

Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday 16 March 2022
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Committee Room 2, Shire Hall

Membership

Councillor Yousef Dahmash (Chair)
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jo Barker
Councillor Brett Beetham
Councillor Barbara Brown
Councillor Peter Gilbert
Councillor Brian Hammersley
Councillor Marian Humphreys
Councillor Justin Kerridge
Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince
Joseph Cannon
John McRoberts
Rev. Elaine Scrivens

Items on the agenda: -

1. General

(1) Apologies

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

5 - 14

2. Public Speaking

3. Question Time

(1) Questions to Cabinet Portfolio Holders

Up to 30 minutes of the meeting are available for members of the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to put questions to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

(2) Updates from Cabinet Portfolio Holders and Assistant Directors

Cabinet Portfolio Holders and Assistant Directors are invited to provide any updates they have on issues within the remit of the Committee.

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 4. Quarter 3 Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarterly Progress Report (April 2021 to December 2021) | 15 - 34 |
| 5. Progress of Integrated Front Door (MASH) | 35 - 58 |
| 6. Child Protection Performance | 59 - 68 |
| 7. Work Programme | 69 - 72 |

To consider the attached work programme, updated following the meeting of the Chair and Group Spokespersons. The programme includes an update from the Forward Plan showing items relevant to the remit of this Committee.

8. Any Other Business

9. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for 11 April 2022 @ 10am.

The meeting will be held in Committee Room 2, Shire Hall, Warwick.

Meetings for 2022/2023 have been scheduled as follows –

- 14 June 2022 @ 10am
- 27 September 2022 @ 10am
- 8 November 2022 @ 10am
- 14 February 2023 @ 10am
- 11 April 2023 @ 10am

Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

Disclaimers

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Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless they have a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if they have not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

Non-pecuniary interests relevant to the agenda should be declared at the commencement of the meeting.

The public reports referred to are available on the Warwickshire Web
<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

Public Speaking

Any member of the public who is resident or working in Warwickshire, or who is in receipt of services from the Council, may speak at the meeting for up to three minutes on any matter within the remit of the Committee. This can be in the form of a statement or a question. If you wish to speak, please notify Democratic Services in writing at least two working days before the meeting. You should give your name and address and the subject upon which you wish to speak. Full details of the public speaking scheme are set out in the Council's Standing Orders.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Any member or officer of the Council or any person attending this meeting must inform Democratic Services if within a week of the meeting they discover they have COVID-19 or have been in close proximity to anyone found to have COVID-19.

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Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 16 November 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Yousef Dahmash (Chair)
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jo Barker
Councillor Brett Beetham
Councillor Barbara Brown
Councillor Peter Gilbert
Councillor Brian Hammersley
Councillor Marian Humphreys
Councillor Justin Kerridge
Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince

Officers

Rachel Barnes (Delivery Lead, Change Hub Lead)
Duane Chappell (Strategy and Commissioning Manager (SEND & Inclusion))
Nigel Minns (Strategic Director for People)
Mark Ryder (Strategic Director for Communities)
Sarah Tregaskis (Service Manager – Education Service Delivery)

Others Present

Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education)
Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Paul Gillett (Co-opted Member) and John Coleman (Assistant Director for Children and Families).

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 October 2021 were agreed as an accurate record to be signed by the Chair.

2. Public Speaking

No members of the public had registered to speak.

3. Question Time

(1) Question to Cabinet Portfolio Holders

There were no questions to Cabinet Portfolio Holders.

(2) Updates from Cabinet Portfolio Holders and Assistant Directors

Councillor Jeff Morgan (Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education) informed the committee that Ofsted was due to commence an inspection of Children's Services on Monday 22 November 2021. This visit has been known of for some time. As a result, it has been possible to undertake a considerable amount of preparatory work. Any inspection can be stressful, stated Councillor Morgan, but the Council will demonstrate the very best of what it does.

Councillor Pete Gilbert observed that officers and members should be prepared to present the most accurate impression of services. In response the committee was informed that Ofsted inspectors are trained to assess that which they see and not to rely on what they are told.

Mark Ryder (Strategic Director for Communities) informed members:

- 1) that education services will work closely with John Coleman's team around the inspection.
- 2) That a workshop had recently been held on school admissions systems. Run by Vanguard, the session had attracted considerable engagement by head teachers.
- 3) Five workshops concerning schools' capacity have recently been completed. Each workshop covered a separate district/borough area.

Councillor Jo Barker thanked officers for the school sufficiency workshops and asked that they be held on a regular basis. Councillor Jeff Morgan stated that the briefings mark the start of longer-term engagement with members. Officers had needed to be able to triangulate the intelligence they had gathered concerning school sufficiency with members' own experience working in their communities.

Councillor Marian Humphries had been unable to attend the meeting in her area. She was informed that she would not be at a disadvantage at the second meeting because of this.

4. SEND Inspection - Verbal Update from Officers

The Chair welcomed Duane Chappell, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (SEND & Inclusion) and Rachel Barnes (Delivery Lead, Change Hub Lead) to the meeting. Between them Duane and Rachel briefed the committee on the SEND and Inclusion Change programme and the local area SEND inspection that had been undertaken in the summer of 2021.

Members were informed of an anticipated increase in demand for SEND services of 14%. This will significantly increase the service's overspend to around £95m. To build momentum a number of projects delivering rapid results were identified. These included the reduction of the number of panels from nine to two and a review of the service's structure to make sure that staff are in the best place to deliver an effective service.

The vision for SEND and inclusion was set out in the meeting and the three phases of the change programme explained. The committee was informed that Warwickshire needs to introduce a whole system change to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND. For this to happen there needs to be a focus on promoting inclusion in mainstream settings, giving schools the skills and resources to meet the needs of learners, and building the confidence of parents and carers. To aid in the delivery of this over 30 projects will take place up to 2023.

Regarding the local area inspection, the committee was informed that in July 2021, Ofsted & CQC visited Warwickshire to assess how the local area fulfils their responsibilities for children and young people with SEND age 0-25. (The local area includes WCC, CCG, Public Health, NHS providers, early years' settings, schools and Further Education providers). The inspection final report was published on 23 September on the council's website.

Although several areas were commended, there are significant areas of weakness that the local area needs to address. A Written Statement of Action is being co-produced with partners, parents and carers showing how the council will deliver the improvements needed.

The committee was informed of a series of strengths identified by the inspection. These were:

- Commitment of leaders to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- Children and young people with SEND achieve positive educational outcomes. A high proportion remain in education, training and employment
- Attendance rates are very positive and fixed term exclusions have reduced dramatically
- Leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses with an accurate, well-informed and detailed self-evaluation
- Leaders have developed and started to implement an ambitious change programme, which identifies what needs to change and why

A series of significant weaknesses had also been identified. These were:

- Waiting times for ASD assessments, and the support for children and young

people awaiting assessment and following diagnosis of ASD.

- Relationships with parent/carers and communication and co-production at a strategic level.
- Incorrect placement of some children and young people with EHC plans in specialist settings, and mainstream school leaders' understanding of why this needs to be addressed.
- Uptake of staff training for school staff to help them understand and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.
- Quality of the online local offer

The committee was then updated on progress to date as follows:

- SEND and Inclusion Steering Group set up with partners from Education, Social Care and Health and Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice (WPCV)
- SEND & Inclusion Change Programme Board governance strengthened with CCG and WPCV representation
- Robust comms plan to ensure we engage with stakeholders in developing the WSoA, including a monthly newsletter and a programme of events
- Areas already in progress as part of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme:
 - establishing the new Parent Carer Forum (Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice) - April 2021
 - refresh of local offer webpages, bringing together information about local services and support for families with children and young people ages 0 to 25 - October 2021
 - introducing an inclusive framework in schools – trial of a new model of support to schools (in Rugby initially) to enable early intervention and improve outcomes – began October 2021
 - workforce development to improve the knowledge, skills and understanding of school staff in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND – began October 2021

Members were informed that the Written Statement of Action will be presented to Cabinet on 7 December. It was also noted that the framework of inspection is being reviewed. Any reinspection is likely to be under the revised framework.

Councillor Yousef Dahmash (Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee) thanked Duane and Rachel for their presentation and asked whether all schools are engaged with the initiatives being developed by the council. Duane Chappell responded that not all schools consider that they have the skills or the staff they would need. Some special schools are feeling vulnerable although this is not necessary. The objective is to ensure that children attend the correct educational setting. There will always be some that require the services of special schools.

Some schools work hard to be inclusive whilst others choose not to be. In the future it will be necessary for all schools to embrace inclusivity.

Councillor Jo Barker sought clarification over the data used to establish demand for services. The committee was informed that this is not reliant on National Census data. In October of every year a school census is held locally. In addition, national data is gathered annually allowing for thorough comparisons to be made with statistical neighbours.

Concerning the panels, members were informed that whilst these comprise senior managers and school leaders anyone can attend to observe proceedings. An interesting aspect of this is the different approaches displayed by schools.

Councillor Marian Humphries asked about children living on the county boundary. In these instances, they may attend schools in neighbouring authority areas. However, the plan for that child will remain with Warwickshire.

Councillor Barbara Brown observed that placing children with special needs into mainstream schools is an expensive option. It is not cost neutral. Given that a new special school is being developed in the north of Warwickshire Councillor Barbara Brown asked whether there was still a need for it. In reply, the committee was informed that even with a model of inclusivity there will always be a need for some special provision away from the mainstream. In addition, the development of a facility in Warwickshire will reduce the need for children to travel out of county. Councillor Barbara Brown asked whether there were instances of schools holding on to children with special needs to the detriment of the education of other children in the school.

By way of response the committee was informed of the way in which schools are supported financially concerning their special needs provision. Funding comes from pupil weighting, the notional £6000 (notional as schools are not told how they must use it) and the High Needs Block. In some instances, it is not clear how schools are using the notional £6000.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) agreed that it is not good practice to send children out of county. He also concurred that some schools may use the notional £6000 for purposes other than that for which it is intended. The findings of the inspection were not a surprise he stated adding that it would be of interest to understand the impact of reductions in health visiting. Regarding co-production Councillor Jerry Roodhouse observed that this came take a long time to deliver. It needs to be driven from the top and not left to those at the bottom to press for it. Councillor Roodhouse also challenged whether the parent/Carer Voice is truly representative. A fully inclusive approach is required with the child at the centre.

Concerning health visitors Duane Chappell informed the committee that a child's development begins during pregnancy. It is important that information on babies at that stage is relayed by health authorities to the council. Within 6 weeks of birth children's needs can be identified. Duane Chappell offered to review health visiting budgets and service delivery and report back to Councillor Roodhouse. Duane Chappell also agreed that child-centred planning is required to capture the voice of the child. She agreed that co-production takes a long time adding that a major challenge is in identifying the capacity to develop it. There are concerns over data sharing. The health service remains wary about sharing data.

Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell agreed that obtaining the voice of the child is essential. It is important to get the message across that diagnosis is not required before an EHC plan can be developed. It was noted that the number of panels has been reduced. However, is there member support on these panels? Elected members want more training on special education needs. This should not just focus on high level demand. Councillor O'Donnell asked why some schools are unwilling to take children with special education needs.

On the subject of schools Duane Chappell informed members that peer to peer support is practiced by schools. SEND needs to engage with this so that all head teachers receive the support they require. Some needs do not present very often (eg multi-sensory deprivation) but when they do then it is essential that the right level of care is in place.

In response to a question from the Chair members were informed that the Pandemic had impacted on the robustness of data. Some children are entitled to support that they have not been accessing and in some instances simple issues are not being picked up early enough. Consideration needs to be given as to how to get staff to undertake assessments.

Resolved:

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. notes progress with the SEND and Inclusion Change programme, and
2. welcomes progress to date following the Local Area SEND inspection conducted by Ofsted in July 2021.

5. Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy

Sarah Tregaskis (Service Manager – Education Service Delivery) introduced the report along with the draft strategy and appendices.

Councillor Dahmash, acknowledging the closure of the Marle Hall facility in North Wales asked what should be said to people who miss it. In reply the committee was informed that outdoor education is about more than one facility. Marle Hall was a facility and not a provision. It had not been widely used by schools in recent years. The strategy aims to open up opportunities for more schools to pursue outdoor education activities.

Councillor Pete Gilbert observed that very often outdoor education relies on having a teacher with a passion for it. It is an important element of the curriculum and should not be overlooked. Schools, he added, need to work with the County Council. Would the strategy ensure that outdoor education is included in the curriculum? Councillor Gilbert closed by suggesting that there is a role for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in monitoring future outdoor education provision.

In reply, Sarah Tregaskis stated that a part of the delivery plan is a proposal to set up a professionals' network for Warwickshire. This will bring schools and teachers together to share practice and obtain feedback. A recent survey had found plenty of activity going on already.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places overall responsibility for health and safety on educational visits with the employer. Where Warwickshire County Council is the employer; which includes community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools but not academies, foundation, voluntary-aided or free schools, WCC provides support to schools via the web-based system EVOLVE to facilitate the efficient planning, management, approval, and evaluation of visits.

One school that operates a forest school approach has offered to provide training for other schools wishing to follow this route. One school that operates a forest school approach has offered to provide training for other schools wishing to follow this route.

Councillor Brian Hammersley recognised the difficulties of providing outdoor challenges and activities in a climate of blame and litigation.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse suggested that outdoor education had been given a low priority for some time. The closure of Marle Hall had brought it to the fore. A clear definition of outdoor education and provision is required, and it will be important to monitor delivery of the strategy over time.

Councillor Roodhouse challenged the status of the emerging strategy. At one stage it was to have been a sub-strategy of the Education Strategy, but this had been considered inappropriate. It should, he suggested, be a corporate strategy signed off by the Leader of the Council. It would then sit at a high level with other corporate documents.

Councillor Jeff Morgan agreed that it would be useful if the strategy included a definition of outdoor pursuits. Some activities that were undertaken in the 1970s would not be considered acceptable now he added. The committee was reminded that outdoor activities are not a statutory service. Nevertheless, they do need to be given a high priority.

In reply to a question from Councillor Marian Humphries it was agreed that a list of those schools that engaged in the review would be shared.

Councillor Jo Barker expressed the view that young people need to be given the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities. People need to be encouraged to become leaders for outdoor activities.

Councillor Justin Kerridge called for a specific measure to be created to establish the take up of opportunities by children from disadvantaged backgrounds. It will also be important to measure the extent to which schools are engaging and what they are doing.

Councillor Kerridge also requested that the draft strategy be reviewed to make it more concise.

Councillor Barbara Brown supported the suggestion to reduce the size of the strategy and also endorsed Councillor Jerry Roodhouse's comments regarding its status. Schools, she stated, need to be clear on the management of outdoor education and there is a need to provide evidence of its benefits.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse requested that the strategy be sent to partners including district and borough councils and health colleagues for them to endorse. The committee was informed that this is an element of the delivery plan.

Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince (who was a member of the first working group to examine outdoor education) emphasised the need to produce an effective strategy. There is a need to get head teachers engaged although many will consider that some outdoor education offers carry too much risk.

Councillor Marian Humphries observed that schools had been engaged with as part of the strategy development process at a busy time for them. In reply the committee was informed that the original plan had been for engagement with school to take place in June or July. However, the Pandemic had delayed matters.

Councillor Piers Daniell (Chair of the member working group) stated that the closure of Marle Hall had highlighted the importance of outdoor education. A concise strategy is now necessary to encourage schools and children to engage in such activity. He suggested that surveys may struggle to be able to identify the success of the strategy. The delivery plan will be key to engaging with partners and other initiatives eg Youth Justice, country parks and Child Friendly Warwickshire. Councillor Daniell concluded that previously there has been too much emphasis on outdoor education in the school environment. It is important to push for outdoor adventure.

Councillor Pete Gilbert noted that the County Council undertakes a great deal of non-statutory activity. He had been concerned over the data presented to the committee concerning Marle Hall. It is important that the Outdoor Education Strategy is given a high priority.

Councillor Brian Hammersley agreed that the document should be made more concise.

Resolved:

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny,

1. Requests that in approving the strategy, Cabinet acknowledges its high priority.
2. Requests that a performance report that sets out progress against the strategy's objectives be produced annually for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. Requests that officers identify ways in which the strategy can be made more concise.

6. Work Programme

Members considered the committee's work programme. Councillor Pete Gilbert requested that the committee undertake a body of work to review why some children in certain communities, struggle with education. It was agreed that this would be considered at the next Chair and Group Spokes meeting.

7. Any Other Business

None

8. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held at 10am on 22 February 2022.

The meeting rose at 12.32

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Chair

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Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

16th March 2022

Council Plan 2020 – 2025 Quarterly Progress Report Period under review: 1st April 2021 to 31st December 2021

Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider progress on the delivery of the Council Plan 2020 - 2025 for the period as contained in the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council Plan Quarter 3 Performance Progress Report for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st December 2021 was considered and approved by Cabinet on 17th February 2022. The report provides an overview of progress of the key elements of the Council Plan, specifically in relation to performance against Key Business Measures (KBMs), strategic risks and workforce management. A separate Financial Monitoring report for the period covering both the revenue and capital budgets, reserves and delivery of the savings plan was presented and considered at the same Cabinet meeting.
- 1.2. This report draws on information extracted from both Cabinet reports to provide this Committee with information relevant to its remit.
- 1.3. Comprehensive performance reporting is now enabled through the following link to Power BI [OSC 2021/22 Performance Report.](#)

2. Council Plan 2020 - 2025: Strategic Context and Performance Commentary

2.1 The Council Plan 2020 – 2025 aims to achieve two high level Outcomes:

- **Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent;** and,
- **Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure.**

Progress to achieve these outcomes is assessed against 54 KBMs.

| Outcome | No. of KBMs | No. of KBMs available for reporting at Quarter 3 |
|---|-------------|--|
| Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent | 27 | 23 |
| Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure | 13 | 8 |
| WCC making the best use of its resources | 14 | 12 |

2.2 Overall, the Council continues to maintain its robust performance across the board in the face of increased and changing demand, due to the ongoing and varying degree of impact of the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in significant changes in how services are delivered. Despite some restrictions being reintroduced Council Services are continuing to provide support to communities most in need but are now focusing more resource on their core work and less on specific pandemic response, which is now being reflected in KBM performance.

2.3 14 KBMs fall within the remit of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.4 The education examination regime was suspended for the second year running in 2021 due to Covid-19. Therefore, the education performance for agreed measures as detailed below, cannot be reported at this time:

| National Body | KBM |
|--------------------------|---|
| Dept of Education | % of children achieving GCSE level 4 in both English and Maths |
| | % of children achieving the KS2 expected standard for combined reading, writing and maths |
| | Progress 8 score |

Eight proxy measures have been introduced for educational attainment to provide oversight in this area. Section 3 provides an Education progress summary based on recently published data.

2.5 A further KBM cannot be reported for Quarter 4 as data is not yet available:

- % of Year 6 children (aged 10-11 years): prevalence of obesity (including severely obese). This KBM has only recently been resumed, with a data sample too small at this stage for reporting.

- 2.6 Of the remaining 10 available for reporting at Quarter 3, 50% (5) are reported as being On Track and 50% (5) are reported as not being Not on Track.

Table 1 below summarises KBM status at Quarter 3 by agreed Outcomes.

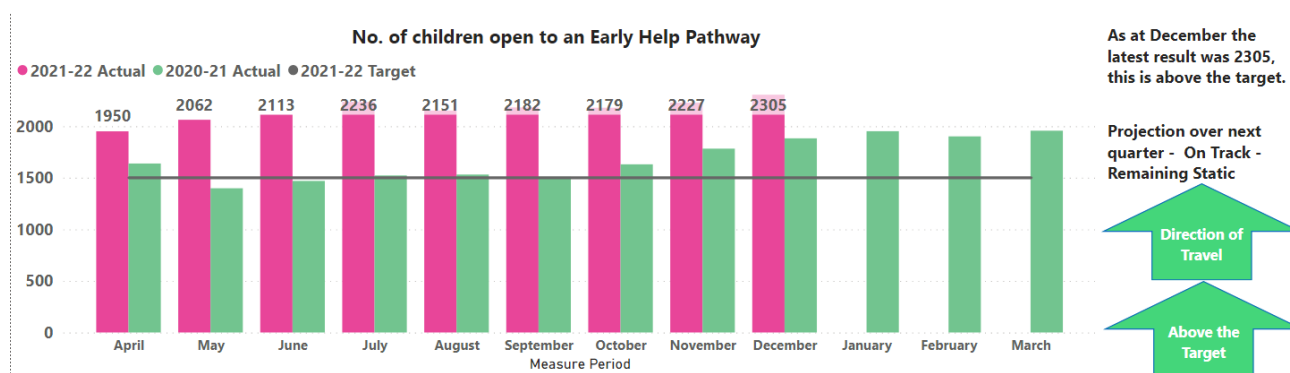
| Outcome | Current Status | Number of measures |
|--|----------------|--------------------|
| Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent | On Track | 4 |
| | Not on Track | 5 |
| | Not Applicable | 1 |
| Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure | On Track | 1 |
| | Not on Track | 0 |
| | Not Applicable | 3 |
| WCC making the best use of its resources | On Track | 0 |
| | Not on Track | 0 |
| | Not Applicable | 0 |

Table 1

- 2.7 Of the 50% (5) KBMs which are On Track, there are 2 of note as Areas of Good Progress, which are detailed in Table 2 below.

Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent

No of children open to an Early Help Pathway



Current performance narrative:

The service has 2,182 children open to an Early Help Pathway to Change plan which is 659 above the target of 1500.

Improvement activity:

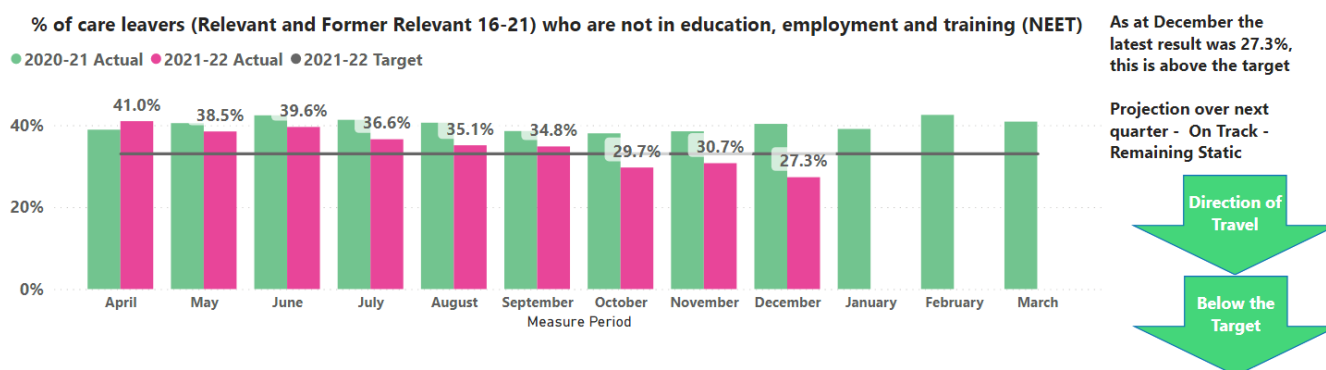
With the trajectory constantly increasing, the service will re-evaluate the target of 1,500 for a more realistic higher one.

The service will continue to deliver consistent messaging to schools and other partners and the redesign work in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will support further improvements.

Explanation of projected trajectory: On Track – Remaining Static

Increased demand is consistent with the impact of Covid-19 upon families, based on trend information performance is expected to remain static.

% of care leavers (Relevant and Former Relevant 16-21) who are not in education, employment and training (NEET)



Current performance narrative:

The number of young people not in education, employment and training has dropped considerably this quarter and Warwickshire are well below the target of 33%, this is particularly impressive, having started the financial year at 41% and the fact that numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) have risen to the highest they have been for many years. Clearly when these young people arrive, they are not in education or employment, so it would not have been surprising if the figure had actually risen.

Improvement activity:

The addition of an extra Carers Advisor and a dedicated Carers Advisor for UASC young people has enabled NEETS groups to be expanded and there to be a real focus on this area.

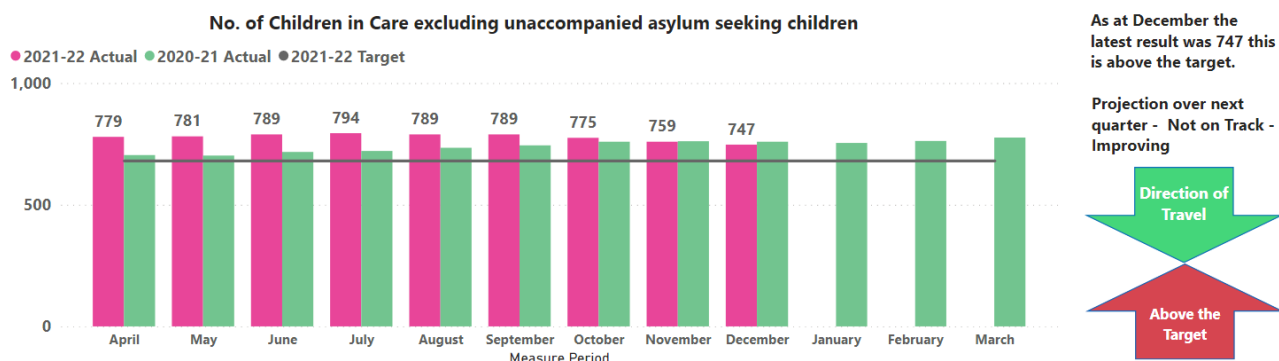
Explanation of projected trajectory: On Track – Remaining Static.

The service has managed to improve on this area significantly and have returned to a figure that is as good if not better than pre covid. If the economy and job opportunities remain fairly stable, the service would expect to see this figure stabilising and possibly improving further.

- 2.8 Of the 50% (5) KBMs Not on Track, there is 1 KBM which requires Improvement Activity, as detailed in Table 3 below.

Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent

No of Children in Care (CiC) excluding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children



Current performance narrative:

This month Warwickshire have seen a fall of 15 in Children in Care numbers and 43 in the quarter. While Warwickshire remain above target for the year, the service believes there will be further falls in Child in Care numbers in January and February.

Improvement activity:

All change programme projects are now implemented which appear to have slowed down the numbers of children entering care. The service continues to work closely with the local courts to bring down the backlog of work in court, which is speeding up discharges and the making of special guardianship orders, child arrangement orders and adoptions

Explanation of the projected trajectory: Not on Track – Improving

There are a significant number of young people that will turn 18 between January and March 2022. Twelve young people are currently placed for adoption who should achieve permanence through adoption.

Table 3

2.9 Table 4 below illustrates the considered forecast performance projection over the forthcoming reporting period.

| | On Track | | | Not on Track | | | Not Applicable |
|--|-----------|------------------|-----------|--------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| | Improving | Remaining Static | Declining | Improving | Remaining Static | Declining | |
| Warwickshire's communities and individuals are supported to be safe, healthy and independent | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 3 | | 1 |
| Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure | | 1 | | | | | 3 |

Table 4

It is forecast that over the next period of Quarter 4 2021/22, 2 of the KBMS currently reporting as being On Track, will continue to improve, and 3 will remain static, these are:

Improving:

- % of Children in Care aged under 16 who have been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years, who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption; and,
- % Population vaccination coverage – Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) for two doses (5 years old).

Remaining Static:

- No. of children open to an Early Help Pathway;
- % of care leavers (Relevant and Former Relevant 16-21) who are not in education, employment and training (NEET); and,
- % 16 and 17 year olds who are Not in Education, Employment or Training.

Of the KBMs which are Not on Track, 2 are expected to begin to show signs of improvement, and 3 are expected to remain static during Quarter 4, these are:

Improving:

- No of Children in Care excluding unaccompanied asylum seeking children; and,
- % of placements in provision (agency foster care or residential) of Good or Outstanding quality as rated by Ofsted (CLA).

Remaining Static:

- % of Children receiving a 6-8 week health check (C8i) ;
- % of children and young people seen within 18 weeks (Referral to Treatment Time) amalgamated across the three Clinical Commissioning Group (CCGs); and,
- % of Women who smoke at the time of delivery across Warwickshire.

2.10 The Pandemic continues to impact on a proportion of these measures leading to delays in programmes of activity and both additional and frequently changing service demands. Improvement activity is in place to improve performance across all measures, and this is under constant review to ensure it is robust. Full context on all measures is provided in the [Power BI report](#).

2.11 The Council is developing a new performance management framework alongside the Council Plan refresh, which aims to provide a sharpened focus on performance and trajectory and will better support delivery of the Organisation's new priorities as outlined in the refreshed Council Plan. A Members Working Group (MWG) has been supporting the development of the new Framework and Cabinet will receive a full report, including the recommendations from the MWG and the full proposed Performance Management Framework, in March.

3.0 Education Progress Update 2021 refer to section 2.4

3.1 Assessments for 2021

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the summer exam series for the 2020/21 academic year was cancelled.

Instead, for 2020/21, Key Stage 4 and post 16 pupils were only assessed on the content they had been taught for each course. Schools were given flexibility to decide how to assess their pupils' performance, for example, through mock exams, class tests, and non-exam assessment already completed. GCSE grades were then determined by teachers based on the range of evidence available and they are referred to as teacher-assessed grades, or TAGs.

This was a different process to that of 2019/20 when pupils were awarded either a centre assessment grade (known as CAGs, based on what the school or college believed the pupil would most likely have achieved had exams gone ahead) or their calculated grade using a model developed by Ofqual - whichever was the higher of the two.

The changes to the way GCSE grades have been awarded over the last two years (with CAGs and TAGs replacing exams) means 2020/21 pupil attainment data cannot be directly compared to pupil attainment data from previous years for the purposes of measuring year on year changes in pupil performance.

3.2 Proxy measures for 2020 and 2021

For 2020 and 2021 school performance data proxy measures have been used for WCC reporting purposes. The proxy measures are based on Department for Education (DfE) published data for Key Stage 4 and is available at county level only (individual school level data is not available). Comparisons are available to national and statistical neighbours¹ (similar councils) only. There is no data available for Early Years or Key Stage 2 (primary school data).

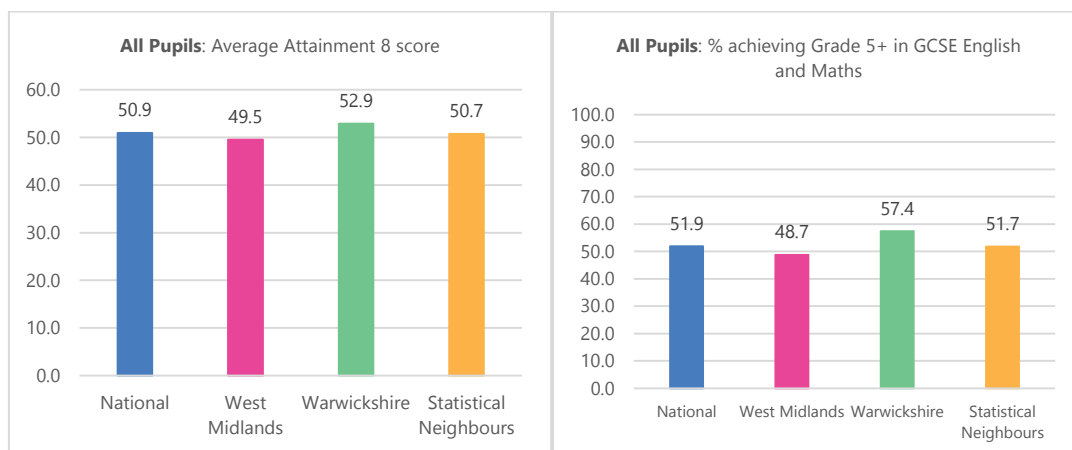
3.3 Proxy measure Key Stage 4 performance 2021

Table 5 shows 2021 Key Stage 4 Results. Due to the changes in the way GCSE results have been awarded in the summers of 2020 and 2021 there have been significant changes to the distribution of the grades which reflect the likely change in method for awarding grades rather than demonstrating a step change in standards. For the reasons set out in section one 2021 results cannot be compared to other years.

| Region | Characteristic | Total number of pupils at the end of key stage 4 | Average Attainment 8 score of all pupils | % of pupils achieving grades 5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs | % of pupils achieving grades 4 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs | Average English Baccalaureate Average Point Score per pupil |
|------------------------|----------------|--|--|--|--|---|
| National | All Pupils | 575863 | 50.9 | 51.9 | 72.2 | 4.5 |
| West Midlands | All Pupils | 65625 | 49.5 | 48.7 | 69.5 | 4.3 |
| Warwickshire | All Pupils | 6225 | 52.9 | 57.4 | 76.3 | 4.7 |
| Statistical Neighbours | All Pupils | 6594 | 50.7 | 51.7 | 73.0 | 4.4 |

Table 5: 2021 Key Stage 4 Results – All pupils

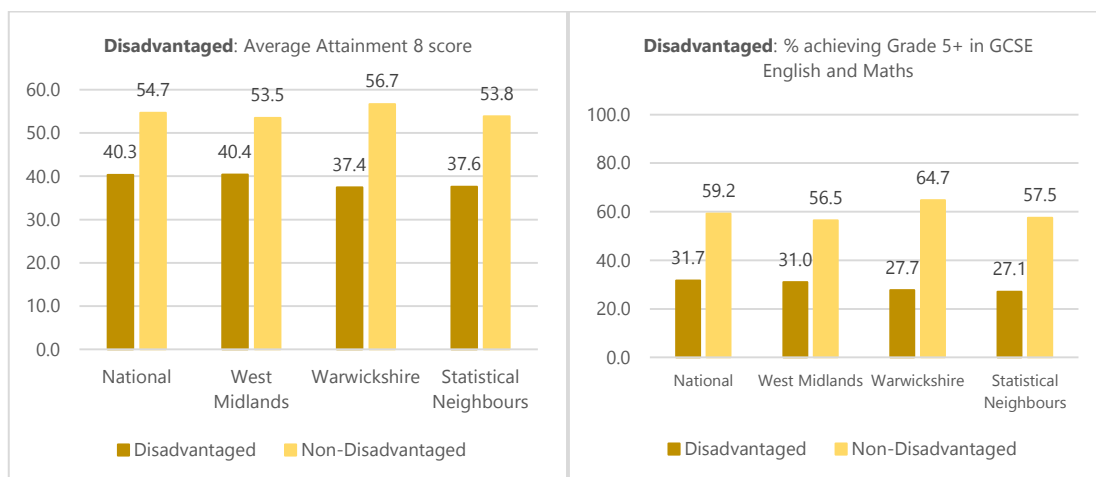
¹ Statistical Neighbours are those local authorities deemed to have similar characteristics and used for benchmarking purposes. Warwickshire's 10 statistical neighbours are Cheshire West and Chester; Worcestershire; Central Bedfordshire; Leicestershire; Staffordshire; Warrington; Cheshire East; Essex; Hampshire; North Somerset.



Overall Warwickshire out-performs national, statistical neighbours and West Midlands.

| Region | Characteristic | Total number of pupils at the end of key stage 4 | Average Attainment 8 score of all pupils | % of pupils achieving grades 5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs | % of pupils achieving grades 4 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs | Average English Baccalaureate Average Point Score per pupil |
|------------------------|-------------------|--|--|--|--|---|
| National | Disadvantaged | 151973 | 40.3 | 31.7 | 53.1 | 3.4 |
| | Non-Disadvantaged | 423890 | 54.7 | 59.2 | 79.0 | 4.8 |
| West Midlands | Disadvantaged | 20062 | 40.4 | 31.0 | 52.5 | 3.4 |
| | Non-Disadvantaged | 45563 | 53.5 | 56.5 | 77.1 | 4.7 |
| Warwickshire | Disadvantaged | 1218 | 37.4 | 27.7 | 49.5 | 3.1 |
| | Non-Disadvantaged | 5007 | 56.7 | 64.7 | 82.8 | 5.0 |
| Statistical Neighbours | Disadvantaged | 1261 | 37.6 | 27.1 | 48.9 | 3.1 |
| | Non-Disadvantaged | 5334 | 53.8 | 57.5 | 78.7 | 4.7 |

Table 6: 2021 Key Stage 4 Results – Disadvantaged pupils



In 2021 Warwickshire disadvantage pupils fall behind the comparators in almost all of the measures (the only exception is statistical neighbours for % disadvantaged pupils achieving GCSEs grade 4 or higher and grade 5 or higher in English and maths). This follows previous years patterns and reinforces the need for Warwickshire's continued focus on disadvantaged learners in Warwickshire.

3.4 2021 Contextual information

3.5 Attendance in 2020/21

Pupil attendance across the 2020/21 academic year remained high at just over 95%, testament to the hard work and measures put in place by schools to remain open and keep staff and pupils safe. Even during the national lockdown between January and March 2021, schools were open to key worker and vulnerable children whilst also running virtual lessons for children at home, ensuring a continuity of education.

3.6 Remote learning in 2020/21

DfE provided laptops to schools to support students to access remote learning from home (based on Free School Meal pupils). Warwickshire County Council complemented the DfE laptop scheme distributing over 3,200 Laptops and 926 dongles to special schools, infant schools, vulnerable young people, and pupils without access to laptops or broadband data allowances at home.

3.7 Pupil mental health

Many pupils managed well during periods of lockdown and adjusted to remote learning. However, there is no doubt that mental health issues are more prevalent among pupils and increased anxiety about examinations.

3.8 School staff mental health

There has been an increase in absence of staff in schools due to Covid-19 infections and self-isolation. Headteachers have reported significant difficulties in sourcing supply cover and increased pressures on school budgets because of these additional cover costs.

More recently Warwickshire has seen increased numbers of experienced staff and in particular experienced head teachers leaving the profession due to the pressures the pandemic has had on their roles. By necessity since the beginning of the pandemic the head teacher role has changed to be more operational.

3.9 Disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils

Many children particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, or who are vulnerable in other ways have been adversely affected by extended time away from school.

3.10 Performance pre pandemic in 2019

Performance of Warwickshire children and young people in Statutory National Tests in 2019 were reported to Children's & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 14th July 2020. Summary information is shared below.

3.11 Table 7 below provides a summary of the available key headline indicators for the different curriculum stages achieved by Warwickshire pupils in 2019 compared to those nationally and our statistical neighbours:

| WE Strategy ² | National Curriculum Stage | Headline Measure | Warwickshire | National | Statistical neighbours (SN) ² |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--------------|----------|--|
| WE1: Early Years Foundation Stage | Early Years Foundation Stage Profile | % of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development - often used as a school readiness measure | 72% | 72% | 74% |
| WE3: Family of Schools | Phonics | % of Year 1 pupils working at the required level | 84% | 82% | 83% |
| | Key Stage 1 | % of pupils achieving the Expected Standard in Reading | 77% | 75% | 77% |
| | | % of pupils achieving the Expected Standard in Writing | 71% | 69% | 71% |
| | | % of pupils achieving the Expected Standard in Maths | 77% | 76% | 77% |
| | Key Stage 2 | % of pupils achieving the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths | 65% | 65% | 66% |
| | Key Stage 4 | % of pupils achieving a Strong Pass (Grade5+) in English and Maths GCSEs | 50% | 43% | 43% |
| | | Average Attainment 8 Score per pupil | 49.8 | 46.5 | 46.4 |
| | | Average Progress 8 Score | 0.00 | -0.03 | -0.10 |

² Warwickshire Education Strategy available here:
<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/educationstrategy>

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|--|--------|--------|--------|
| WE4: Employability | Post 16 | A Level students: Average grade | C+ | C+ | C+ |
| | | A Level students: Percentage achieving AAB or higher in at least 2 facilitating subjects | 16.4% | 14.1% | 12.4% |
| | | Tech level students: Average grade | Merit | Merit+ | Merit+ |
| | | Applied General students: Average grade | Merit+ | Merit+ | Merit+ |

Table 7: Headline 2019 measures and results for Warwickshire, national and statistical neighbours

3.12 2019 Key trends

In 2019 the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is exactly in line with the national result, all the other Key Stage 2 (Primary) school headline indicators are above or in line with the national averages.

In 2019 Key Stage 4 results continued to show that Warwickshire's students performed strongly in their GCSE and equivalent qualifications, compared to national and statistical neighbour results.

- Data showed an upwards trend in the ranking for Attainment 8, with Warwickshire improving its position the last two years running, moving up six places in total, from 31st place nationally in 2017 and 29th in 2018.
- Progress 8 dropped from previous years - from 43rd in 2018 and 42nd in 2017, this brings us in line with West Midland Local Authorities.
- Warwickshire improved one place on its 2018 ranking for the EBacc average point score, moving from 33rd to 32nd.

3.13 2019 Key issues

3.14 Closing the Gap

Disadvantage attainment gaps have not been closing in Warwickshire which is in line with the national picture. The full impact of Covid-19 will not be apparent for some time

A review of the Closing the Gap Board is being undertaken. It recognises that the attainment gap still exists and has not reduced. There are many external influences which are out of the boards remit e.g. economic, Covid-19 etc.

3.15 School improvement support for recovery from the impact of the pandemic

The School Improvement Team's focus is on recovery and catch up for 2021. The Department for Education Monitoring and Brokering grant was ring fenced from July 2021 to support school's recovery from the ongoing impact of the pandemic. The Team has provided a wide range of support, training, wellbeing, headteacher retention, pupil attendance and Continuous Professional Development programmes for schools. Attendance at programmes has been supported by providing staff cover costs for schools.

e.g. aspiring headteacher course, CHIMP for schools (a mind management model to support wellbeing), peer coaching programme for head teachers, EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) tiered approach programme, listening ear programme of support, Breaking the Glass ceiling of good programme plus many more. Schools who have found themselves in exceptional circumstances have been supported with additional funding to support staffing costs and additional system leader support depending on the support needed. Within this work there is a focus on disadvantaged learners who will have been adversely affected by the pandemic and extended time away from schools.

4. Financial Commentary

4.1. Revenue Budget

4.1.1. The Council has set the performance threshold in relation to revenue spend as zero overspend and no more than a 2% underspend. The following Table 8 shows the forecast position for the Services concerned.

| Service Area | Approved Budget | Service Forecast | (Under) /Over spend | Variation as a % of budget | Change from Q2 forecast | Represented by: | | | | Remaining service variance as a % of budget | Remaining Service Change from Q2 forecast |
|--|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| | | | | | | Investment Funds | Impact on Earmarked Reserves | Covid Impact | Remaining Service Variance | | |
| | £m | £m | £m | % | £m | £m | £m | £m | £m | % | £m |
| Education Services - Non-DSG Children & Families | 41.270 | 45.427 | 4.157 | 10.07% | 1.549 | 0.713 | 0.210 | 0.594 | 2.640 | 6.40% | 0.932 |
| | 74.701 | 80.493 | 5.792 | 7.75% | 0.460 | (1.007) | (0.313) | 2.112 | 5.000 | 6.69% | 0.432 |
| Total | 115.971 | 125.92 | 9.949 | 8.58% | 2.009 | (0.294) | (0.103) | 2.706 | 7.640 | 6.59% | 1.364 |

Table 8

4.1.2. Covid

Children and Families forecast £9.949m overspend including £2.706m Covid pressures at the end of Quarter 3. The Covid pressures relate to additional placement/leaving care costs and staffing cost and will be fully funded from Covid grant income.

4.1.3. Investments

The overall Children Transformation Fund (CTF) / Child Friendly Warwickshire Transformation Programme has experienced delay due to recruitment and interaction with 3rd sector partners taking longer than anticipated (often due to capacity and the post Covid effect on partners). Although the forecast underspend for 2021/22 is £1.007m, the project leads are continually reviewing

plans to ensure the overall 4 year programme to 2023/24 is on track to complete the objectives and fully maximise the DfE grant. The overall planned budget is fully committed over the re-phased life of the programme.

Education is forecast to overspend by £0.713m and relates to investment activity primarily on phase two of the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme and in January Cabinet approved the draw down from earmarked reserves to fund the programme.

4.1.4. Remaining Service Overspend

After taking account of Covid and the impact of earmarked reserves and Investment/Transformation Funds, the remaining service overspend is £7.640m (an increase of £1.364m since Quarter 2).

The material aspects of the remaining overspend are attributable to the following factors, further details can be found in the Quarter 3 Finance Monitoring report -

Children and Families remaining service overspend of £5m (increase from Quarter 2 of £0.432m)

- The variance mainly consists of an overspend on placements of £3.700m (Quarter 2 £3.382m) and staffing of £2.465m (Quarter 2 £2.601m), offset by some underspends, including a part year underspend of £0.464m resulting from the new internal children's home opening part way through the financial year.
- The service continues to carry out work on a number of areas to address the placements overspend including initiatives to rebalance the 'Placement Mix'; recruiting and retaining internal foster carers; the opening of our own children's home; Early Help wrap around services to children-in-need families; and wrap around support to foster carers to assist in stepdown from residential care. In addition, the service is working with commissioning colleagues to explore other placement options.

Education remaining service overspend of £2.640m (increase from Quarter 2 of £0.932m)

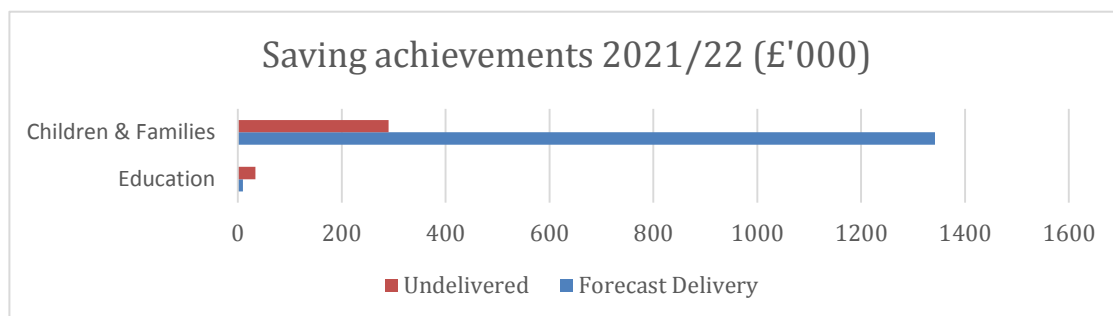
- The primary driver of this overspend is the Children with Disabilities (CwD) forecast overspend of £2.073m (an increase of £0.203m since Quarter 2). The service incurs high unit costs from increasingly complex needs for which the supply of high-quality specialist placements is low; and the use of emergency placements which can be both necessary and expensive. There is continued work to commission cost-beneficial spot contracts; to review strategies and

options to secure quality and affordable placements and to move and maintain more children at Early Help stage.

- The increase from Quarter 2 is mainly driven by a large increase in projected expenditure on mainstream transport for pupils. The new academic year has triggered a large change in demand (post Quarter 2) of £1.358m. As a result of this significant change a review has been instigated by the Strategic Director for Communities to review the process for projecting and reviewing demand and expenditure (especially for the early months of the financial year, prior to the commencement of the new academic year).

4.2. Delivery of the Savings Plan

4.2.1. The savings targets and forecast outturn for the Services are shown below in Chart.



Of the five Children & Families saving plans two are expected to deliver with three having forecasted a shortfall at Quarter 3 totalling to £0.290m (17.7% of the target).

Education has two saving plans for the current financial year totalling to £0.044m, the service is forecasting not to achieve £0.034m in relation to savings on third party spend.

4.3 Capital Programme

4.3.1. Table 9 below shows the approved capital budget for the Services, new schemes, and any delay into future years.

| Service | Approved | New projects in year | Budget Reprofile | Net over / underspend | Total capital programme | Delays | Forecast In year capital spend | Delays % |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|---|-------------|
| | 2021-22 capital programme | | | | | | | |
| | £'000 | | | | | | | |
| Education Services | 32,514 | 1,362 | 0 | (224) | 33,652 | 0 | 33,652 | 0% |
| Children & Families | 492 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 492 | 0 | 492 | 0% |

Table 9

The current economic situation, both nationally and internationally post Covid-19, is likely to have an impact on the delivery of the capital programme in the short to medium term. Inflation, material shortages and supply chain issues are creating uncertainty and a challenging delivery environment.

5.0 Management of Risk

- 5.1 Strategic risks were updated and assessed by Corporate Board in January 2022. Those strategic risks that align to the Committee's remit and Council Plan priority areas are reported at Appendix A, along with mitigation strategies and an indication of the direction of travel for each risk.
- 5.2 All service risk registers were also updated by Assistant Directors and service risk owners in January. The highest rated risks and movements in risk levels are then reported to respective Directorate Leadership Teams for senior leader oversight and assurance on mitigation actions. Directorate level risk reporting will continue to evolve in 2022/23, making use of Power BI to report aggregated risk and provide a facility to drill down to risk register information.
- 5.3 Strategic areas of risk that are assessed as high (red rating) or with increasing levels of residual risk due to a challenging external environment include:
 - The risk that inequalities, which were compounded by the Pandemic across a range of social, economic, education and well-being indicators, are sustained with cost-of-living increases, despite targeted catch up activity in schools, social care, community health & well-being and support for businesses.
 - The risk of ongoing pressure on SEND resources and targeted services to support the increasing population of students with Education Health Care Plans continues to present service delivery and financial challenges. These are being addressed through the SEND programme and Medium term

Financial Strategy, including actions to address improvement areas identified in Ofsted's SEND Local Area Inspection.

5.4 There are Council wide strategic risk themes which impact on delivery of services for Children and Young People:

- The sustained risk of inflationary pressures putting pressure on direct costs, service budgets, service continuity and affordability; and
- Workforce resilience and impact on service capacity and individual well being, particularly in customer contact roles.

6. Supporting Papers

A copy of the full report and supporting documents that went to Cabinet on the 17th February is available via the committee system.

7. Environmental Implications

None specific to this report.

8. Background Papers

None

| | |
|---------------------|--|
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Appendix A

1. Strategic Risk Update, Corporate Board 17 January 2022, for reporting to C&YP OSC

For each strategic risk, a **residual risk score is applied, using a consistent risk assessment matrix [(impact x likelihood) + impact]**. The positive impact of existing control and mitigation measures is also considered.

| Priority Areas and Risk Appetite | Risk number (Corporate Risk Register) | Mitigation Approach | Lead Directorate | Residual Risk Scores Corporate Board assessment | | | |
|--|--|---|------------------|--|----------|--------------|---------------------|
| | | | | Feb 2021 | Oct 2021 | January 2022 | Direction of Travel |
| Vibrant Economy and Places | 03. Risk of education and skills gaps widening and inability to catch up to regain pre-pandemic levels of attainment after restricted access to school learning settings, lasting mental health and child development impacts. | Social Inequalities Strategy Education Strategy. WRIF investment allocations and new WCC business support funds to expand new skills and learning opportunities. | Communities | 16 | 12 | 12 | ➡ |
| Best Lives | 05. Risk of Post Pandemic widening of social and health inequalities and inability to catch up, compounded by challenges in healthcare catch up and cost of living increases, e.g., increased waiting lists for treatments and the emergence of long covid, resulting in worsening outcomes for our communities. | Community Powered Warwickshire programme and access to levelling up initiatives and catch up funds. People Strategy & Commissioning Plans 2020-22. Health, Well Being and Self Care, Integrated and Target support. | People | 16 | 16 | 16 | ➡ |
| Risk Appetite: Community safety and well being, Safeguarding. | 06: Risk of failings in the protection of vulnerable children in our communities and the potential for legal and reputational damage to the Council. | Children and Families service plan and owned strategies; Children & Families Improvement Action Plan implemented, services rated as “good” Jan 22. Child Friendly Warwickshire Strategy. | | 10 | 10 | 10 | ➡ |
| (Minimalist) | 08: Risk of continued and increasing levels of disruption to care markets and impacts on the supply of core provision and cost pressures from inflation, demand and legislative changes. | Integrated Commissioning approach provides some flexibility to respond to pressure points. Market viability framework; market intelligence and engagement will inform market analysis and future plans (fee levels, provider support). | | 12 | 12 | 16 | ⬆ |
| | 13. Risk of insufficient resources to match the increasing demand for SEND provision and not achieving our SEND and Inclusion ambitions, worsening outcomes for our communities, damaging the council’s financial resilience and potential for reputational damage to the council. | Education Strategy Closing the Gap Board review. SEND & Inclusion Change Programme and oversight of Ofsted Local Area inspection improvement actions (Local Area Written Statement of Action). Progress on all sub projects is overseen by the Better Lives Delivery Group. | Communities | Escalated from Service Risk level | 16 | 16 | ➡ |

Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

16th March 2022

Progress in the Children and Families Front Door (Formally the MASH)

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 Committee note the updated report detailing the changes and progress made to the Children and Families Front Door, formally the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Warwickshire's Safeguarding Partnership established the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in 2016. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs are structures designed to facilitate information-sharing and decision-making on a multi-agency basis through co-locating staff from the local authority, health agencies, the police, and other partners.
- 2.2 Since 2016 there have been several changes both to legislation, guidance and organisational constructs across not only in Children and Families Services but partner agencies as well. In addition, Warwickshire Children and Families Service were part way through an Ofsted Inspection (March 2020) which was abandoned due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. During the time Ofsted were undertaking the inspection they raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of the MASH.
- 2.3 Warwickshire Children and Families Service and partner agencies, making up the Chief Officer Board, agreed to undertake a review of the MASH in October 2020. The purpose of the review was to look at; the current structure, operating model and delivery of services to children and families to establish if it is safe, efficient, robust and whether it offers best value in terms of resource allocation.

- 2.4 In December 2020 a new permanent Service Manager overseeing the MASH, Initial Response Team, Emergency Duty Team and Family Information Service started and following this, a new Operations Manager was appointed in February 2021.
- 2.5 The outcome of the review was the development of an Integrated Front Door, which was agreed by partners and its development a major priority within the Service, with the new model officially launching in September 2021.
- 2.6 The Ofsted Report published in February 2022 highlighted the progress made in the Front Door noting this was an area of focus for Senior Managers, the benefits of the new structure, quality of management oversight and strong partnership relationships as some of its strengths.
- 2.7 Ofsted did highlight that it found a couple of examples where it felt a Strategy Discussion should have taken place, statutory multi agency meeting, adding to the planning around a concern. Whilst noting that they did not feel the outcomes would have changed in the examples they reviewed.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 None.

4. Environmental Implications

- 4.1 None.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 The review of the MASH included consultation with a number of Teams and Services, including within the Children and Families Service, Police, Health, Education, MARAC/MAPPA Chairs, Probation and Commissioning. Targeted Focus Groups also took place with operational staff. In addition, performance information was reviewed, quality assurance activity was undertaken for the review and consultation with the draft threshold document.
- 5.2 There is no single model for the establishment of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub however a consistent purpose is that through the co-location and integration of partnership agencies alongside children's social care; there will exist a safe environment in which to share information about children and families. This enables more accurate assessment of need/risk and subsequently better identification and provision of services.

- 5.3 The sharing of information, between partners is a critical function of a MASH, however this should only be required if the threshold of need cannot be determined by the information contained within the contact and from the information already known by the Children and Family's database. Warwickshire MASH were viewed to have adopted the practice of information sharing on every child even if the threshold for intervention was clear, which contributed to the poor performance of the MASH. At the time of the aborted Ofsted and in subsequent months there was a backlog of contacts (referrals) within the MASH which was leading to a delay in decision making on safeguarding contacts.
- 5.4 The review raised issues in relation to the structures of the MASH and the number of partners engaged in safeguarding within this Hub. The lack of partners within the MASH were seen as indicative of a lack of clarity around the function of the MASH. It was also noted that the Early Help Service was not present within the MASH which takes away the potential for joint discussion which enables more holistic, informed decision making and reduces the risk of children and families being bounced from one part of the service to another and back.
- 5.5 MASH partners engaging in discussion and consultation about their service changes was highlighted as missed opportunities. In particular the report highlighted the need to review and define the roles and responsibilities of all partners within the MASH and to have a shared understanding of thresholds. Through this work it is hoped that the culture of the MASH begins to be more collaborative.
- 5.6 The main recommendation of the review was the development of an Integrated Front Door, moving the MASH from being the Children and Family's Front Door, to making it an element of a Front Door. The development of an Integrated Front Door would help ensure a focus on prevention, by supporting children and families at the earliest opportunity. The recommendations of the review were endorsed by the Chief Officer Board, chaired by Nigel Minns (Strategic Director – People) in March 2021.
- 5.7 The new Front Door model was developed to allow Children and Families Service to provide a holistic view. It created one pathway to support and publicise one number for all worries relating to children regardless of risk and complexity. This will simplify the process for the public and professionals and potentially reducing unnecessary social work interventions as we continue to focus the right support at the right time for children.

5.8 The Front Door consists of three interlinked Hubs, with their own distinct functions:

- Triage Hub – Initial Screening and Contact
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub – Complex/High Risk concerns
- Early Help and Support Hub – Support through early intervention

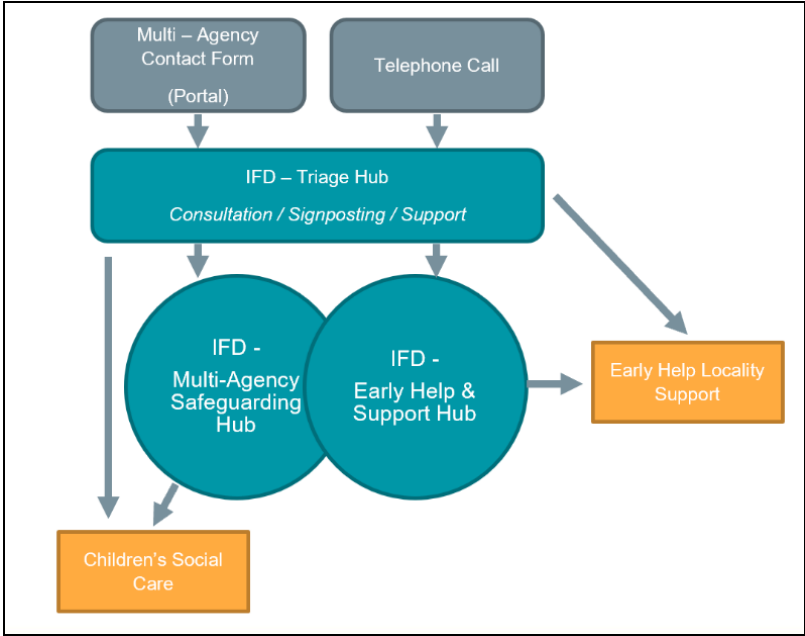


Table 1 – Front Door Structure

5.9 The Front Door saw a reshaping of the Children and Families workforce which saw both an investment of more experienced Social Workers, whilst investing in additional Child and Families Advisors to increase the availability of support to members of the public and professional referrers making contact with Safeguarding concerns.

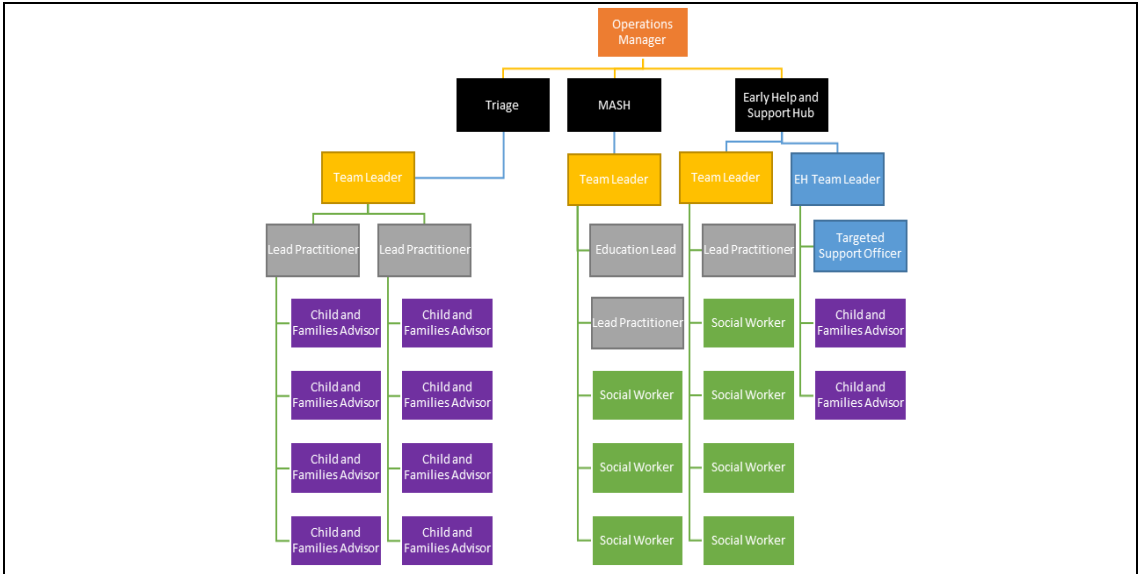


Table 2 – Front Door Children and Families Structure

- 5.10 In addition to reshaping the structure of Children and Families Front Door workforce, including bringing in Early Help, there has been a development of partnerships which have further enhanced the ability to ensure children and families can access the correct support. Established partners such as the Police and Health remain committed to the new approach, but other agencies include:

Refuge

Education

Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Probation

Child Exploitation

RISE (CAMHS)

COMPASS – Young People’s Substance Misuse Support

- 5.11 The new structure has seen performance in relation to both qualitative and quantitative measures show significant progress with timeliness of decision making, within three working days, increasing from 50% in February 2021 to consistently above 85% from August 2021. Changes to the form used by the Front Door and the service’s performance reporting from February 2022 will support drives to improve performance even further. Quality Assurance, including multi-agency audits, take place regularly with a continued learning approach adopted by the Service alongside core partners.

- 5.12 Ofsted noted in the Inspection report that:

Senior managers have strengthened the arrangements to manage contacts and referrals to ensure that they are timely and effective. The integrated front door, composed of three hubs, operates cohesively and efficiently, providing a clear structure for allocation and completion of work. Strong relationships with partner agencies ensure that information is shared and action agreed to support and improve the circumstances of children and families, such as an agreement with schools to provide children with counselling and preventative work around exploitation. Consent from parents to share information between agencies is sought when necessary.

Managers provide clear direction and regular oversight to inform decision-making and planning. When serious safeguarding concerns arise, action is taken to ensure the immediate safety of children.

Domestic abuse contacts are managed well through a daily triage meeting with the police and social care within the multi-agency safeguarding hub.

Partner agencies consider a wide range of factors, such as the family history and the impact on the child, so that if patterns emerge, even if the risks are considered to be low, consideration is given to referring the family for early help support to prevent further escalation.

- 5.13 Ofsted did note that in a small number of cases that a Strategy Discussion should have taken place. They noted, *'for these children, information was shared, and safety plans put in place, but a subsequent review of any pattern of concerns would not highlight that the threshold of a risk of significant harm had previously been met'*. The Service is taking the learning from this, which will include additional quality assurance of decision making in the Front Door in relation to both those have a Strategy Discussion and those cases progressing for further Social Care involvement, including from independent quality assurance auditors, to ensure that the learned is embedded.
- 5.14 The other area of challenge from the Front Door has been in relation to Covid-19 pandemic. During this period it has inevitably led to periods of peaks and troughs in referral numbers, most notably around reopening and closures of education settings. Additional resources were required within the MASH/Front Door have been required to meet the additional demand.
- 5.15 Contact (Referrals to Children's Services) remain high and work is ongoing with partner agencies to ensure the appropriateness of contacts to the Front Door. Due to the changes in how contacts and referral recording has taken place impacts direct comparisons with previous years is difficult. However, referral (Assessments) data shows that the rate per 10,000 increased from 382.50 in Q1 20/21 to 475.9 in Q1 in 21/22. This was the second highest increase in the West Midlands, behind only Coventry.
- 5.16 Work is ongoing with partners through the use of our new Spectrum of Support Document (June 2021) which replaced the Threshold document to support the identification of the appropriate support for children and young people dependent on their needs to ensure that appropriate contacts (referrals) come through to the Front Door.

6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 6.1 The Front Door have been through a significant amount of development over the last eighteen months and will continue to further strengthen as part of its development including learning from the one area noted in the Ofsted Report.
- 6.2 The next nine months will see the introduction of a Portal to support web based referring to the Front Door, which will improve both information security and to support an improvement in the quality of information completed when safeguarding concerns are raised by professionals.

7.0 Background Papers

None

8.0 Appendix

8.1 [Spectrum of Support](#)

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

- Members of the Children & Youth People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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SPECTRUM OF SUPPORT

**Guidance for all practitioners to work together
with children and families to provide early help
and specialist support.**



Warwickshire
Safeguarding

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WELCOME

We are very pleased to be introducing this updated guidance for supporting children and families in Warwickshire.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 - 'A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'.

- states that the safeguarding partners should publish a threshold document, which sets out the local criteria for action in a way that is transparent, accessible and easily understood.

When level of supports are understood by all professionals and applied consistently this will ensure that the right help is given to children and families at the right time. Taking a partnership approach from the start should mean that fewer children in Warwickshire are at risk of serious harm from abuse or neglect and in need of protection. By adopting the practices within this guidance, you will be promoting early intervention and prevention and helping avoid escalation of needs.

Most children and families welcome help and support from professionals involved in their lives but we need to recognise that for some children and families they will find this challenging. Skilled practitioners will be able to overcome those challenges by using the principles of restorative practice including empowerment, honesty and respect, encouraging family members and children to shape the decisions required to support them.

We hope that this revised guidance strikes the right balance between supporting practitioners from all settings to identify situations where children and young people might require support, recognising the vital role of professional judgement in assessing the impact of risk and protective factors on positive outcomes for children and young people.

Warwickshire Safeguarding Executive Board

INTRODUCTION

This guidance provides a framework for professionals who are working with children, young people and families, and aims to help identify circumstances when children may need additional support to achieve their potential. The Spectrum of Support provides information on the levels of children's needs and gives examples of some of the factors that may indicate when a child or young person needs additional support or protection.

There are four different levels of need from universal services which are available to all children and include education and health, extra and targeted support for those children who need additional support to reach their potential and specialist support where the issues are complex and may include concerns about safeguarding.

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The Stepped Approach diagram on page 6 is a representation of how the extent and complexity of a child or young person's circumstances can move both up and down over time and provides a visual guide and a common language to discuss levels of need. The spectrum of support need is divided into 4 levels. The Stepped Approach is followed by some descriptors of the levels of need as a quick reference guide and is accompanied by the Triage Tool.

The principle of ensuring that children, young people and their families experience the service at the right time with minimal disruption and change is crucial to service delivery. This document provides a



more detailed explanation of when an Early Help Pathway to Change Assessment and Action Plan are appropriate and when an assessment by Children and Families Service should be considered.

The Warwickshire Safeguarding Board are required to publish a multi-agency threshold document that includes:

- The process for the Early Help Pathway to Change Plan and the type and level of early help services to be provided
- The criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to children's social care for assessment and for statutory services
- This should be read in conjunction with the Assessment Framework which are in the West Midlands Regional Child Protection procedures manual ([view here](#))

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

Restorative Practice is the theory of change that has been adopted by Warwickshire's Children and Families Service. The purpose is to build empathy, collaboration, authenticity and the development of meaningful relationships. Warwickshire have chosen to use this change model as it is proven to have created demonstrable and sustained change in families lives. The impact of implementing and embedding Restorative Practice means that documents, processes, meeting formats have changed, as well as the way we communicate and work with all people. For more information about Restorative Practice visit [Safeguarding Warwick](#)



SPECTRUM OF SUPPORT

THE STEPPED APPROACH

The Stepped Approach is a visual representation of the Spectrum of Support available to ensure children and their families access the right support at the right time. They are as follows:

A family maybe accessing one or many of these types of service at a time.



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SPECTRUM DESCRIPTIONS



UNIVERSAL HELP

Children and young people have needs that are met within universal provision (such as through their GP or school).

All children and young people have a right to universal services, such as maternity services at birth, health visiting, schools, and health providers. In addition, information advice and guidance is available through the web pages of the Family Information Service webpages and helpline. Universal services seek, together with parents, carers and families to meet all the needs of children and young people so that they are happy healthy and able to learn and develop securely.



EXTRA HELP

Children and young people with extra needs that can be met through a single agency response and/or partnership working.

Many children and young people require some additional support. Parents and carers usually access these services for their children by applying directly to them or by asking the relevant universal service to help them. Some services can be accessed directly by young people. Children with 'extra' needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as children and family centres, Early Help family support workers or schools, organising additional support with local partners as needed.

Where the needs are such that there are a number of services involved it will be advisable to assess the child or young person's needs under Early Pathway to Change Plan with an appointed lead professional.

This extra help should be recorded on a plan and its effectiveness be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that outcomes are achieved.



TARGETED HELP

Children and young people with complex needs may require a targeted, coordinated response with a lead professional.

Some children and young people and their families have more complex needs requiring the provision of coordinated, targeted and enhanced services following an Early Help Pathway to Change. Where targeted help is required, a lead professional will coordinate the child's plan, to support the child, young person and parent(s). This also includes step downs from children's social care to ensure the continuation of support once the identified level of risk has reduced.



SPECIALIST HELP

Children and young people with acute or severe needs or is a child in need of protection.

Specialist services are where the needs of the child are so great that statutory and/or specialist help is required to keep them safe or to ensure their continued development. This will usually include Children and Families Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (RISE) Tier 3 & 4 or Youth Justice Service.

There are some children whose needs are so complex that they will not reach their potential without specialist/statutory provision, or where they would be at risk from harm if such services were not available to them. These children need to be referred to the appropriate specialist/statutory service so that they can be appropriately assessed and provided with intervention to improve their life chances and to ensure they are safe. Where there is an allocated social worker, they will assume the role of lead professional ensuring that there is a multi-agency plan of intervention. This can be through a child in need plan, a child protection plan, through a all about me review or pathway plan.

The intervention of specialist/statutory provision is in addition to universal services and often in collaboration with those services already working with the family such as early help/targeted support.

It is important that children and young people have access to the right services at the right time and can move through the spectrum of support, stepping down when the levels of need or risk diminish and stepping up if levels of risk or need increase. Equally important in the safeguarding of children and young people are practitioners who work collaboratively, reflectively and with professional curiosity keeping the child at the centre of their practice.

UNDERSTANDING LEVELS OF SUPPORT - TRIAGE TOOL

It is important when deciding about level of support to; gather as much information as possible, to use professional judgement, to keep the child at the centre, to listen to the child/family and work collaboratively with partner agencies.

The triage tool has been developed to be transparent and clear about the Spectrum of Support and the document seeks to support professional discussion to ensure the child and family receive the right support at the right time. If there is disagreement between services, the resolution should be through the restorative practice approach of open and honest professional challenge. There is a Professional Escalation Protocol for addressing contested decisions within the West Midlands Child Protection procedures manual. ([view here](#)).

The tables which follow are intended to provide a quick reference, by giving examples of the types of need experienced by children and young people at each level of need.

Children and Families Triage Tool

KEY:

GREEN issues only = information, advice and guidance / signposting

1 **YELLOW** or **ORANGE** issue = single-agency response

2 or more **YELLOW** and/or **ORANGE** issues = multi-agency response

Any **PURPLE** issues = specialist support (non - Early Help)

| | Green = Universal Help | Yellow = Extra Help | Orange = Targeted Help | Purple = Specialist Help |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Family members have their developmental, physical and mental health needs met | Green Minor concerns regarding child's development Child occasionally misses health checks Adult / child has minor physical health issues Adult / child has low level mental health issues and dips in emotional well-being Adult / child at risk of / occasional incident of substance/ alcohol misuse Adult / child has poor presentation / is socially isolated | Yellow Child has poor attachments Child has SEND or speech and language difficulties Child has delay in meeting developmental milestones Family members are missing health appointments Adult / child has some physical or mental health needs Adult / child is impacted by historical substance / alcohol misuse Child is at early risk stage in substance use Teenage pregnancy in household Adult / child has poor presentation / personal hygiene | Orange Child is not meeting some developmental milestones Child is displaying some signs of emotional behavioural disorder Adult / child has chronic or recurring health problems Family is not engaging with health professionals Adult / child has disabilities which impact access to services Adult / child is at harmful substance use / misuse stage Adult / child's mental health needs are not being met | Purple Child is not meeting developmental milestones or there is evidence of non-organic failure to thrive Child is displaying significant signs of emotional behavioural disorder Adult / child has significant unmet mental health needs incl. self-harm or suicide attempts Child has a life threatening eating disorder Child is pregnant / teenage parent under the age of 13 Substance dependency is severely impairing development |
| Children and young people are accessing their full entitlement to education | Green Child has episodes of lateness / incidents of absence from school Child is at risk of fixed term exclusion Child's behaviour in school is leading to risk of exclusion | Yellow Child has over 10% average absence from school Child has episodes of truancy Child has 1-2 fixed term exclusions from school during the last three terms Child is in alternative provision for behaviour problems Child is persistently late Pre-school child is not accessing early years provision | Orange Child has 3+ exclusions, is at risk of permanent exclusion, or has been permanently excluded in last 3 terms Child is not registered with school or is missing from education Child is persistently absent from school Concerns around child's home education Educational setting cannot meet child's needs Family not engaging with education professionals | Purple Child is continuously receiving fixed-term exclusions Child has been permanently excluded and has no school place Child / young person is on a part-time timetable for 3 months, with no clear reintegration plan Significant concerns regarding a home educated child that has not been seen within 12 months |
| Children and young people are safe from crime, exploitation and ASB | Green Child displaying early signs of low level anti-social or offending behaviour Family is exposed to low levels of community criminal activity or anti-social behaviour Concerns around a child / young person's safety online Child is displaying signs of developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour | Yellow Child / young person has had a missing episode Child is displaying potential offending behaviour Child of prisoner / parent with community orders Family is experiencing harassment or discrimination Evidence child is being groomed / targeted for purposes of exploitation Child is displaying potentially unhealthy / unsafe sexual behaviour Household member is being discussed in ASB forums or has an active ABC | Orange Child / young person has had multiple missing episodes Child is at risk of arrest Family impacted by prison sentence / release of significant person Adult / child is displaying extremist views Family at risk of harm due to harassment or discrimination Indicators present that child is being exploited Child's sexual behaviour is unsafe and/or unhealthy Household member is being considered for injunction / CBO Persistent police call-outs to family address | Purple Child has offended Child has repeated missing episodes of longer duration Child is displaying harmful behaviour towards other children Adult / child is engaging others in extremist views Family is repeated victim of harassment or discrimination Child is victim of exploitation and/or at risk of trafficking Child's sexual behaviour has led to police enquiry / strategy meeting Family member is at risk / victim of faith-based abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence or FGM |
| Families are financially stable, appropriately housed, and work ready | Green Family has debts that are not well managed Credits and support allowances are not being claimed Adult is claiming out of work benefits or Universal Credit and is subject to work-related conditions Change in family finances due to divorce, new baby, separation, sickness, reduction in working hours, etc Family at risk of social exclusion due to finances Family has 1-2 months rent arrears (no repossession action) | Yellow Young person is at risk of becoming NEET, or is NEET Poor home environment impacting on family's health Family is overcrowded or in temporary accommodation Family is benefit dependent or has unmanageable debt Family has poor access to core services Major change in family's finances due to divorce, death, separation, disability, loss of employment Family has 2-3 months rent arrears / repossession action has started | Orange Family is at risk of becoming homeless Family is significantly impacted by poverty or worklessness Family has no recourse to public funds / dependent on charity Transient family is not accessing services Family is reliant on emergency service such as food banks Family has 4+ months rent arrears / served eviction notice Home conditions are poor, overcrowded and/or putting child at increased risk of harm | Purple Family have been evicted Young person over 16 is presenting as homeless Family is intentionally homeless Family is in extreme poverty which is significantly affecting child well-being Home conditions are putting child at significant risk of harm |
| Parents and carers feel well-supported, skilled and confident in their parenting | Green Parent / carer experiences occasional behavioural challenges Occasional incidents of inconsistent care arrangements or poor supervision by parent or carer Occasional incidents of poor parent-child relationship Unclear boundaries and routines in place, including around bedtimes, mealtimes etc Parent / carer is isolated and / or lacks support networks Child lives in household where other household members have care needs | Yellow Parent / carer experiences regular behavioural challenges Inconsistent care arrangements, supervision and lack of routines and boundaries Parent-child relationship is impacting child well-being Parent / carer has poor response to emerging needs Parent / carer is not maintaining home conditions Parental isolation is impacting family well-being Child is a young carer | Orange Parent / carer experiences persistent behavioural challenges Evidence of persistently poor parent-child relationship / inconsistent parenting and/or care arrangements Parent / carer has barriers to parenting due health and/or development needs, or own lived experiences Parent / carer presents as non-compliant with professionals Parent / carer has been prosecuted under the Education Act Child is undertaking a regular caring role of parent / carer | Purple Child's behaviour is beyond parental control Child is suspected / actual victim of abuse or neglect Parent / carer encourages abusive or offending behaviour Parenting / care arrangements put child at risk of harm Professional judgement that parents / carers are persistently non-compliant or are disguising compliance Child is not protected from adults who poses risk of harm Parental control is undermined by exploitation or other factors Child is continuously undertaking role of parent / carer |
| Family members are free from parental conflict, domestic abuse and violence | Green Parent relationships are mostly equal and co-operative but there are some unresolved or recurring difficulties One or both parents report lack of open and honest communication, with difficulties minimised, not recognised or addressed Conflict between adults beginning to adversely impact on children | Yellow Parent relationship is at risk of breakdown Inter-parental conflict is persistent and unresolved Concerns raised about previous domestic abuse Adult / child in the household is suffering from the impact of previous domestic abuse or violence Child is impacted by persistent unresolved conflict between adults | Orange Inter-parental conflict at risk of becoming violent Parent reports experiencing controlling or abusive behaviour Mental health of family members is impacted due to domestic abuse or violence Parents are not engaging with professionals around healthy relationships Children are showing significant signs of distress due to parental conflict | Purple Child is at risk of significant harm from domestic abuse Family experiences a combination of domestic abuse with substance misuse and/or mental health issues Adult is victim of coercive control and physical harm, or fear of violence / death Adult relationship has a clear abuser and victim Child is significantly adversely affected or traumatised by abusive adult relationships |

Children and Families Triage Tool

This tool is designed to be used by professionals and families, to map out issues or concerns for **all family members** and identify the **right level of support** for the family. Taking a **whole-family approach** is important because evidence shows this improves the likelihood of **positive outcomes** and reduces re-referral rates. Please use the examples provided on the guidance page to help you talk to the family and other professionals about the **types of issues** the family is facing, **how serious** the issue is, and how the family should be **supported to make progress**.

| | Green = Universal Help | Yellow = Extra Help | Orange = Targeted Help | Purple = Specialist Help |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Family members have their developmental, physical and mental health needs met | Green | Yellow | Orange | Purple |
| Children and young people are accessing their full entitlement to education | Green | Yellow | Orange | Purple |
| Children and young people are safe from crime, exploitation and ASB | Green | Yellow | Orange | Purple |
| Families are financially stable, appropriately housed, and work ready | Green | Yellow | Orange | Purple |
| Parents and carers feel well-supported, skilled and confident in their parenting | Green | Yellow | Orange | Purple |
| Family members are free from parental conflict, domestic abuse and violence | Green | Yellow | Orange | Purple |

EARLY HELP

Early Help is the term used in Warwickshire to describe all support offered to potentially vulnerable children, young people and their families. The purpose of Early Help is to put in the right support at the right time so that problems are less likely to escalate to a point where the child becomes vulnerable or in need of specialist support. Early Help is sustainable so that problems are less likely to reoccur.

'Early Help' refers to all the support available to children, young people and families before formal intervention (such as when children are placed on a child in need or child protection plans or taken into the care of the council).

This includes universal services that are designed to improve outcomes for all, such as Children and Family Centres, open access youth services and health visiting. While early help is led by local authorities, the local offer usually includes the work of a range of agencies, including: the health system, schools, police and the voluntary community sector. (Early Intervention Foundation 2018)

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An Early Help Pathway to Change Plan can be initiated by any professional who has attended the Warwickshire 2-hour training. This will enable the needs of the child, young person and their family to be identified and the best services to be co-ordinated to meet their needs. The lead professional will organise a family support meeting with the parent(s) young people and relevant services to co-ordinate the Family Support Plan.

Effective Early Help relies upon local agencies working together to identify children and young people and their families who would benefit from Early Help; Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional need

- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
 - Is a young carer
 - Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
 - Is frequently missing from home
 - Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
 - Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
 - Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
 - Has returned home to their family from care
 - Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
 - Is a privately fostered child
 - Is exhibiting any other signs of vulnerability
- (Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2020)

Providing early, extra or targeted help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focus on activity will significantly improve the outcomes for the child. Before determining what services are to be provided for a particular child or young person, so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with the child's welfare, professionals will consider the child or young person's perception of their circumstances and what they want to change and any ideas they have about what will help.



CONSENT

Early Help is a voluntary and consensual. Where parents or a young person do not consent to Early Help, or do not use the services offered, then the lead professional should make a

judgement as to whether, without significant help, the needs of the child will escalate.

The Early Help Directory can be used to determine what agencies can support the family without formal Early Help as well as the use of the Family Support Line or Family Information Service.

STEP UP

An early discussion with the targeted support officer or the early help social workers can support decision making.

Ultimately, if it is determined the lived experience of the child is unlikely to change and outcomes may be compromised, a referral to the Children and Families Front Door may be necessary and **an assessment by Children and Family Service may be appropriate and can be referred under the 'step-up procedures'.**

STEP DOWN

A new Early Help Pathway to Change is not required to be initiated, if there is a recent assessment completed by children's social care or a current multi-agency plan (such as a mental health plan) which can then be used to 'step-down services' to be delivered by Early Help. The social worker who conducted the assessment will determine what family needs are still to be supported and will seek consent from the family to step the case down to Early Help.

The recently completed Child and Family Assessment will determine what support will be continued by Targeted Early Help.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to make arrangements to promote cooperation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners and such other persons or bodies working with children in the local authority's area as the authority considers appropriate. The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the well-being of all children in the authority's area, which includes protection from harm and neglect.

Children's social care become involved when children require more specialist intervention in accordance with the Children Act 1989, such as:

- S17 (child in need) or
- Children with a long-lasting and substantial disability which limits their ability to carry out the daily tasks of living,
- Children and young people with severe and complex special educational needs and disability (SEND) requiring an education health and care plan (EHCP) and potentially a specialist educational placement
- S47 (child protection)

Children's social care has a responsibility to respond under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. That is, children whose development would be significantly impaired if services are not provided. This includes children who have a long lasting and substantial disability, which limits their ability to carry out the tasks of daily living. The local authority has a general duty to provide services to children who are children in need by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/17> although those services may be provided by a range of agencies .

A multi-agency contact (referral form) to children's social care is appropriate when more substantial interventions are needed because the child is 'in need' or where a child's development is being

significantly impaired because of the impact of complex parental mental ill health, significant learning disability, alcohol or substance misuse, or very challenging behaviour in the home.

A multi-agency contact is also appropriate where parents need practical support and respite at home because of a disabled child's complex care needs. In these situations, children's social care will work with families on a voluntary basis, often in partnership with other professionals, to improve the welfare of the children and to prevent problems escalating.

The second area of children's social care responsibility is child protection; that is where children's social care, with the help of other organisations, must make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, to determine whether a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

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There are no absolute criteria upon which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, and the severity of the emotional and physical impact on the child. It is important to consider age and context – babies and young children are particularly vulnerable – and parental factors such as history of significant domestic abuse, substance misuse or mental ill-health.

Significant harm could occur where there is a single event, such as a violent assault or sexual abuse. More often, significant harm is identified when there have been several events which have compromised the child's physical and psychological well-being; for example, a child whose health and development is severely impaired through neglect.

There may be a need for immediate protection whilst enquiries are carried out. This can be achieved; using police powers; an application to the family court for an emergency protection order; by consent of the parents pursuant to section 20 of the Children Act.

Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to complete a multi-agency contact to children's social care when it is believed or suspected that the child:

- Has suffered significant harm – child protection
- Is likely to suffer significant harm – child protection
- Has significant developmental or disability needs, which are likely only to be met through provision of children's social care family support services (with agreement of the child's parent) – children in need

Some children in need may require accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. This is where there is no one who has parental responsibility for them, because they are lost or abandoned or because the person who has been caring for them is prevented from providing them with suitable accommodation or care. The decision to seek a legal order or offer accommodation under Section 20 will be done in accordance with the department's procedures with the development of a child's plan designed to meet the specific level of need and risk.

Under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 the local authority can apply to the court for a child or young person to become the subject of a care order, where there is concern that the child concerned is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm attributable to the care being given to the child, or likely to be given if an order were not made, not being what it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give, or the child is beyond parental control. The court will only make a care order if it believes that it is better for the child than not making an order. Once a care order is made the local authority, as a corporate parent, sharing parental responsibility with the parent, must assess the child's needs and draw up a care plan which sets out the services which will be provided to meet the child's identified needs including how their parents will be supported to make the changes necessary for the child to return safely to their care.

At every level of need, the aim of the multi-agency plan for the child is to improve the life experiences and outcomes for the children and young people, by providing them and their families with the services they need in order to reduce their need for additional services. Following successful work with a family at the specialist help level, it is likely that a lead professional and Early Help Pathway to Change Plan will continue to be necessary for a period of time to help the family sustain the changes made and can be met following the 'step-down' procedures.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FRONT DOOR

Each agency will have its own safeguarding procedures which will detail how to identify and assess safeguarding concerns. However, further advice about supports needs and when to make a referral can be obtained from professionals own agency safeguarding leads or for Education by calling the **Front Door Education Lead** on **01926 418608**. Professionals contacting the Front Door cannot remain anonymous when seeking advice and children discussed should be identified to ensure effective advice is provided.

A referral to the front door needs to be made on the Multi Agency Contact Form (MAC) which can be accessed [here](#). The MAC form is the initial contact into the front door and work undertaken within the Front Door will determine whether the contact progresses to a referral and into children's social care. Other support from Early Help or signposting to other services may instead be recommended by the front door. All professionals must get parental consent before completing the Form and be clear with parents and carers or those with parental responsibility about the nature of the referral. Their consent must be sought verbally or in writing and recorded.

Consent should not be sought if doing so places a person at risk of significant harm or serious harm or would cause unjustified delay in making enquiries into significant harm or would prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime.

CHILDREN IN URGENT NEED OF PROTECTION OR THOSE SUFFERING SIGNIFICANT HARM

If you have concern that a child or young person may be in need of urgent protection or in significant harm, then the designated/named child protection service should be consulted and contact made with **Front Door** on **01926 414144** and/or the **Police** (in an emergency on **999**

or on 101) and/or **Emergency Out of Hours Social Work Service** on **01926 886922**. Please see Warwickshire Safeguarding Procedures online for more information www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk.

CONSULTATION

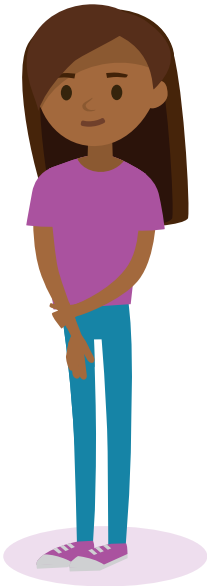
There are many professionals in the locality networks that can help give the **right advice and support at the right time**.

The pyramid of support helps practitioners know who they can talk to in the locality networks for help, advice and guidance. In addition to the front door education lead, Practitioners can seek a professional consultation with social worker in the front door to gain advice on Children's Safeguarding and Social Care support.

Consultation are available in the front door for all professionals seeking advice about children who they are concerned about. To undertake a consultation, a professional should telephone **01926 414144**.

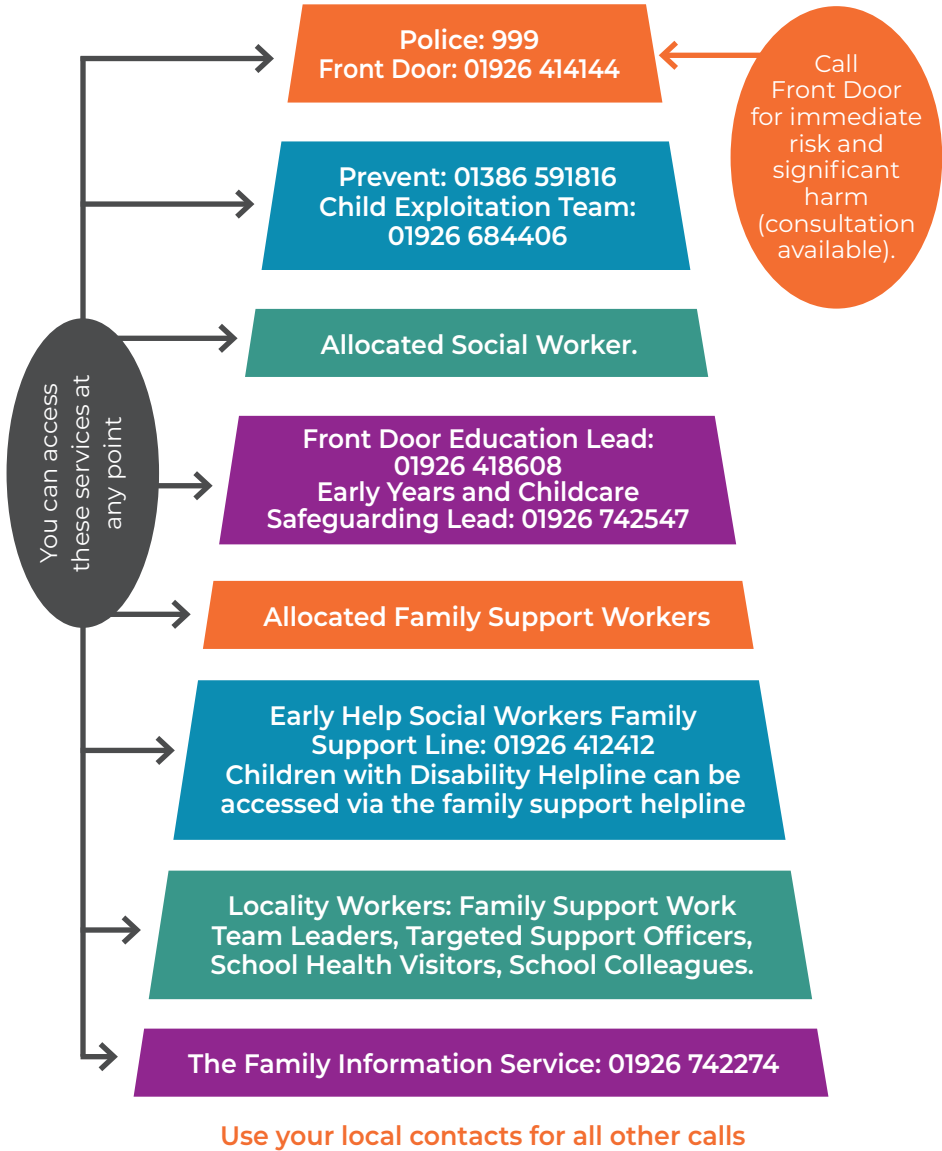
The front door will record the consultation against the child's details. The contacting professional is expected to follow the record keeping and information guidelines for their own agency, to record they have held a consultation.

The front door will not contact the family discussed but do expect professionals to discuss any concerns they have with the people who have parental responsibility for the child.



PYRAMID OF SUPPORT

WHO DO I CALL FOR HELP?



INFORMATION SHARING

Knowing when and how to share information isn't always easy. Usually parents say they are happy for you to talk to other professionals who can help them and their children.

'Effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential for effective identification, assessment and service provision' (Working Together 2015).

The Warwickshire Safeguarding Information Sharing Protocol can be found in the West Midlands Regional Child Protection Procedures ([view here](#)).



INFORMATION SHARING SEVEN GOLDEN RULES

1. The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement.
3. Seek advice from your manager if you are not sure.
4. If someone requests that some information is kept confidential then their wishes should be respected unless the sharing of the information is overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

NEW PRACTITIONER ESCALATION PROTOCOL





Warwickshire
Safeguarding

SUPPORTING



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Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

16 March 2022

Update on Child Protection

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Committee notes the updated report detailing Child Protection Performance in Warwickshire.
- 1.2 Children & Families to continue their programme of themed audits, focusing upon areas of practice where performance is below statistical neighbours or are identified for review. The next audit to focus on strategy discussion thresholds, given the recommended action in the recent OFSTED inspection.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 OFSTED noted that in Warwickshire “Children & Young People are made safer by effective multi-agency arrangements.” “Child in need & on child protection plans evidence progress in meeting needs, many children & families benefit from a wide range of support services & interventions” (22nd November – 3rd December 2021, WCC OFSTED Report page 3)
- 2.2 OFSTED’s findings are a positive acknowledgement of the fact that we know ourselves well & have used this knowledge to improve our child in need & child protection services. Although the recent widely reported deaths of children, are reminders of the need to avoid complacency and to ensure we seek ongoing improvement in our services.
- 2.3 The Covid pandemic provided challenges to our work but throughout the pandemic our offices remained open & our staff continued to visit households. Where necessary, even when people in the household had Covid. At times our staff were the only professionals seeing these vulnerable children. Given this, it is positive our services are stronger now than at OFSTED’s 2017 visit.
- 2.4 Warwickshire Children & Families have for four years undertaken a series of themed audits aimed at improving our child protection performance & services for Warwickshire families. These audits have been led by Calvin Smith,

Service Manager for Children's Safeguarding & Support. Other mechanisms are also in place, such as the Child Protection Escalation Panel, chaired by Jo Davies, Service Manager, Practice Improvement & Principle Social Worker. These mechanisms ensure we challenge ourselves & partners.

- 2.5 Audits are undertaken by key decision makers within Warwickshire's child protection services e.g., Operation Managers, Team Leaders, Independent Reviewing Officers, staff from Practice Improvement & Service Managers. The audit process changed in the pandemic from a face-to-face, to a Microsoft Teams process. We plan to return to the face-to-face process because we believe it enhances our action learning cycle. The last 2 audits considered children subject to repeat plans & those on plans for 3 months or less.
- 2.6 After each audit, the learning is shared in workshops with the teams who complete child protection investigations & when appropriate, key partners.
- 2.7 These audits provide a continuous cycle of improvement & have resulted in:-
- Our child protection numbers being in line with our statistical neighbours.
 - Our numbers of children subject to plans for over two years being below our statistical neighbour average.
 - Repeat plans, which were out of line when last reviewed by this committee are now below regional, national & statistical neighbour averages.
 - The one key area we have struggled to provide consistent performance improvement is the timeliness of initial child protection conferences.
- 2.8 In addition to seeking to improve the rates for key indicators reported annually in the DfE Child in Need return, the audits aim to monitor & improve factors impacting the experience families. For example, ensuring we capture the voice & experience of children, the participation of parents/carers, whether plans are SMART & if our processes met our Restorative Practice goals. We had identified that a minority of our plans were not SMART, a finding in line with OFSTED's conclusions. Work is in place to address this.
- 2.9 Over the past 4 years our child protection processes have become more robust & restorative. We will adopt the learning from the OFSTED inspection & our findings to ensure we maintain our cycle of continuous improvement.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

- 3.2 The Children & Families Service received an investment of £12m (£4.9m from the Department for Education). This has enabled 16 projects in total to be undertaken which all contribute to providing support earlier for families, to avoid escalation of need and for children to stay, where it is safe, with their parents or extended family. Audits & action plans have been completed within existing resources. Whilst the benefits from the investment in new ways of working & additional services are still being evaluated, our change of culture & provision of family support has contributed to the reduction in child protection numbers from a high four years ago of 592 to 415 on 22nd February 2022. This also allows Social Workers to focus upon support for children at a child in need level, to provide support earlier to stop escalation. For families these children in need & early help services are usually less traumatic interventions. This financial year we have issued fewer care proceedings to the Family Court than in any of the previous five years. OFSTED were positive about the fact that 45% of our Public Law Outline, pre-proceedings work with children subject to child protection plans diverts families from care proceedings. Whilst these actions are around cost avoidance, this is positive for our service budget & most importantly better for children and their families.

4. Environmental Implications

- 4.1 The use of Microsoft Teams for strategy discussions & hybrid child protection meetings has reduced travel needs, thereby lessening our carbon footprint.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 The cycle of audits began June 2018 with an objective to improve child protection performance. At the time our child protection numbers reached 592, a rate of 52.3 per 10,000, against a national rate of 43 per 10,000 & 36 per 10,000 for our statistical neighbours. Our first thematic audit concluded that children were no more likely to experience abuse in Warwickshire than in other parts of England but that we were at times inappropriately using child protection processes. Work focused on thresholds & encouraging the use of child in need processes rather than child protection. We set no targets & have supported managers to initiate child protection investigations whenever they think necessary, but we have encouraged reflection & professional challenge. The table below illustrates the progress of this work.

Table 1 Rate of Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan at 31 March per 10,000 of the 0-17 child population

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Warwickshire | 38.8 | 49.0 | 29.8 | 25.1 | 29.3 |
| Statistical Neighbours | 35.7 | 34.4 | 34.7 | 31.1 | 30.5 |
| England | 43.3 | 45.3 | 43.7 | 42.8 | 41.4 |

- 5.2 Child protection numbers have risen since Covid, most likely due to the pressures on families & their isolation from professionals. There has been a more significant increase since November 2021, following the reporting of Arthur & Star's deaths. This is a trend that often occurs after such nationally reported tragedies. On 31st January 2022 there were 401 children subject to child protection plans, or 33.7 per 10,000. We do not have up to date national data but it is likely other Local Authorities have seen similar rises. In the West Midlands, we know that from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3 the rate per 10,000 rose from 38.2 to 41.8. Warwickshire currently has the lowest child protection rate within the West Midlands. The auditing process builds in quality assurance safeguards to ensure the right children are subject to child protection plans. We are confident through our auditing that this remains the case & this was endorsed by OFSTED who found no children at risk of harm during their recent inspection. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude our performance in this area is good but we will never be complacent & continue our cycle of auditing to check, review and learn about our performance.
- 5.5 This second & fourth audits (June 2019 & May 202) considered long-running plans, as we were again out of line with our statistical neighbours. The audits clarified why plans were running long, which included waits for unnecessary assessments. Professionals had developed a pattern of requesting similar assessments on all children subject to a plan, rather than using those same resources to undertake direct work e.g. waiting for a 8 week parenting assessment, rather than completing an evidence based parenting course. We redirected recourses & completed training with teams, then repeated the audit process. It has resulted in a significant improvement in performance & reduced waiting times for families. The process has been supported via challenges from the Escalation Panel that reviews all long running plans.

Table 2 - shows Long Plans: The percentage of children who ceased to be the subject of a child protection plan during the year ending 31 March, who had been the subject of a child protection plan, continuously for two years or more.

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Warwickshire | 4.9% | 5.9% | 3.0% | 2.3% | 2.6% |
| Statistical Neighbours | 3.3% | 3.8% | 3.7% | 3.3% | 4.0% |
| England | 3.4% | 3.4% | 3.3% | 3.6% | 3.7% |

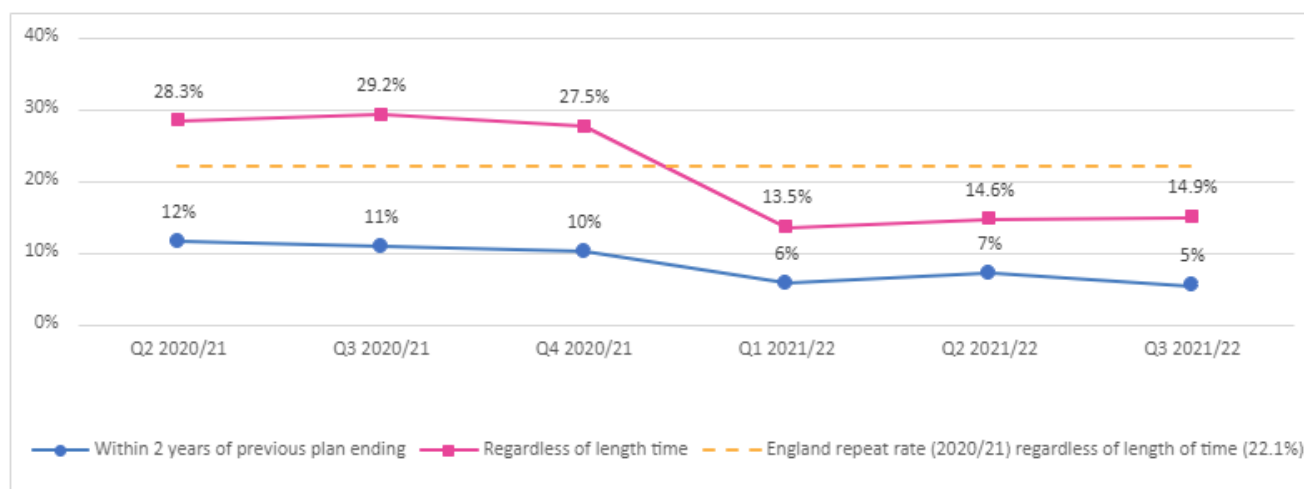
5.8 We do not yet have year-end figures for 2021/22 but this indicator has risen in Warwickshire, with professionals seemingly more anxious about ending plans during the pandemic, which is understandable. This is a trend that has been challenged & now seems to have changed; as more services recover from the pandemic. Positively, at the end of January 2022, we had no children subject to a child protection plan for over 2 years.

5.9 When last at Overview & Scrutiny (Sept 2020) we planned an audit on repeat child protection plans. Something we historically performed well on but that had declined at that time. Part of the decline was due to the fall in the total number of plans. Some months we had few repeat plans than previous years but because the total number of plans had reduced, the percentage rose.

Table 3 - Of all children who had a child protection plan initiated during the year, the proportion who became the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time.

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Warwickshire | 20.8% | 18.7% | 18.6% | 23.8% | 27.5% |
| Statistical Neighbours | 18.9% | 21.6% | 22.0% | 20.5% | 23.2% |
| England | 18.7% | 20.2% | 20.8% | 21.9% | 22.1% |

Graph 1 - Repeat child protection plans



- 5.10 As can be seen from the graph above we are now below our statistical neighbour average for repeat plans. The West Midlands reports on repeat plans within two years, the average for the region is currently 10.6%.
- 5.11 When we last reported to O&S the 1 indicator that we had really struggled to consistently improve was our timescales for initial child protection conferences (ICPC). The DfE sets a target of 15 days between strategy discussion & ICPC, to prevent drift. It is also unreasonable to expect families to wait for such an important meeting & one that causes so much anxiety.

Tables 4 & 5 % of children whose initial child protection conferences were held within 15 working days of the initiation of the s.47 enquiries which led to the conference

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Warwickshire | 76.8% | 72.6% | 83.1% | 67.8% | 69.6% |
| Statistical Neighbours | 80.4% | 84.9% | 84.5% | 82.4% | 85.5% |
| England | 77.2% | 76.9% | 78.7% | 77.7% | 83.0% |

| | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 | Dec 21 | Jan 22 |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Warwickshire | 55.3% | 51.4% | 94.4% | 100% | 61.9% |

- 5.12 We have conducted multiple audits, provided training & amended the procedures to clarify the process, yet to date consistency alludes us. We have recently introduced monthly performance meetings between Service Managers & Ops Managers & Team Leaders by team, to better understand & address issues. There is also a monthly report that managers use to explain & report reasons for any delay. We will resolve this issue, it is one of our performance priorities but it is taking longer than we wanted or expected.
- 5.13 Our most recent audit sought to explain & address the relatively high numbers of children on plans for less than 3 months. There are reasonable grounds for such plans e.g. the family move out of area or children come into care, but these are the same for all LA's. We wanted to understand what happened in Warwickshire for our performance to move above our statistical neighbours.

Table 6 - Short Plans: The percentage of children who ceased to be the subject of a child protection plan during the year ending 31 March, who had been the subject of a child protection plan for 3 months or less

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Warwickshire | 16.0% | 14.7% | 16.8% | 24.5% | 20.8% |
| Statistical Neighbours | 20% | 21% | 18% | 17% | 18% |
| England | 20% | 20% | 18% | 19% | 17% |

- 5.14 For our most recent audit we looked at the 56 families, 96 children who were on a plan for 3 months or less between May 2020 & June 2021. While the main reason for the short plans were those we expected; for 39% or 22 families, further investigation was required. Audits concluded that for 16 of these families, had not needed to be on a child protection plan. At times professionals appear uncertain of the risk level & opt to invoke the child protection process, “just in case”. Three months on when professionals know the family better, they end the plan as the threshold is not met. Had professionals accepted a “safe uncertainty” model & worked with the families on a child in need basis our performance would have improved. More importantly, this group of families could have avoided the stress & trauma of a child protection plan.
- 5.15 None of the 16 families identified, some of whom saw plans end in the summer of 2020 have been subject to another child protection process, which further supports the audits conclusions. These findings have been shared with managers & teams. It is believed this will help address any risk adverse approach & see this indicator improve.
- 5.16 All audits also track progress on key goals, e.g. embedding Restorative Practice; parental participation; the inclusion of children’s views & experience; and, monitoring SMART plans. The last audit saw a fall in the number of SMART plans from 84% to 73%. This finding is in line with what OFSTED found & was something already on our “Deep Dive” process to address. In the main we need to consistently provide timescales & contingency plans.
- 5.17 The audits continue to show that domestic abuse appears as a main cause for children to be on plans (to a level above the national average). The introduction of “Caring Dads” & its ongoing funding is a welcome additional service to help address this. This evidenced based perpetrator programme impressed OFSTED, especially because of the feedback from fathers.
- 5.18 The Warwickshire Family Safeguarding model being piloted in the North of the County, which sees Adult Mental Health, Substance Misuse & Domestic Abuse workers embedded in teams, is another evidence-based transformation programme that we believe will further improve our child protection service.
- 5.19 These new services & our internal processes illustrate our strategy of continuous evidenced based learning, services & improvement. A strategy that is proving successful in helping to keep Warwickshire children safe.

- 5.20 OFSTED questioned our number of strategy discussions & thresholds at the Front Door, suggesting we should hold more. They identified some children which they accepted would not have gone to a child protection conference but suggested a strategy discussion could have speeded the process up. We are satisfied that all children were seen & assessed in a timely manner & that our voluntary approach improved the experience for families & aided our ability to work with them. We also believe our approach is more in line with recommendations coming from Joshua McCalister's National Care Review.
- 5.21 Table 7 & 8 illustrate that our early child protection processes have not reduced in fact the reverse is true. Given our relatively low conversion rate between section 47 investigations & ICPC's when compared nationally & to our statistical neighbours, it is possible we are undertaking too many investigations.

Table 7 - Child Protection Activity

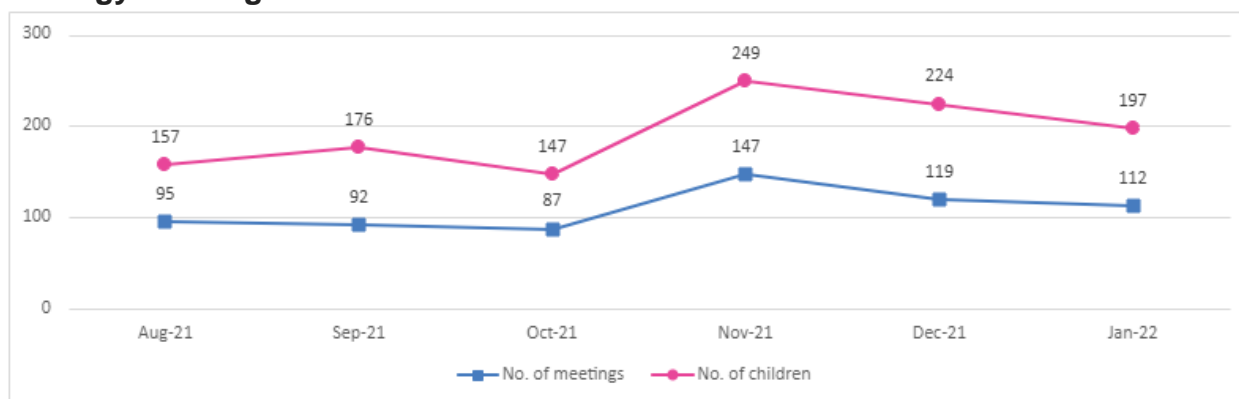
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Number of S47 Investigations initiated | 1290 | 1426 | 1205 | 1306 | 1685 |
| Number of Children subject to an Initial Child Protection Conferences during the year | 555 | 727 | 623 | 482 | 527 |
| Number of Child Protection Plans initiated during the year | 496 | 674 | 516 | 425 | 480 |
| Number of Child Protection Plans closed during the year | 532 | 545 | 734 | 473 | 424 |
| Number of Children subject to Plans at 31 March | 439 | 563 | 345 | 295 | 349 |

Table 8 - Conversion rate of Section 47 enquiries in the year to ICPCs in the year

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Warwickshire | 43% | 51% | 52% | 37% | 31% |
| Statistical Neighbours | 46% | 49% | 46% | 45% | 41% |
| England | 41% | 40% | 38% | 39% | 37% |

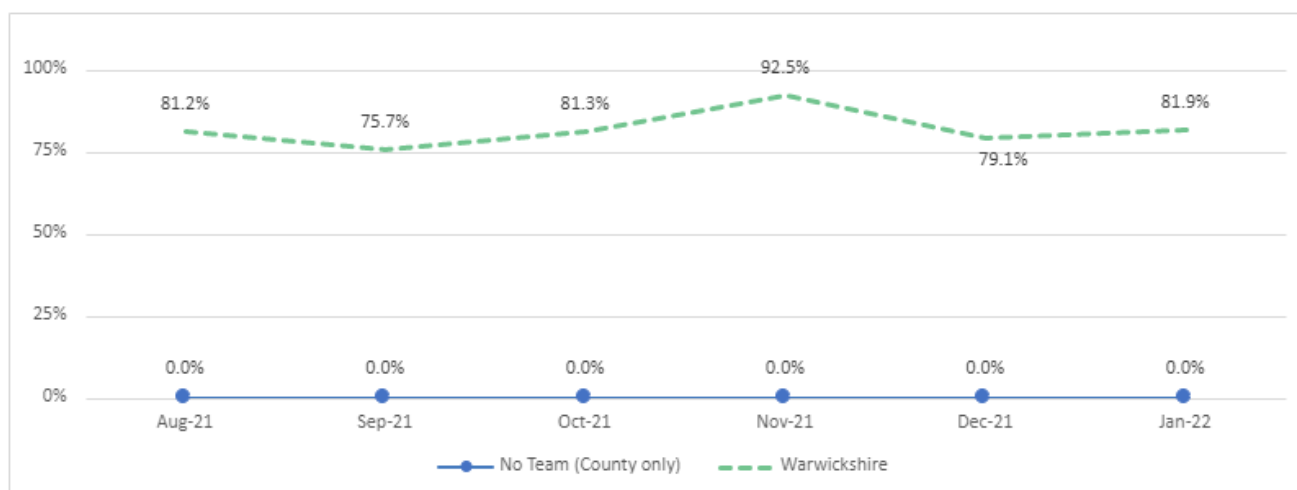
- 5.20 We do not report nationally on the number of strategy discussions that move on to a section 47/child protection investigation but again these numbers are significant & the graph below shows the impact of the widely reported deaths of Arthur & Star in November. An impact slow to return to more normal levels.

Graph 2 - Number of Strategy meetings & number of children that had a strategy meeting



5.22 A final key piece of our child protection process is the timeliness of our visits to children subject to plans. We are confident from audits & supervisions with social workers that these are taking place. The timeliness of recording visits is more problematic, being impacted by factors like sickness & caseloads. We measure if the visit has been recorded within 2 weeks & have a target of 90%. Graph 3 shows we are not meeting our recording target. This is being picked up with managers in our new monthly performance meetings.

Graph 3 – child protection visits



6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

6.1 We plan to continue to complete audits approximately every six months, allowing time to embed any changes before preparing for the next one. Our goal is a cycle of continuous improvement, embedding best practice & improving services for children in need of protection.

- 6.2 When OFSTED were with us, they questioned if we completed enough strategy discussions at our Front Door. They could not identify any children that did not have a strategy discussion, that would have gone on to have an ICPC. However, they felt at times our voluntary approach may have slowed the assessment process. Currently the National Care Review led by Joshua McCalister is looking at the rate of investigations, using the significant rise in Strategy Meetings as a key performance indicator. The National Care Review in their initial findings felt some local authorities focussed too much on investigation and assessment and not enough on support. Nationally there has been a very significant rise in Strategy Meetings, which are the only meeting held without family present. A large number of strategy meetings nationally occur but do not lead to a child protection conference. We are confident that generally we have the right balance with support and investigation but we do plan our next audit to focus upon the quality & threshold for strategy discussions, while also focusing on those important 15 days to ICPC. We plan for this to take place in April 2022, allowing time to complete an ongoing child in need audit.

Background Papers

Previously Review Paper August 2020 presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee 29th September 2020.

| | Name | Contact Information |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Report Author | Calvin Smith, Service Manager. | calvin.smith@warwickshire.gov.uk |
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| Portfolio Holder | Cllr Jeff Morgan | jeff.morgan@warwickshire.gov.uk |

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

- Members of the Children & Youth People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee: February 2022

| Meeting Date and status | Reports | Details |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| 22 February 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarter 3 Council Plan 2020-2025 Quarterly Progress Report (April 2021 to December 2021) Child Protection performance Progress of Integrated Front Door (MASH) | Meeting moved to 16 th of March 2022 |
| 11 April 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post Covid – impact on services (to include an update from RISE) Children and Families Workforce Strategy Review (including Social Worker Health Check) OFSTED Report | |
| 14 June 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different Futures – Annual Report 2022 Cultural Change in Children's Social Care – performance and sustainability plan (to include information on Keeping Families Together) Update on the SEND Written Statement of Action. | |
| 27 September 2022 | | |
| 8 November 2022 | | |
| 14 February 2022 | | |
| 11 April 2023 | | |

Outstanding Reports/Visits

- OFSTED Inspection report and action plan (postponed from 22 February 2022)
- Visit for the Committee to be arranged to the Warwickshire Academy (Formerly the PEARS site)
- Visit for the Committee to be arranged to the House Project

Future Items to be added to the Work Programme

- The recent SEND Inspection may generate items for the work programme
- Joint meeting with the Adult Social Care and Health OSC in relation to Mental Health and its impact on Children
- Children missing school/NEETS

Motions from Council

16 March 2021

Regarding the concerns raised with some local councillors and to maintain the high number of families accessing the aid of the Family Support workers across the county, this Council will maintain its commitment to the Family Support Workers' service and will continue to work with providers to ensure effective service delivery to those most in need and asks that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee keeps the Family Support Workers' service under review as part of its on-going performance monitoring

Briefing Notes/Information to be circulated outside the meeting

- Evaluation of Social Workers in Schools
- Post Covid – impact on services/RISE/Family Support Workers etc (ahead of April '22 meeting).
- Education Sufficiency Strategy – the methodology for forecasting numbers/places

Items on the Forward Plan relevant to the remit of the Committee

| Decision | Description | Date due | Decision Maker |
|--|-------------|----------|----------------|
| None to be noted at present (03/03/2022) | | | |

Next Committee Meeting – please note additional meetings may be added for additional agenda items such as performance reviews. These meetings will be held at Shire Hall, Warwick unless otherwise stated.

- 11 April 2022 @ 10am
- Meetings for 2022/2023 have been scheduled as follows –
 - 14 June 2022 @ 10am
 - 27 September 2022 @ 10am
 - 8 November 2022 @ 10am
 - 14 February 2023 @ 10am
 - 11 April 2023 @ 10am
- **Next Chair and Spokes Meeting - these meetings will be held virtually**
 - 30th March @10am

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