clearly visible within their buildings.
15. Ensure that children and young people's voice, engagement and co-production with families is a central tenet of LA and partnership strategies, including Sefton 2030 and the Children's JSNA.
16. Safeguarding partnership to review any outstanding SCRs and LLRs and establish a timetable for completion and where appropriate, publication.
17. Safeguarding Partnership Scrutineer to prepare a report on work undertaken so far and its impact.
18. Map current governance arrangements for children's services across the partnership to ensure a whole-system 'golden thread' approach which prevents overlap and inconsistency.
19. Elected Members to receive additional training and support to ensure they know how to effectively discharge their duties supported by the LGA.
20. Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board has representatives from across the political spectrum to ensure that responsibilities are everyone's business and consistency in compliance with statutory corporate parenting responsibilities and local standards as set out in the pledge.
21. Continue the work to develop local residential care provision and ensure sufficient investment to support this.

Paul Moffatt

Children's Commissioner for Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

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Department
for Education

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Agenda Item 9

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) | Date of Meeting: | 7 November 2022 |
| Subject: | Cabinet Member Reports – September - October 2022 | | |
| Report of: | Chief Legal and Democratic Officer | Wards Affected: | All |
| Cabinet Portfolio: | Children's Social Care Education | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care and the Cabinet Member - Education reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care and the Cabinet Member - Education reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options have been considered because the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

Any financial implications associated with the Cabinet Member reports which are referred to in this update are contained within the respective reports.

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(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None | |
| Legal Implications: None | |
| Equality Implications: There are no equality implications. | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: | |
| The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | No |
| Have a neutral impact | Yes |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |
| There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Work Programme will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time. | |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

| |
|--|
| Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. The Cabinet Member updates provides information on activity within Councillor Doyle's and Councillor Roscoe's portfolios during the previous three-month period. Any reports relevant to their portfolios considered by the Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committees during this period would contain information as to how such reports contributed to the Council's Core Purpose. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: As above |
| Place – leadership and influencer: As above |
| Drivers of change and reform: As above |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As above |
| Greater income for social investment: As above |
| Cleaner Greener: As above |

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What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Cabinet Member Update Reports are not subject to FD/LD consultation. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the attached Cabinet Member update reports will be included in those reports as appropriate

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Contact Officer: | Debbie Campbell |
| Telephone Number: | 0151 934 2254 |
| Email Address: | debbie.campbell@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Appendix A - Cabinet Member – Children’s Social Care - update report
- Appendix B - Cabinet Member – Education – update report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 Attached to this report, for information, are the most recent Cabinet Member reports for the Children’s Social Care and Education portfolios.

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| CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| COUNCILLOR | PORTFOLIO | DATE |
| Mhairi Doyle | Children Services | 7 November 2022 |

Children’s Social Care

- A monitoring visit by Ofsted is to take place on the 1st and 2nd of November. The focus on the inspection will be:
 - Timeliness and quality of screening
 - Application of thresholds
 - Quality of child protection enquiries – such as strategy discussions or S47 enquiries
 - Child in need assessments
 - Step-up from and step-down to early help
 - No further action/signposting
 - Out of hours responses
 - Designated Officer response

- The commissioner’s report has been published Friday 28th October. Briefings to staff have been completed.
- Recruitment for all Service Manager posts has been completed and successfully appointed to. Two service managers start 31st October 2022, with the final appointee starting the beginning of 2023.
- The Children's Services improvement plan has been completed and submitted to Ofsted. Briefings to staff have been completed.
- Training is underway to all staff on our care experienced offer, roles and responsibilities.
- The social work academy is now launched with 22 newly qualified social workers. Recruitment is ongoing. We will now be looking to extend this offer to social workers who wish to return to the profession.

- The “Family Time Team” has now been launched which will be focussed on ensuring supportive, fun and safe contact between children and their parents whilst they are in care proceedings on in alternative care settings.
- Work continues to be underway with the new approach to working with children affected by Extra Familial Harm. The new “S.P.A.C.E. service (named by our young people) is a multi-agency approach to reducing risk in both the present and future terms.
- Targeted family support team has now launched. Training is underway with the team and the focus of the work will be supporting families who are on the cusp of Children’s Social Care intervention.
- We are in the process of moving children who are subject to care proceedings into the Cared for Service. We have successfully recruited 2 teams and they will commence in December.

Youth Justice Service

Performance

- Sefton’s performance against the current Key Performance Indicators is positive. The First Time Entrants numbers have reduced marginally, and the reoffending rate has also reduced. This doesn’t reflect the levels of need and complexity that children accessing the service present, although the new suite of Key Performance Indicators will provide greater context. The new reporting arrangements commence in early 2023.
- There is one child who remains in custody. One child was recently released from custodial remand and was sentenced to a community order, so far they are doing well.
- The performance will be scrutinised at the next Youth Justice Partnership Board on 3rd Nov, at this Board we will welcome our new chair Dawn McNally who is the Superintendent for Sefton Local Policing.

Audit Plan

- YJS has refreshed the Audit Plan to capture some area identified for development. A recent audit for out of court work identified some areas that framed a staff workshop that resulted in additional Practice Standards being created to ensure improvement. A further workshop is planned for November.

Turnaround Programme Funding

- The Ministry of Justice has awarded Youth Justice Teams a sum of money to strengthen the prevention offer. Sefton Youth Justice has been awarded £250 between Dec 2022 to end March 2025. The programme plan is being developed as whilst the eligibility criteria is tight, there is flexibility for interventions and delivery. This will be agreed with the Lead Member, Senior Leaders and the Youth Justice Partnership who will provide governance.

Community Connectors

- Localities managers have successfully secured additional funding for Community Connectors from the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership. This project is in response to recent case mapping for girls within the Youth Justice system in Sefton. The funding will be used to recruit four Community Connector posts who will work with girls to support their mental health needs and reduce their offending and risk-taking behaviour. There are opportunities to link this project to the Turnaround Programme.

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Agenda Item 10

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) | Date of Meeting: | 7 November 2022 |
| Subject: | Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan | | |
| Report of: | Chief Legal and Democratic Officer | Wards Affected: | All |
| Cabinet Portfolio: | Children's Social Care Education | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

To:

- review the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2022/23;
- note the progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group;
- seek the views of the Committee on the re-establishment of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group;
- seek the views of the Committee on the review of health services for children in Sefton;
- note the progress of informal briefing sessions for Committee Members to be held during 2022/23, and the intention to hold an informal briefing on the Leeds Family Values in due course;
- note the intention to hold a site visit for Committee Members to meet with Children's Services Teams at Magdalen House, Bootle, in due course;
- note that there are no items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the latest Key Decision Forward Plan;
- receive an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- formally approve the nomination for a new Parent Governor Representative to sit on the Committee.

Recommendations:

That:

- (1) the draft Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted, along with any additional items to be included and agreed;

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- (2) progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group be noted;
- (3) the views of the Committee be sought on the re-establishment of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group, and in the event that the Working Group is re-established, to appoint at least 3 Members of the Committee to serve on the Working Group;
- (4) the views of the Committee on the review of health services for children in Sefton be sought;
- (5) the Committee be requested to note the progress of informal briefing sessions for Committee Members to be held during 2022/23 and the intention to hold an informal briefing on the Leeds Family Values in due course.
- (6) the Committee be requested to note the intention to hold a site visit for Committee Members to meet with Children's Services Teams at Magdalen House, Bootle, in due course;
- (7) the fact that there are no items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan that fall under the remit of the Committee, on this occasion, be noted;
- (8) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (9) the nomination received for a new Parent Governor Representative to sit on the Committee be formally approved.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2022/23; identify scrutiny review topics which would demonstrate that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny "adds value" to the Council; and to comply with a decision of the Committee to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues before making formal decisions.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to approve its Work Programme and identify scrutiny review topics.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None | |
| Legal Implications: None | |
| Equality Implications: There are no equality implications. | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: | |
| The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | No |
| Have a neutral impact | Yes |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |
| There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Work Programme will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time. | |

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

| |
|--|
| Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. Reference in the Work Programme to any other reports could impact on the Council’s Core Purposes, in which case they will be referred to in the report when submitted. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As Above |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: As Above |
| Place – leadership and influencer: As Above |
| Drivers of change and reform: As Above |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As Above |
| Greater income for social investment: As Above |
| Cleaner Greener: As Above |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Work Programme Report is not subject to FD/LD consultation. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the Work Programme report will be included in those reports as appropriate.

(B) External Consultations

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Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Contact Officer: | Debbie Campbell |
| Telephone Number: | 0151 934 2254 |
| Email Address: | debbie.campbell@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23;
- Appendix B – Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review;

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

1.1 The Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2022/23 is set out at **Appendix A** to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee. The Programme is submitted to each meeting of the Committee and updated, as appropriate, to reflect any additional items requested by Members and Officers.

1.2 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee.

1.3 **The Committee is requested to comment on the Work Programme for 2022/23, as appropriate, and note that additional items may be added to the Programme at future meetings of the Committee during this Municipal Year.**

2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC 2021/22 – IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM WORKING GROUP

2.1 At the meeting of the Committee held on 28 September 2021, the Committee agreed that:

a working group on the impact of Covid 19 on the primary curriculum be established, to include the consideration of the impact of lockdown and home schooling, comprised of the following Members of the Committee:

- Councillor Spencer
- Councillor Yvonne Sayers
- Mrs. S. Cain, Independent Advisory Member
- Ms. M. McDermott, Parent Governor Representative

(Minute No. 22 (4) refers).

- 2.2 A number of meetings of the Working Group have taken place and Members have suggested recommendations arising from the review.
- 2.3 The Final Report of the Working Group was submitted to the meeting of the Council held on 29 September 2022 and the recommendations were approved. Where appropriate, an update report on progress on each of the recommendations will be submitted to the Committee in approximately six months' time.
- 2.4 **The Committee is requested to note the progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group.**

3. POSSIBLE SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC 2022/23 - SECONDARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND ATTAINMENT WORKING GROUP

- 3.1 At its last meeting held on 27 September 2022, the Committee agreed that:

“(3) previous reports on school performance be provided to the Assistant Director Children’s Services (Education) and she be requested to submit a report on exam results and performance this year of secondary schools, by school, if possible, in order for the Committee to ascertain whether there is a need to re-establish the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group;” (Minute No. 19 (3) refers).

- 3.2 At the time of drafting this report, a separate report on Summer 2022 Data is anticipated to appear elsewhere on the agenda and Members may wish to consider the report to ascertain whether there is a need to re-establish the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group at the current time.
- 3.3 For the information of Members, a criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at **Appendix B**, to assist the Committee in selecting topics and appointing Working Group(s) for the Municipal Year.
- 3.4 In the event that the Working Group is re-established, at least 3 Members of the Committee will be required to be appointed to serve on the Working Group;

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3.5 The views of the Committee's views are sought on the establishment of a Working Group to review the topic of Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group.

4. POSSIBLE SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC 2022/23 – CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

4.1 A request has been received from the Sefton Place Director for the Committee to review health services for children in Sefton, with a view to ensuring future improvements in health outcomes for children. The request has arisen as a result of the recent Ofsted report on Children's Services in Sefton.

4.2 The Committee may wish to establish a traditional working group comprised of at least 3 Members of the Committee. Alternatively, the Committee may wish to consider holding an informal meeting to which all Committee Members could be invited, to review health services for children in Sefton, as a task and finish group.

4.3 The views of the Committee's views are sought on the review of health services for children in Sefton.

5. INFORMAL BRIEFING SESSIONS 2022/23

5.1 All Members of the Committee have been invited to participate in informal briefings on the work of Children's Services and Safeguarding, where the information is deemed to be useful.

5.2 A number of possible topics have been suggested for informal briefings, including the following:

- Leeds Family Values and the Sunderland model; and
- The MacAlister Review.

5.3 At the time of drafting this report, initial arrangements are being made for Committee Members to be invited to an informal briefing on the Leeds Family Values and any further information will be reported verbally at the meeting.

5.4 The Committee is requested to note the progress of informal briefing sessions for Committee Members to be held during 2022/23 and the intention to hold an informal briefing on the Leeds Family Values in due course.

6. POTENTIAL SITE VISIT – MAGDALEN HOUSE, BOOTLE

6.1 At its last meeting held on 27 September 2022, that Committee agreed that:

“(5) visits by Committee Members to the Children's Services Teams based in Magdalen House, Bootle, be arranged in due course;” (Minute No. 19 (5) refers).

6.2 At the time of drafting this report, initial arrangements are being made for Committee Members to be invited to a site visit to meet with Children's Services Teams at Magdalen House, Bootle, and any further information will be reported verbally at the meeting.

6.3 The Committee is requested to note the intention to hold a site visit for Committee Members to meet with Children's Services Teams at Magdalen House, Bootle, in due course.

7. PRE-SCRUTINY OF ITEMS IN THE KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

7.1 Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit (terms of reference) of this Committee. The Forward Plan, which is updated each month, sets out the list of items to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration during the next four-month period.

7.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

7.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.

7.4 The latest Forward Plan published on 30 September 2022 contains no key decisions that fall under the remit of the Committee, on this occasion.

7.5 At the time of drafting this report, the Forward Plan to be published on 31 October 2022, covering the period 1 December 2022 – 31 March 2023 is in course of preparation and any items that fall under the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be shared with Members prior to the meeting.

7.6 The Committee is requested to note that there are no items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan that fall under the remit of the Committee, on this occasion.

8. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8.1 During the October/November 2019 cycle of meetings, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny. This Committee considered the matter at its meeting held on 15 October 2019 (Minute No. 32 refers).

8.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees all agreed the recommendations contained in the report, one of which being that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Agenda Item 10

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S) be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

8.3 In accordance with the above decision, information on the LCRCAO&S is set out below.

8.4 **Role**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established by the Combined Authority in May 2017 in accordance with the Combined Authorities Order 2017.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

- Scrutinise the decision and actions taken by the Combined Authority or the Metro Mayor;
- Provide a “critical friend” to policy and strategy development;
- Undertake scrutiny reviews into areas of strategic importance for the people of the Liverpool City Region; and
- Monitor the delivery of the Combined Authority’s strategic plan.

8.5 **Membership**

The Committee is made up of 3 elected Members from each of the constituent Local Authorities of the LCR Combined Authority, along with one elected Member from both the Liverpool City Region Liberal Democrat Group and the Liverpool City Region Conservative Group.

Sefton’s appointed Members are Councillors Howard (Scrutiny Link), Hansen and Waterfield.

Representatives of the Liberal Democrat Group and Conservative Group on the Committee will be reported to Members at the next meeting.

8.6 **Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be a Member of the majority group. The Chair will be appointed at the first meeting of the Committee on 13 July 2022.

8.7 **Quoracy Issues**

A high number of meetings of the LCRCAO&S have been inquorate in the past.

The quorum for meetings of the LCRCAO&S is 14, two-thirds of the total number of members, 20. This high threshold is not set by the Combined Authority but is set out in legislation.

The Combined Authority’s Monitoring Officer will be looking to work with the Monitoring Officers from the other Combined Authorities to identify what problems they are experiencing with Scrutiny and how/if they had overcome them. Representations to Government would also be considered once all options locally to resolve the quorum issue had been exhausted. The CA Monitoring Officer

would then be able to provide evidence to Government that the quorum level was obstructing the work of scrutiny within the CA.

8.8 Meetings

Information on all meetings and membership of the LCRCAO&S can be obtained using the following link:

<https://moderngov.merseytravel.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=365&Year=0>

8.9 Latest Meeting – 7 September 2022

The latest meeting of the LCRCAO&S was held on 7 September 2022. Matters considered at the meeting related to:

- Portfolio Holder Update - Business Support
- Race Equality Programme
- Recommendations of the Improving Disability Employment Opportunities in the Liverpool City Region Task and Finish Group
- Work Programme Update

The next meeting of the LCRCAO&S will be held on 9 November 2022. Matters discussed at the meeting will be reported to Members at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Details of all meetings can be obtained using the link referred to above

8.10 The Committee is requested to note the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9. PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVES

9.1 The Committee has two Parent Governor Representatives that sit on the Committee.

9.2 At the last meeting of the Committee on 27 September 2022, it was reported that one of the Parent Governor Representatives had tendered her resignation and the other Parent Governor Representative's term of office was due to expire.

9.3 The Governor Services Team within the Council has been advised of the position and has sought nominations for new Parent Governor Representatives to sit on the Committee.

9.4 Just one nomination has been received to date and the Committee will be requested to approve the nomination at its meeting. A further recruitment drive will take place early in 2023.

9.5 The Committee is requested to formally approve the nomination received for a new Parent Governor Representatives to sit on the Committee.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING)

WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

| Date of Meeting / Item | Tues 05/07/22 Bootle | Tues 27/09/22 Southport | Mon 07/11/22 Bootle | Tues 20/12/22 Southport | Tues 31/01/23 Bootle | Mon 06/03/23 Southport |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Regular Reports | | | | | | |
| Cabinet Member Update Reports (Amy Riley/Debbie Campbell) | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Work Programme Update (Debbie Campbell) | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Ofsted Inspection Reports (Termly Basis) (Tricia Davies) | √ | √ | | | | √ |
| Service Operational Reports: | | | | | | |
| Final Report of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group (Debbie Campbell) | √ | | | | | |
| Update on Ofsted Report & Children's Services Improvement Plan/Programme (Martin Birch/Jan McMahon) | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Performance Dashboard (Martin Birch/Jan McMahon) | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| | | | | | | |

| Date of Meeting / Item | Tues 05/07/22 Bootle | Tues 27/09/22 Southport | Mon 07/11/22 Bootle | Tues 20/12/22 Southport | Tues 31/01/23 Bootle | Mon 06/03/23 Southport |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Early Help Services (Jan McMahon) | | √ | | | | |
| Education Excellence Strategy for Sefton 2022-2027 (Nicola Robson/Tricia Davies) | | √ | | | | |
| Domestic Abuse (Janette Maxwell/Simon Burnett/Steven Martlew) | | √ | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Integrated Care System Update and Start Well Update (Eleanor Moulton) | | | √ | | | |
| Summer 2022 Data (Tricia Davies) | | | √ | | | |
| Children's Commissioner (Martin Birch) | | | √ | | | |
| SEND Annual Update (Tricia Davies) | | | | √ | | |
| Corporate Parenting Board - Annual Update – Invite Cr. Doyle (Laura Knights) | | | | √ | | |
| Attendance by Improvement Board Chair | | | | √ | | |
| Exam/Test Data (Tricia Davies) | | | | | √ | |

APPENDIX A

| Date of Meeting / Item | Tues 05/07/22 Bootle | Tues 27/09/22 Southport | Mon 07/11/22 Bootle | Tues 20/12/22 Southport | Tues 31/01/23 Bootle | Mon 06/03/23 Southport |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board - Annual Update (Joe Banham/Deb Hughes) | | | | | √ | |
| Fostering Service - Annual Update (Laura Knights) | | | | | √ | |
| Adoption Service - Annual Update (Laura Knights) | | | | | √ | |
| NHS Updates | | | | | | |
| Maternity Services Briefing Associate Director Quality and Performance, Cheshire & Merseyside ICB Sefton Place Team | | | | √ | | |
| Sefton Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - Update NHS Cheshire & Merseyside (Sefton)/Alder Hey Reps.) | | | | | | √ |

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CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

| Criteria for Selecting Items |
|---|
| ▪ Issue identified by members as key issue for public (through member surgeries, other contact with constituents or volume of complaints) |
| ▪ Poor performing service (evidence from performance indicators/benchmarking) |
| ▪ Service ranked as important by the community (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels) |
| ▪ High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels/complaints) |
| ▪ Public interest issue covered in local media |
| ▪ High level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area (as percentage of total expenditure) |
| ▪ Pattern of budgetary overspends |
| ▪ Council corporate priority area |
| ▪ Central government priority area |
| ▪ Issues raised by External Audit Management Letter/External audit reports |
| ▪ New government guidance or legislation |
| ▪ Reports or new evidence provided by external organisations on key issue |
| ▪ Others |

CRITERIA FOR REJECTION

| Potential Criteria for Rejecting Items |
|--|
| ▪ Issue being examined by the Cabinet |
| ▪ Issue being examined by an Officer Group : changes imminent |
| ▪ Issue being examined by another internal body |
| ▪ Issue will be addressed as part of a Service Review within the next year |
| ▪ New legislation or guidance expected within the next year |
| ▪ Other reasons specific to the particular issues. |

SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

| |
|--|
| DO |
| ◆ Remember that Scrutiny <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Is about learning and being a "critical friend"; it should be a positive process ◆ Is not opposition |
| ◆ Remember that Scrutiny should result in improved value, enhanced performance or greater public satisfaction |
| ◆ Take an overview and keep an eye on the wider picture |
| ◆ Check performance against local standards and targets and national standards, and compare results with other authorities |
| ◆ Benchmark performance against local and national performance indicators, using the results to ask more informed questions |
| ◆ Use Working Groups to get underneath performance information |
| ◆ Take account of local needs, priorities and policies |
| ◆ Be persistent and inquisitive |
| ◆ Ask effective questions - be constructive not judgmental |
| ◆ Be open-minded and self aware - encourage openness and self criticism in services |
| ◆ Listen to users and the public, seek the voices that are often not heard, seek the views of others - and balance all of these |
| ◆ Praise good practice and best value - and seek to spread this throughout the authority |
| ◆ Provide feedback to those who have been involved in the review and to stakeholders |
| ◆ Anticipate difficulties in Members challenging colleagues from their own party |
| ◆ Take time to review your own performance |
| ◆ DON'T |
| ◆ Witch-hunt or use performance review as punishment |
| ◆ Be party political/partisan |
| ◆ Blame valid risk taking or stifle initiative or creativity |
| ◆ Treat scrutiny as an add-on |
| ◆ Get bogged down in detail |
| ◆ Be frightened of asking basic questions |
| ◆ Undertake too many issues in insufficient depth |
| ◆ Start without a clear brief and remit |
| ◆ Underestimate the task |
| ◆ Lose track of the main purpose of scrutiny |
| ◆ Lack sensitivity to other stakeholders |
| ◆ Succumb to organisational inertia |
| ◆ Duck facing failure - learn from it and support change and development |
| ◆ Be driven by data or be paralysed by analysis - keep strategic overview, and expect officers to provide high level information and analysis to help. |

KEY QUESTIONS

Overview and Scrutiny Committees should keep in mind some of the fundamental questions:-

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| Are we doing what users/non users/local residents want? |
| Are users' needs central to the service? |
| Why are we doing this? |
| What are we trying to achieve? |
| How well are we doing? |
| How do we compare with others? |
| Are we delivering value for money? |
| How do we know? |
| What can we improve? |

INVESTIGATIONS:-

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| To what extent are service users' expectations and needs being met? |
| To what extent is the service achieving what the policy intended? |
| To what extent is the service meeting any statutory obligations or national standards and targets? |
| Are there any unexpected results/side effects of the policy? |
| Is the performance improving, steady or deteriorating? |
| Is the service able to be honest and open about its current performance and the reasons behind it? |
| Are areas of achievement and weakness fairly and accurately identified? |
| How has performance been assessed? What is the evidence? |
| How does performance compare with that of others? Are there learning points from others' experiences? |
| Is the service capable of meeting planned targets/standards? What change to capability is needed. |
| Are local performance indicators relevant, helpful, meaningful to Members, staff and service users? |

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