



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Town Hall, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA10 1HP**

**Telephone: 01744 676276 (Karl Allender)**

# **Agenda**

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date: Monday 24 April 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Room 10

### **Membership**

**Lab 6 Councillors** CD Banks, J Banks, T Long (Chair), McCormack, Osundeko and Sweeney

**Grn 1 Councillor** Sheldon

**LD 1 Councillor** Sims

**Inds 1 Councillor** Greaves

**NIW 1 Councillor** Maguire

**Co-opted (Voting)**

|               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Mr D Thorpe   | (Church of England)              |
| Mr C Williams | (Roman Catholic)                 |
| Miss A Kirman | Parent Governor (Primary)        |
| Vacancy       | Parent Governor (Secondary)      |
| Vacancy       | Parent Governor (Special School) |

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Title</u>   | <u>Page</u> |
|-------------|--|-------------|
| 1.          | <u>Apologies for Absence</u>                                   |             |
| 2.          | <u>Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2023</u>           | 3           |
| 3.          | <u>Declaration of Interests from Members</u>                   |             |
| 4.          | <u>Declaration of Party Whip</u>                               |             |
| 5.          | <u>Directors Report on Progress in Children's Services</u>     | 11          |
|             | Hillary Brooks Director for Children Services has been invited |             |
| 6.          | <u>Performance Report Quarter 3 2022/23</u>                    | 51          |

Hillary Brooks - Director for Children Services &  
Shirley Goodhew - Consultant in Public Health Have been invited

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Title</u>  | <u>Page</u> |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| 7.          | <u>Improving Employment Opportunities for Looked After Children and Care Leavers Task and Finish Group Recommendations Update</u><br>Dominic Tumelty – Head of Cwla/CL/Cwd Has been invited | 83          |
| 8.          | <u>Improving School Attendance Spotlight Review</u>   | 91          |
| 9.          | <u>Reducing Teenage Pregnancy in St Helens Spotlight Review</u>   | 101         |
| 10.         | <u>Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022/23</u>   | 113         |

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of this Committee held on  
9 January 2023

**(Present)**            **Councillor T Long (Chair)**  
**Councillors J Banks, Greaves, Maguire, Osundeko, Sheldon, Sims and Sweeney**

**(Also Present)**    **Councillor Charlton, Cabinet Member Children and Young People**

**(Not Present)**     **Councillors CD Banks and McCormack**

**Mr C Williams (Roman Catholic Church Representative)**  
**Mr D Thorpe (Church of England Representative)**  
**Miss A Kirman, (Parent Governor – Primary)**

-----

### 17    **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors CD Banks and McCormack.

### 18    **MINUTES**

\*        **Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2022, be approved and signed.**

### 19    **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of interest from Members were made.

### 20    **DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP**

No Declarations of party whip were made.

### 21    **IMPROVEMENT PROGRESS IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SINCE JULY 2022**

A report was submitted to provide an overview of the improvement journey in St Helens Children's Social Care in the last six months.

Members were informed that the last Ofsted monitoring visit in July 2022 and a subsequent meeting with the Department for Education (DFE) in August 2022 had been positive, in that they both evidenced the pace of improvement in St Helens. Since the summer, Leaders, Managers and staff had worked extremely hard to build on that momentum, and there was evidence of improved quality of practice and that the impact of the work with children and families was improving outcomes.

The demand for services was increasing, with a higher-than-average number of Children in Need (420 per 10,000 children); Child and Family Assessments completed (1028 per 10,000); children subject to Child Protection Plans (68 per 10,000) and Children We Look After (130 per 10,000). This was a challenging time for vulnerable families as levels of child poverty were rising due to the cost-of-living crisis. The impact was being seen by the increased numbers of contacts and referrals to services.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The impact of the Autumn Statement 2022 on local authority budgets and on families on low incomes was detailed and appended to the report at Appendix 1. Also appended to the report was the Children's Services Improvement Plan: '*Children at the heart of everything we do*'.

The report provided the following detailed information which was outlined:

- The impact of leaders;
- Partnership working;
- Workforce and recruitment;
- Quality Assurance;
- Early Help;
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Front door;
- Assessment teams;
- Achieving permanence;
- Complex safeguarding and exploitation
- Vulnerable adolescents;
- Children in care and care leavers; and
- The improvement team

In conclusion, it was reported that:

- despite rising demand and the very complex children and families that social workers were working with, there was evidence that good practice was being embedded in every team;
- all staff were supported by managers who provided oversight and guidance through supervision and management oversight, and leaders who were providing the resources and culture for good practice to thrive; and
- the improvement journey in St Helens was moving at pace. Leaders were aware, however, that the pressure must not be tapered off and there must remain an intense focus on improvement and improving the lives of vulnerable children and young people in St Helens.

Comments and queries were raised by Members as follows:

- In the Children's Improvement Plan, it was requested if the 'Measures' column could include more detail on the specific measures and targets. A response was provided, and it was indicated that the Plan was reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the Children's Improvement Board;
- Information was provided upon how the social work staffing position would be managed until April 2023, when a number of newly recruited staff would be in post;
- Finer detail was provided on the management of caseload volumes and staff recruitment, in particular how staff with high caseloads were supported and that risk was mitigated using number of strategies;
- Partnership working arrangements were clarified, together with the ongoing work to improve that area such as safeguarding training needs and developments in key areas;
- The numbers of Looked After Children in the borough were discussed, and it was reported that St Helens was one of the highest performance rates of getting children out of care. However, delays in the court system meant that children

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

coming into care resulted in performance being in the middle quartile. Ongoing work was in place to address the issue via dialogue with the courts;

- Looked After Children numbers were higher than national average, and the impact of Early Help and family hubs was certainly helping in reducing the numbers;
- It was recommended to involve young people who had experiences of Neglect and experienced Neglect in the prevention campaigns that had been introduced with local educational establishments;
- The passion and commitment of the social work staff to maintaining the momentum for improvement was acknowledged by the Committee;
- A query was raised about the capacity to increase assessed and supported year (AYSE) provision and it was confirmed that there was an apprenticeship programme in place to ensure a sufficient cohort of AYSE's. It was also confirmed that there were opportunities for social worker progression to the role of practice educators and that this was actively promoted; and
- Finer detail was provided on audit activity that had been provided in the Improvement Plan, and information was provided on the improvement work that was being undertaken to address the practices graded as 'Inadequate'. Members commented that they looked forward to seeing an impact of this improvement work on the statistics at the next meeting.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the report be noted; and**
- (2) **all staff in Children's Services, along with the Director and Leadership Team and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, be thanked for all their hard work involved in the recent Ofsted inspections and the improvement progress.**

## 22 PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 2 2022-23

The Quarter 2 Performance Report 2022-23 was presented and provided an analysis of progress and performance over the period April to June 2022 against each of the Council's six priorities.

The report reflected the new Performance Framework and targets aligned to the priorities and outcomes of the Borough Strategy as agreed by Cabinet on 20 April 2022. This framework provided the basis for quarterly performance reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny over the course of 2022-23.

The Council acknowledged that effective performance management arrangements were critical to supporting decision making during these challenging times and work continued to ensure the development of the Performance Framework and performance management processes across the Council.

It was reported that there were 85 performance indicators, where targets had been set, reported in the Quarter 2 Performance Report 2022-23. Of these:

- 75% of indicator targets had been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compared to 73% of indicators in the previous quarter and 60% at Quarter 2 2021/22;
- 25% of indicator targets were not met. This compared to 27% of indicators in the previous quarter and 40% of indicators in Quarter 2 2021/22;

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- Over the course of the last 12 months 56% of indicators showed improvement, 5% of indicators maintained the same performance and 39% of indicators showed a downward trajectory. The position was an improvement on the position in the previous quarter where only 46% of indicators showed improvement. The position was also an improvement on the position reported in Q2 2021/22, where 49% of indicators showed improvement; and
- 39% of all indicators where comparison was possible were in the top quartile, compared to 35% at Q2 2021/22, whilst 33% were in the bottom quartile, compared to 30% at Q2 2021/22.

In summary, at Quarter 2 there were a number of areas where performance against outcomes was either some distance from the Quarter 2 target or an outlier in terms of St Helens performance relative to the England average or St Helens nearest neighbours.

In conclusion, it was reported that the Quarter 2 Performance Report 2022-23 at Annex A provided an assessment of the Council's performance over the second three months of the 2022-23 financial year.

The impact of the pandemic and sustained financial pressure on local government continued to pose significant challenges for the Council and St Helens Borough. Robust and appropriate performance management arrangements continued to be critical to support effective decision making and enable the delivery of the Council's desired outcomes across the borough and its communities.

Members' attention was drawn to performance data that had been included within the Children's Improvement Plan which contained more detailed, quantitative data when compared to the Performance Report Quarter 2 2022/23 which was time lagged.

Comments and queries were raised by Members as follows:

- An updated position was provided on assessment timeliness which was now at 81% and much closer to statistical nearest neighbouring authorities;
- An update was also provided upon request, in respect of Education Psychologist recruitment and an update on Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) casework provision and SEND assessment review;
- In relation to the Healthy Child Programme indicators, attention was drawn to the improvement work that was being put on place to address areas of underperformance. It was advised that collaboration with partners via family hub provision and the work of the People's Board would play a key role in the improvement journey;
- Information was provided on the ongoing work towards identification and potential locations of family hubs;
- Following discussion of the under 18 admissions to hospital for alcohol specific reasons per 100,000 population, it was confirmed that a universal approach was in place via partnership working training programmes. Campaigns were also in place to promote key messages around prevention, and information was provided about the additional resources put in place within alcohol and substance misuse services.

However, it was recommended that a wider approach be adopted to include campaigns in educational establishments to raise awareness of health implications. It was agreed that this recommendation would be explored.

- In terms of dental checks measures, improvement work that was being undertaken for looked after children and young people was indicated, in addition to work that

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

could be undertaken to improve outcomes, however it was acknowledged that there were resource challenges and access to dentists; and

- the Director of Children's Services explained that, following an option to do so, they had changed or added some performance indicators with revised targets.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the performance position at Quarter 2 2022-23 be noted;**
- (2) **the revised targets for the performance indicators at Annex B be noted; and**
- (3) **the actions planned by the Children and Young People's Services Directorate and services to address specific areas for performance improvement in relation to Priority 1 be noted.**

### 23 RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF FOSTER CARERS TASK GROUP (PROGRESS REPORT)

A report was provided to update the Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee on the actions agreed in response to the recommendations of the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers Task Group, which was agreed by Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2022 and the current recruitment and retention activity underpinned by the recommendations.

An update Action Plan, that set out progress made against the recommendations from the Recruitment and Retention Foster Carers Task Group, was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

At the beginning of the 2021/22 municipal year, members of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee were concerned about whether there was a sufficient supply of foster carers within the borough to meet the needs of children and young people who required foster care. In response, Members committed to holding a Task Group to explore the recruitment and retention of foster carers within the borough.

The Task Group report and recommendations was approved by Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee at a meeting held on 31 January 2022. As per the Council's Constitution the report was presented to the CYPS Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held in July 2022.

Subsequently there had been considered focus upon the Task Group report and the recommendations agreed. To progress a number of key recommendations a further report was submitted to the Senior Leadership Team in September 2022 seeking approval to a number of identified incentives to support recruitment activity and to approve the realignment and development of the service to meet the priority of increasing and retaining foster carers, which was approved.

The recommendations of the Task Group and the approvals granted in September 2022 had been considered and a project team developed to ensure oversight and scrutiny of both workstreams. This activity was reported to the Director of Children's Services on a weekly basis.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The project team had developed a Project Plan with key workstreams which were outlined in the report.

In conclusion, it was reported that the current cost to the local authority of those children placed in external residential care settings was approximately £13.5 million per year, and the average annual placement cost £254k. Based on current costs, reducing the number of children/young people in residential care and placing them with specialist foster carers would reduce costs.

Feedback in relation to the current recruitment and retention activity was provided as follows:

- Members were pleased to see that fostering enquiries had risen in December 2022 and thanks were given to the staff in the service for that achievement;
- Whilst it was acknowledged that the assessment process was intrusive, reassurance was provided that unsuccessful applications were provided with a process for feedback in a sensitive manner and support to meet standards, and to communicate that their enquiry was valued;
- Members were pleased that if a placement ended unexpectedly or the foster carer was not matched with a child/young person following approval, it would be expected that the foster carers were used as part of the Edge of Care Offer to provide additional support and looked forward to seeing the future progress of that approach;
- Congratulations were offered upon the highly effective marketing recruitment campaign. Discussion took place on the need to develop an approach to target different communities in the borough to recruit foster carers, with ideas and suggestions being welcomed from Members;
- Information was provided on how recruitment material was also shared with schools and safeguarding partners as part of the recruitment drive, and suggestions were made about the effectiveness of extending promotions via pop up events in establishments which had proved to be popular in other boroughs; and
- It was confirmed that a strategy document was in the process of being produced to set out how recognition could be given to foster carers.

\* **Resolved that the updated Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 of the report, that set out the progress made against the recommendations from the Recruitment and Retention Foster Carers Task Group, be noted.**

### 24 IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SPOTLIGHT REVIEW

A report was submitted which provided a summary of the evidence that was submitted to the Children and Young People's Services spotlight review, Improving school attendance in St Helens. The report concluded with five recommendations to ensure that a culture of 'Every Attendance Matters' was introduced in the Borough.

The report presented this Committee with the findings from the spotlight review 'Improving School Attendance'

Based on it's findings, the Committee's main objective was to contribute to strategies to improve school attendance rates in St Helens, thereby improving pupil achievement, well-being, life chances and reducing the potential of children and young people's vulnerability to harm.



## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members were informed that, at the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Workshop on 6 July 2022, it was agreed to hold a spotlight review on 3 November 2022 to contribute to wider work to improve school attendance in St Helens.

This focus was agreed because overall absences in St Helens for the 2021/2022 Autumn and Spring Term were higher than regional and national averages.

The primary school absence rate in St Helens was 6.7% compared to the northwest average of 6.0% and 6.2% in England. The secondary school absence rate in St Helens was 10.2% compared to the northwest average of 8.8% and 8.6% in England.

St Helens also had higher rates of persistent absences for this period than regional and national average. The primary school absence rate in St Helens was 21.3% compared to 17.3% and 18.2% in the northwest and England respectively. St Helens' secondary school persistent absence rate was 31.6% compared with 27.3% and 26.7% in the northwest and England respectively.

It was reported that absenteeism affected learning, attainment, social and emotional well-being, and the life chances of those children and young people. For some, it was also a factor in safeguarding issues. It was agreed to scrutinise examples of work being carried out in three St Helens schools and to look at how the Council could support the work on improving school attendance across the borough.

A detailed overview of reports was presented to Members and discussion was provided within the report.

It was reported that five key recommendations were determined from the review, these being:

- Develop a borough-wide culture and expectation that every attendance matters;
- Each year deliver Every Attendance Matters campaign;
- Establish a multi-agency 'Behavioural Attendance Board' and an annual School Forum 'Every Attendance Matters';
- Continue to focus on children's mental and emotional well-being;
- Write to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education to emphasise the impact of funding reductions on Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) completion.

It was agreed that Recommendation 5 be revisited, in relation to EHCP completion by a meeting between the Chair and senior staff in Children's Services being convened.

\* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the report be noted;**
- (2) recommendations 1- 4 of the Task Group be approved; and**
- (3) recommendation 5 be revisited, in relation to EHCP completion, by a meeting between the Chair and senior officers in Children's Services being convened.**


**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****25 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

A draft work programme was provided to Members for consideration of topics for the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee to consider during the Municipal Year.

The Chair confirmed the agenda items for the next meeting as indicated in the work programme, and summarised other scrutiny work areas that had and were due to take place.

\* **Resolved that the report be noted.**

-oOo-

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <br><b>ST HELENS</b><br>BOROUGH COUNCIL | <h2>CYPS Scrutiny Committee</h2> <h3>24 April 2023</h3> |
|--|---|

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report Title</b>         | <b>Directors Report on Progress in Children's Services</b>   |
| <b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>    | Children and Young People  |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>       | Councillor Nova Charlton   |
| <b>Exempt Report</b>        | No   |
| <b>Reason for Exemption</b> | N/A  |
| <b>Key Decision</b>         | No   |
| <b>Public Notice issued</b> | N/A  |
| <b>Wards Affected</b>       | All  |
| <b>Report of</b>            | Hilary Brooks<br>Director of Children's Services<br><a href="mailto:HilaryBrooks@sthelens.gov.uk">HilaryBrooks@sthelens.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>Contact Officer</b>      | Hilary Brooks<br>Director of Children's Services<br><a href="mailto:HilaryBrooks@sthelens.gov.uk">HilaryBrooks@sthelens.gov.uk</a> |

|                           |  |   |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Borough Priorities</b> | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life         | x |
|                           | Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities     |   |
|                           | Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all          |   |
|                           | Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy |   |
|                           | Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture  |   |
|                           | Be a responsible Council   | x |

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of progress in children's services, highlighting the inspection of the Youth Justice Service by HM Inspectorate of Probation in November 2022, the Ofsted monitoring visit in December 2022, findings from a peer review of the Public Law Outline in January 2023, and an update on progress made with the Children's Improvement plan, which was updated in February 2023.

## 2. Recommendation for Decision

- i) To note progress achieved.

## 3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 To provide an update on progress to the Children's Scrutiny Committee.

## 4. Background

- 4.1 This has been a busy period for the service, with the Youth Justice Service inspection in November, an Ofsted Monitoring Visit in December, and a peer review by Bolton Council of our Public Law Outline practice and processes in January. On top of this we have also had the annual conversation with Ofsted in March 23.
- 4.2 The department is also implementing the Workforce Strategy and managing staffing issues following the exit of the last innovate team. The service has a strong focus on recruitment and retention of social work staff, with the first tranche of international social workers joining the local authority this spring.
- 4.3 Priorities from the Children's Improvement Plan continue to be achieved, including practice improvement across the service, and an improved focus on achieving permanency for children, evidenced through the feedback from our recent monitoring visits in July and December 2022.
- 4.4 Further peer reviews are being undertaken throughout the spring, with Fostering and Kinship Care in March, the Care Leaver Service in April, and Children We Look After in April/ May. All of this activity is in preparation for the next full Ofsted inspection (ILAC), which is likely to be later on in the year.

### **Ofsted Monitoring Visit December 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 2022**

- 4.5 This was the fifth monitoring visit since the full inspection of Children's Services in 2019. The lead inspector in her letter highlighted a positive picture and identified evidence of improved quality in practice and outcomes for children. The monitoring visit reflects the focused work that has been happening in St Helens to accelerate improvement. The inspectors acknowledged the progress made since their last visit in July 2022 and since the inadequate judgement of 2019.
- 4.6 Leaders are relentlessly driving through the changes needed. Inspectors were impressed by the improvements in audits, quality assurance framework and performance monitoring to improve practice. They also highlighted how it was evident that management oversight is used to drive decision making and progress for children.
- 4.7 The inspectors noted that most assessments of children are informed by family history, trauma, cumulative harm and risks and protective factors for children. The child's voice is usually present. The quality of planning for children has improved since 2021, and when risks emerge, children are safeguarded appropriately.

- 4.8 Inspectors praised the Change Grow Live (CGL) service which educates parents to understand the impact their substance misuse has on their children and supports them to overcome their difficulties. Multi-agency meetings are well attended, and partner agencies contribute to children's plans. Some children benefit from purposeful direct work with their social workers.
- 4.9 Since the appointment of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Assistant Director (AD), prior to the monitoring visit in July, there has been a significant and renewed focus on quality assurance to understand the impact of social work practice for children's outcomes. Audit activity has increased, and the quality of audits are better. Leaders have implemented a robust learning loop that is understood by staff, therefore learning from audits improves social work practice. The Improvement Team was seen by inspectors as having a positive effect on social work practice, offering coaching and support to staff.
- 4.10 Areas highlighted by inspectors that still require improvement are: social workers are not always recording sufficiently their knowledge and interactions with children; too many children have experienced drift and delay in having their plans reviewed effectively and their needs met because of frequent changes of social workers and the 'start again' process. Some managers do not always identify and challenge social workers when children's plans are not progressing; partner agencies do not always challenge drift and delay when the plans for children do not progress; supervision records do not always reflect the depth of the discussions about children that happen between managers and social workers. These areas of development form part of our improvement plan.
- 4.11 Inspectors were pleased to note that social workers are positive about the visibility and accessibility of the new leadership team, their involvement in the improvement journey and that they feel valued by senior leaders and enjoy working for St Helens.

#### **The Youth Justice Service (YJS) Inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation**

- 4.12 The service was inspected at the beginning of November 2022. There was an acknowledgement by inspectors of the extremely challenging circumstances relating to staff vacancies and sickness the service has recently endured, as well as the tribulations of operating during the Covid 19 pandemic, and the resultant lack of face-to-face contact with children and young people.
- 4.13 Overall, St Helens YJS was rated as 'Good'. Of the 13 areas inspected, 8 were rated as outstanding. The quality of resettlement policy and provision was separately rated as 'Good'. The inspection found a strong service, with strengths evident across the casework for court disposals and out-of-court disposals, both of which were rated as outstanding across all elements of assessment, planning, delivery and implementation, and review. They highlighted that this is attributable to the 'colossal efforts of the staff and head of service.'
- 4.14 Inspectors found practitioners to be skilled, experienced, and resilient. They are able to build positive relationships with children, which translated into effective outcomes. Overall, they were impressed with the breadth and provision of partnership services, with children being able to access a range of interventions and support swiftly, alongside clear and specific pathways for universal, targeted, and specialist provision. Staff work together collaboratively and there are strong peer support networks across the service.
- 4.15 However, inspectors also noted that the service needs to make improvements to its governance and leadership. There has been a turnover of senior leaders and a lack of board attendance by all partners. Board chair arrangements have also been inconsistent over the previous 12-18 months. Inspectors found a disconnect between the board and frontline YJS practitioners, leading to many staff feeling undervalued. The Council has now appointed the DFE advisor Karen Bradshaw to chair the board and she brings her wealth of experience working within this area.

- 4.16 The recommendations arising from the inspection highlight that the YJ management board should:
- establish consistent and cohesive chairing arrangements and board membership.
  - develop individual and collective knowledge and understanding of board members' roles and the service's work and provide effective challenge to partners.
  - improve the relationship between the board and practitioners so that all can recognise how strategic priorities influence operational delivery.
  - provide the management team with the necessary staffing resources and ensure the necessary work is completed on the YJS building.
  - improve the analysis and use of data to shape strategic and operational delivery.
- 4.17 The latest Youth Justice Board (YJB) data reveals an overall reduction of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system in St Helens from 169 in April 2019 to March 2020 to 129 in April 2021 to March 2022. This is below the current England and Wales rate of 143. The data shows that there has been a steady decrease in reoffending, year on year. Despite this, St Helens' current reoffending rate of 39.2 per cent (October 2019 – September 2020) is still above the England and Wales average of 33.6 per cent.

### **Peer Review of Public Law Outline (PLO) January 2023**

- 4.18 As part of the NW sector-led improvement arrangements, colleagues from Bolton Council spent three days in St Helens reviewing social work practice and processes relating to the public law outline, which is the framework by which decisions are made about children being removed from the care of their parents, and into the care of the local authority. The PLO consists of two distinct elements, Pre-proceedings, and Proceedings, when the case enters the court arena.
- 4.19 Strengths highlighted included, social workers know their children well; social workers and team managers were open within reflective discussions when discussing good practice and areas for development; management and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) oversight within case files audited was strong in most cases; PLO procedures and oversight are strong within case files. Drift and delay are minimised; the quality of assessments was mostly good.
- 4.20 Peers also commented that the quality of assessments and child protection plans were sometimes inconsistent, better recording of management oversight is sometimes needed, some language can be punitive, and not always strength based, and the child's voice can be lost.
- 4.21 The PLO toolkit and monitoring and oversight was highlighted as being outstanding, with senior management (Head of Service) and the PLO Coordinator oversight a strength, clearly supporting timely decision making and reducing drift and delay for children. Similarly, the Legal Gateway Panel overview of Pre-proceedings is strong, and again reducing drift and delay.
- 4.22 Peers were impressed by the preventative work that stopped children going to court, which included a lot of resources to support families, the use of the strengths-based practice model and Family Group Conferences.
- 4.23 Areas for development included: in some cases, social workers needed to challenge decisions more, and for some cases social workers needed to spot repetitive patterns and cycles of concern, when thinking about families' capacity to change.
- 4.24 Overall, this was a very positive peer review, showing the consistent progress that has been made in this area of social work practice in St Helens.

### **Children's Improvement Plan update**

- 4.25 We are continuing to see high levels of demand for our services, with the rate of CiN being 441 children per 10,000, which is higher than the Northwest average, but similar to our statistical neighbours. The number of Children and Family assessments completed is also high, with a rate of 1040. This equates to one child in ten. The rate of children subject to Child Protection Plans is 76 per 10,000 children, an increase of 32% since the same time last year. Currently there are 477 looked after children in St Helens, a rate of 129 per 10,000 children, this figure has stayed stable despite increases elsewhere.
- 4.26 Early Help is also experiencing high levels of contacts. Referrals rates have been increasing again, after decreasing most of last year. Work took place earlier in the year to analyse the reasons for the decrease in Early Help assessments and resources were reallocated to areas to ensure assessments were completed on time by partner agencies. Despite the high levels of demand, we are making progress against our Children's Improvement Plan, which is monitored every 6 weeks by the Children's Improvement Board, attended by the Leader, Cabinet Member and Chief Executive, and chaired by our DfE Advisor, Karen Bradshaw.
- 4.27 Our priority, 'Being Brilliant at the Basics' is showing good progress. Of case audits completed in January 95% were Good or Requires Improvement (45% Good, 50% RI), up from 90% in September. 100% had Good or RI assessments, Voice of the child, and chronologies, with 95% having Good or RI plans, supervision, and management oversight. The impact of the improvement team work can be seen, they have provided consistent training and support to social workers and managers in these areas.
- 4.28 Partnership working – this is improving. Thematic reviews of neglect and domestic abuse directed by the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board have been completed, with a multiagency conference organised for the spring, to disseminate the findings and increase engagement. Health, 95% of children having their health checks on time. 85% of children have completed their Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire, 8% higher than this time last year.
- 4.29 Workforce - To increase the numbers of permanent experienced social workers in St Helens our Workforce Strategy has been implemented. Weekly meetings with Human Resources to oversee and streamline processes; two recruitment fairs have been held, and the first cohort of international social workers will be joining the council in April.
- 4.30 Work is also underway with the colleges in relation to social work apprenticeships and the development of a 'grow your own' culture. Support for staff to aid retention has improved, there is a good training and development offer and wider staff engagement opportunities. There is now a staff engagement group made up from staff across children services, who are planning activities for the year ahead.
- 4.31 Quality Assurance – the new Quality Assurance framework is fully embedded throughout the department. A concentrated focus on the quality of audits has led to improvements. With collaborative case audits, 28% of grades were changed after moderation in March 2022, in September it was 13.6% and in November 5%. The Improvement Team continues to support individuals and teams on recognised themes that have arisen from audits. The progress relating to practice improvement is evident.
- 4.32 Permanency – a robust system for tracking permanency planning for children along with a new recording system has been implemented, to ensure the child's journey to permanence can easily be reviewed. 100% of pre-proceedings have been completed in 24 weeks this year while 72% have been completed in 16 weeks. The average length of proceedings in the Cheshire and Liverpool family court is 57 weeks, but for St Helens the average time is now 32 weeks.

We are attempting to increase the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers, as part of our Sufficiency Strategy. There was a significant increase in enquiries following #Fosterfest; a series of public events run by the Fostering Service in January.

Of these there are currently eight potential new fostering households. A timetable of events has been drafted for the next 12 months to carry on the positive momentum around recruitment. Plans for new residential children's home are continuing. Discussion at Policy Cabinet in March was positive and a Cabinet report for funding for the homes is due in April.

The Fostering service has shown considerable improvement over the last few months in all areas. A dashboard has now been implemented to monitor performance and progress and this month showed all green.

### **School Attendance**

- 4.33 In May 2022 the Department for Education published a Guidance document 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'. The guidance sets out the responsibilities placed on the local authority and partners to improve school attendance, under the banner that improving school attendance is everyone's responsibility. The importance of good school attendance needs to be recognised across all of the Council's areas of responsibility, particularly across education services, early help, children's social care and the virtual school.
- 4.34 Fundamental to this guidance is the importance of engaging with children and families to understand the reasons for poor school attendance and improving it by implementing a multi-agency approach. The local authority have worked in partnership with all schools in the borough to identify those children who are persistently absent (below 90% attendance) and who they are concerned about. This work initiated a multi-agency response with improved joint working between schools and children's social care. Such work has contributed to the following improvements.
- 4.35 Since the autumn spring term 21/22:
- Reduced primary school overall absence by 1.7%
  - Reduced secondary school overall absence by 1.9%
  - Reduced special school overall absence by 3.4%
- 4.36 The local authority have now developed data dashboards that provide live school level data in relation to attendance, suspensions and exclusions, part time, timetables and elective home education. This data is also able to provide information on distinct groups such children in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan, those in receipt of free school meals as well as ward level data linked to indices of deprivation. The local authority uses this data to provide challenge and support to schools via the headteacher learning partnership meetings, school advice and improvements meetings and directly with schools.
- 4.37 More recently, the local authority has started to work with a Department for Education Advisor and have developed a local action plan which will drive forward the development of a borough wide attendance strategy, the implementation of a Behaviour and Attendance Board and the introduction of targeted support meetings between the Education Welfare Service and schools in the borough.

### **School Support/SEND**

- 4.38 In keeping with the borough strategy priority 1 'Ensuring children and young people have the best possible start in life' the School Effectiveness Team have worked with headteachers to develop three 'Obsessions' focused on attendance, inclusion and wellbeing. Workstreams have been developed and have enabled LA officers and Headteachers to share successful, collaborative practice.



- 4.39 In order to ensure progress towards these priorities the team have held monthly cluster meetings for all schools to discuss LA developments, DFE guidance and localities workstreams. In addition, the team have held termly learning partnership board focused on an area of leaning around the three obsessions.
- 4.40 Those schools judged to be at risk of being judged as 'Requires Improvements' have been invited to Achievement and Inclusion Board (AIB) meetings and School Reviews, with a focus on Leadership and Management, Quality of Education, Personal Development, and overall effectiveness.
- 4.41 Where schools are deemed to be 'Requires Improvement' by OFSTED or where there are data and outcome concerns, the school will be placed into Band B and offered support and challenge. The team have hosted termly reviews for all 'Band B' primary schools, after which written reports have been produced and support provided from officers in curriculum design, behaviour management, leadership and management.
- 4.42 The Achievement and Inclusion Board (AIB) offer has been extended to schools previously judged to be 'Outstanding' and therefore previously exempt from the OFSTED framework. Through the AIB process, leaders are more prepared for inspection. They are able to explain their 2022 data and associated trends and therefore able to satisfy the LA with their plans for school improvement.
- 4.43 Throughout the course of the academic year there have been 17 Inspections. 2 schools have moved from RI to Good and percentage of schools judged to be good or better has increased from 86% to 92% with 51 out of 54 primary schools judged to be good or better.
- 4.44 In February 2023 a new model of support was launched which has seen the education and support services design and implement a more effective way of working. The TESSA model – Triage, Education Support and Specialist Advice to schools, ensures a single point of access and timely intervention by professionals. The model also allows for efficient data collection which illustrates emerging needs both in terms of description of need as well as locality pressures.
- 4.45 SEND, there is a new national SEND inspection framework being implemented, the service has undertaken training around the changes and a SEND improvement board has been established to monitor progress. The service suffered a loss of staff earlier in the year which has impacted on service effectiveness, however , the service it has now recruited to the vacant posts and is starting to show signs of improvement across all areas, especially around timeliness of EHCPs. We are currently awaiting our SEND inspection.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 Despite the continued high level of demand for services, Children's Services are evidencing improvements and progress across all areas. The judgement of 'Good' awarded to our Youth Justice Service' shows how teams ability to change and improve, through a relentless focus on delivering a service where good outcomes for children and good quality practice is prioritised. This is now being shown and evidenced across Children Social care and Education services.
- 5.2 It is a very busy and demanding time for the service, preparing for both the ILAC and SEND inspections, as well as 3 peer reviews and increasing demand and complexity of work for our staff. The staff remain stable, committed and focused to the improvement work and ensuring the best outcomes possible for our children and families.

## **6. Legal Implications**

6.1 N/A

**7. Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications**

7.1 N/A

**8. Social Value**

8.1 N/A

**9. Sustainability and Environment**

9.1 N/A

**10. Health and Wellbeing**

10.1 N/A

**11. Equality and Human Rights**

11.1 N/A

**12. Customer and Resident**

12.1 Children Services are on a continual improvement journey since 2019. However, the services are seeing an increase in demand especially around poverty and neglect and is undertaking current strategies to address them.

**13. Asset and Property**

13.1 N/A

**14. Staffing and Human Resources**

14.1 Staffing is now stable within Children's Services. However, we still have a high degree of agency staff, and we are still awaiting the first cohort of international social worker recruitment.

**15. Risks**

15.1 N/A

**16. Finance**

16.1 Children's Services budget is approximately £60m per annum of which £27m is spent on placements. There is currently a £6m pressure on the budget with an action plan in place to address the shortfall.

**17. Policy Framework Implications**

17.1 N/A

**18. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

18.1 N/A

**19. Background Documents**

19.1 N/A

**20. Appendices**

- 20.1 St Helens Ofsted Monitoring Visit of LA Children's Services
- 20.2 An inspection of youth offending services in St Helens

This page is intentionally left blank

30 January 2023

Hilary Brooks, Director of Children's Services  
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council  
Atlas House  
2 Corporation Street  
St Helens  
WA9 1LD

Dear Hilary

### **Monitoring visit to St Helens children's services**

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to St Helens children's services on 13 and 14 December 2022. This was the fifth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in September 2019. His Majesty's inspectors for this visit were Mandy Nightingale and Louise Walker.

### **Areas covered by the visit**

Inspectors reviewed the progress made in the following areas of concern identified in previous visits:

- Assessment and planning for children in need and children subject to child protection plans.
- Leaders' assurance of the quality of practice and outcomes for children in St Helens.
- Stability of the workforce and how this impacts on children's needs being met.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework.

### **Headline findings**

Since the monitoring visit in November 2021 that focused on children in need and children subject to a child protection plan, there has been some progress in most areas. This means that some children do not consistently receive a timely service that is commensurate with their identified needs.

Oversight of the quality assurance service has been reviewed and is now managed by the assistant director (AD) for children's social care. This has resulted in a significant focus on social work practice and the impact on children's outcomes over

the last few months. The changes are very new but there are some early signs of impact of the quality assurance work informing leader's planning for improvement.

### **Findings and evaluation of progress**

Most children's needs are well considered in comprehensive child and family assessments. The assessments almost always include relevant history, parental trauma and cumulative harm and balance the risks and protective factors in order to inform next steps. Children's voices are gathered and for some children these are informing decision-making. However, for most children, social workers do not always capture what life is like for the child, their understanding of what is happening for them or what they want to change.

Since the monitoring visit in November 2021, the quality of planning and the written plans has improved for most children. When new risks emerge for children, action is taken swiftly to ensure that they are safeguarded. Conversely, when risks to children decrease, swift action is taken to ensure that the level of intervention is proportionate.

Children's written plans mostly reflect what needs to be done and by who. They address the areas of concern effectively and most are clearly written. This means that they are helpful for children and families to understand. In some weaker plans, the involvement and responsibilities of partner agencies is less clear or there are too many actions.

The impact of domestic abuse and parental substance misuse on parenting and children's development is particularly prevalent in St Helens. Children's plans reflect this need and involve the Change Grow Live (CGL) service. This service provides a wide range of effective support for parents, helping them to develop an understanding of the impact of their behaviours on their children's development. CGL also work alongside parents and children to strengthen their relationships and inform future care planning. Inspectors saw evidence of families working with CGL and successfully overcoming their difficulties in order to continue to parent their children.

Multi-agency meetings to review children's plans are well-attended by professionals and parents. They are held regularly, and partner agencies and families are actively encouraged to contribute to reviewing the plans. For some children, they are supported to attend multi-agency meetings about them. However, when the plans for children do not progress, there is little evidence of challenge from partner agencies to address drift and delay.

Some children benefit from purposeful direct work with their social workers. This helps social workers to develop a professional relationship with children and provides an enhanced opportunity to understand the child's lived experience.

Most social workers quickly get to know children's information when they are allocated to them. Most arrange to meet children promptly in order to start building that relationship with them, and this means that they are able to understand the child's needs. Social workers articulate their knowledge about children and their work with them well. However, this is not always recorded on the child's electronic record.

The local authority has an accurate understanding of what needs to change to improve children's lives in St Helens. Since the appointment of the director of children's services and AD, prior to the last monitoring visit, there has been a significant focus on quality assurance in order to understand the impact of social work practice for children's outcomes.

Leaders are fully aware of the detrimental impact of social work churn on the outcomes for children, which are intended to improve their lived experiences. Recruitment of experienced social workers remains an area of concern for St Helens. At this visit, inspectors saw that the turnover of social workers has recently reduced. However, there are still too many children who experience drift and delay in having their plans reviewed effectively and their needs met because of frequent changes of social workers and the 'start again' process for children. The local authority, supported by the whole council, has taken proactive steps to increase recruitment and hopes to have a permanent workforce in place early in 2023.

Since the previous monitoring visit, audit activity has increased, and the quality of the audits has improved. Auditing is now completed collaboratively with social workers and the majority are moderated by a small group of senior leaders. Monthly audit reports demonstrate the increased number of audits, reflecting the improved practice. Leaders have implemented a robust learning loop that is understood by staff, so that learning from audits improves social work practice. This is giving leaders a better informed understanding of the impact of practice.

The recently implemented improvement team has had a positive impact on the quality of social work practice due to the wide range of training and coaching it provides. Social workers, team managers and leaders spoke positively of the intervention from the improvement team, and inspectors saw the positive evidence of their involvement on children's records. For example, when consultations with social workers have taken place, planning for children and family assessments has improved.

Most team managers manage performance effectively. They have access to a comprehensive data dashboard that they use on a daily basis. They now receive daily emails providing helpful data pertaining to visits and assessments that are imminently due. As a result, more children are visited regularly and assessments are completed promptly.

Management oversight is clearly recorded on children's case records. This includes general decision-making and ensuring that actions to progress children's plans are completed. For most children, this means that the managers are robustly overseeing

social work practice. However, for some children this is not the case and managers do not always identify when children's plans do not progress. For these children, managers do not offer challenge to the social workers' planning and interventions.

Social workers report that supervision with their manager provides them with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and consider barriers to progressing children's plans. However, this is not always reflected in the written supervision records.

Social workers spoke positively of the visibility and accessibility of the new leadership team, their involvement in the improvement journey, feeling valued by senior leaders and how they enjoy working for St Helens.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Mandy Nightingale  
His Majesty's Inspector





HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in  
**St Helens**

---

HM Inspectorate of Probation, February 2023

## Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Foreword</b> .....                                | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Ratings</b> .....                                 | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Recommendations</b> .....                         | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Background</b> .....                              | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Domain one: Organisational delivery</b> .....     | <b>7</b>  |
| 1.1. Governance and leadership .....                 | 7         |
| 1.2. Staff.....                                      | 9         |
| 1.3. Partnerships and services.....                  | 11        |
| 1.4. Information and facilities.....                 | 13        |
| <b>Domain two: Court disposals</b> .....             | <b>16</b> |
| 2.1. Assessment.....                                 | 16        |
| 2.2. Planning .....                                  | 17        |
| 2.3. Implementation and delivery .....               | 18        |
| 2.4. Reviewing.....                                  | 19        |
| <b>Domain three: Out-of-court disposals</b> .....    | <b>20</b> |
| 3.1. Assessment.....                                 | 20        |
| 3.2. Planning .....                                  | 21        |
| 3.3. Implementation and delivery .....               | 22        |
| 3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision..... | 23        |
| <b>4.1. Resettlement</b> .....                       | <b>24</b> |
| 4.1. Resettlement policy and provision .....         | 24        |
| <b>Further information</b> .....                     | <b>25</b> |

### Acknowledgements

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Mike Lane, supported by a team of inspectors and colleagues from across the inspectorate. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

### The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children.

We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice and use our data and information to encourage high-quality services. We are independent of government and speak independently.

Please note that throughout the report the names in the practice examples have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence) or email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

### Published by:

HM Inspectorate of Probation  
1st Floor Civil Justice Centre  
1 Bridge Street West  
Manchester  
M3 3FX

Follow us on Twitter  
[@hmiprobation](https://twitter.com/hmiprobation)

ISBN: 978-1-915468-33-8

© Crown copyright 2023

## Foreword

---

This inspection is part of our programme of youth justice service (YJS) inspections. We have inspected and rated St Helens YJS across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work.

Overall, St Helens YJS was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Good'.

The inspection found a strong service, with strengths clearly evident across the casework for court disposals and out-of-court disposals, both of which we rated as outstanding across all elements of assessment, planning, delivery and implementation, and review. This is attributable to the colossal efforts of the staff and head of service. Despite longstanding issues in relation to vacancies, sickness, and attrition, we found practitioners to be skilled, experienced, and resilient. They are able to build positive relationships with children, which translated into effective outcomes. Overall, we were impressed with the breadth and provision of partnership services, with children being able to access a range of interventions and support swiftly, alongside clear and specific pathways for universal, targeted, and specialist provision. Staff work together collaboratively and there are strong peer support networks across the service.

However, the service needs to make improvements to its governance and leadership and must apply effort to developing a sustainable model of oversight. Many of the statutory partner agencies have had their own organisational challenges, which have resulted in a turnover of senior leaders and a lack of board attendance. Board chair arrangements have also been inconsistent over the previous 12-18 months. These issues have impacted on the continuity and cohesiveness of the board. Relationships with some of the board attendees, and the services they represent, need to be strengthened and expectations clarified. We also found a disconnect between the board and frontline YJS practitioners, leading to many staff feeling unvalued, with minimal reward and recognition arrangements, activities or incentives in place.

Moving forward, the challenge is for the YJS management board to establish a consistent, cohesive membership and set of arrangements to allow it to prioritise the key issues identified within this inspection. In particular, it should ensure appropriate staffing resource and that all of the YJS building is suitable for service delivery. At the time of our inspection, there were planned service management changes due to take place and it is clear these would have left the YJS in a vulnerable position. We were pleased to see these were reconsidered and alternative strategic arrangements implemented as a result of our inspection.

In this report, we make several recommendations that will enable St Helens YJS to make important improvements in its service for children who have offended and to build on its existing strengths.



**Justin Russell**  
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

## Ratings

**St Helens Youth Justice Service**  
Fieldwork started November 2022

**Score 29/36**

**Overall rating**

**Good**



### 1. Organisational delivery

|     |                            |                             |  |
|-----|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1.1 | Governance and leadership  | <b>Requires improvement</b> |  |
| 1.2 | Staff                      | <b>Requires improvement</b> |  |
| 1.3 | Partnerships and services  | <b>Good</b>                 |  |
| 1.4 | Information and facilities | <b>Requires improvement</b> |  |

### 2. Court disposals

|     |                             |                    |  |
|-----|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 2.1 | Assessment                  | <b>Outstanding</b> |  |
| 2.2 | Planning                    | <b>Outstanding</b> |  |
| 2.3 | Implementation and delivery | <b>Outstanding</b> |  |
| 2.4 | Reviewing                   | <b>Outstanding</b> |  |

### 3. Out-of-court disposals

|     |  |                    |  |
|-----|--|--------------------|--|
| 3.1 | Assessment                                 | <b>Outstanding</b> |  |
| 3.2 | Planning                                   | <b>Outstanding</b> |  |
| 3.3 | Implementation and delivery                | <b>Outstanding</b> |  |
| 3.4 | Out-of-court disposal policy and provision | <b>Outstanding</b> |  |

### 4. Resettlement<sup>1</sup>

|     |                                   |             |  |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-------------|--|
| 4.1 | Resettlement policy and provision | <b>Good</b> |  |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-------------|--|

<sup>1</sup> The rating for resettlement does not influence the overall YJS rating.

## Recommendations

---

As a result of our inspection findings, we have made six recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of youth justice services in St Helens. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth justice services, and better protect the public.

### **The St Helens Youth Justice Service Management Board should:**

1. establish consistent and cohesive chairing arrangements and board membership
2. develop individual and collective knowledge and understanding of board members' roles and the service's work, and provide effective challenge to partners
3. improve the relationship between the board and practitioners so that all can recognise how strategic priorities influence operational delivery
4. provide the management team with the necessary staffing resources and ensure the necessary work is completed on the YJS building
5. improve the analysis and use of data to shape strategic and operational delivery.

### **The Probation Service should:**

6. provide a probation officer to the YJS to support effective transitions and risk management.

## Background

---

We conducted fieldwork in St Helens Youth Justice Service (YJS) over a period of a week, beginning 07 November 2022. We inspected: cases where the sentence or licence began between 08 November 2021 and 02 September 2022; out-of-court disposals that were delivered between 08 November 2021 and 02 September 2022; and resettlement cases that were sentenced or released between 08 November 2021 and 02 September 2022. We also conducted 13 interviews with case managers.

St Helens YJS is a multiagency partnership that sits within children's services in St Helens Borough Council. The service is led by the assistant director of children's services, and the head of service for YJS and Prevent has responsibility for the YJS. Governance is provided by the multiagency YJS management board, which is chaired by the director of children's services.

In 2019, a full-service restructure of the YJS was undertaken. This was part of the overall improvement work for the service, in line with the feedback from previous inspections. Much had changed; statutory case numbers had fallen significantly and work in the service had not developed in line with evidence-based practice. The new structure was implemented to provide sufficient staffing to meet changing demands while offering the scope to develop new and innovative ways of working, with a particular emphasis on developing local prevention. At the point of inspection, cohort data for St Helens YJS indicated that 71 children were open to the YJS. Of these, 32 per cent were prevention, 28 per cent were out-of-court disposals, and 25 per cent were court disposals.

The restructure challenged the existing workforce, which had not experienced significant change for many years. Subsequently, the YJS has experienced periods without a full staffing complement, due to vacancies and periods of sickness.

The YJS provided a snapshot of the demographics of St Helens, which reveals that 21.4 per cent of the population falls within the 0-18 years category, equating to 38,680 young people in the area. St Helens rate of children looked after remains well above the national average (130 per 10,000 under 18-year-olds compared to 97 for the north west and 67 for England). In the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation, St Helens was ranked as the 26th most deprived local authority in England out of 317. Ninety-eight per cent of St Helens residents consider themselves to be white British, which is higher than the England population average of 85 per cent.

In 2020, at the start of the pandemic, the YJS established its business continuity plan, and then developed a further document outlining recovery from Covid-19. In line with government guidance, all staff were advised to work from home and continue to do so on a hybrid model basis. More recently, the YJS has progressed to its 'business as usual' approach, continuing to deliver interventions within children's homes, in schools, out in the community, and virtually.

The latest Youth Justice Board (YJB) data reveals an overall reduction of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system in St Helens from 169 in April 2019 to March 2020 to 129 in April 2021 to March 2022. This is below the current England and Wales rate of 143. The data shows that there has been a steady decrease in reoffending, year on year. Despite this, St Helens' current binary reoffending rate of 39.2 per cent (October 2019 – September 2020) is still above the England and Wales average of 33.6 per cent.

## Domain one: Organisational delivery

To inspect organisational delivery, we reviewed written evidence submitted in advance by the YJS and conducted 14 meetings, including with staff, volunteers, managers, board members, and partnership staff and their managers.

Key findings about organisational delivery were as follows.

### 1.1. Governance and leadership



The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Requires improvement

#### Strengths:

- There is a current strategic plan, which sets out the YJS partnership's vision. There are terms of reference for the YJS management board, which set the expectations of board members' roles and responsibilities.
- The board chair, vice chair, and some board members are connected with other strategic boards across the wider partnership.
- The YJS head of service has links with a range of local, regional, and national strategic groups and arenas.
- Operationally, YJS managers have designated lead responsibilities and sit on relevant multiagency operational groups.
- The YJS head of service has been successful in obtaining funding from various sources to develop innovative and creative approaches and projects.
- The YJS partnership has confirmed that, as of January 2023, the board will be overseen by an independent chair to drive improvement in strategic leadership and governance.

#### Areas for improvement:

- Board chairing arrangements have lacked consistency in the previous 12 months.
- The turnover in membership of the YJS management board has impacted on attendance, continuity, and cohesiveness.
- There is a disconnect between the board and YJS frontline operational staff. Not all board members are of sufficient seniority to commit resources and make decisions, and many do not advocate effectively for YJS children in their own agencies.
- The YJS management board relies too much on the experienced YJS head of service. Relationships with some of the board attendees and the services they represent need to be strengthened and expectations clarified. This will ensure that appropriate discussions and challenges are undertaken, and decisions made, at a strategic level.

- Board members lack a thorough understanding of the business risks facing the YJS, which has led to insufficient progress in addressing some key issues raised by the head of service.
- The anticipated service management plans would have left the YJS in a vulnerable position. We were pleased to see these were reconsidered during the inspection and alternative plans made.



## 1.2. Staff



Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Requires improvement

### Strengths:

- The operational staff in the YJS are the organisation's biggest asset. They are the main reason that the quality of casework is strong.
- Staff are skilled, experienced, and resilient. They build positive relationships with children to engage them effectively.
- Staff work together collaboratively and there are strong peer support networks across the service.
- The staff survey indicated that supervision was regular and of sufficient quality for 11 out of 13 respondents. Managers state that supervision is a priority.
- Management oversight was effective in all but one of the inspected court disposal cases, and in every inspected out-of-court-disposal case.
- Volunteer staff were complimentary about the balance of work and the support from YJS colleagues.
- The YJS has a comprehensive training offer and has funded staff to undertake additional qualifications, such as the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate.

### Areas for improvement:

- Staffing levels are insufficient, with the YJS currently holding several vacancies, with high levels of staff sickness and turnover in the previous 12-18 months.
- Five out of 13 respondents to the staff survey (38 per cent) stated that their workload was unmanageable.
- Practitioners report a lack of time to be able to attend many training opportunities, due to wider service demand and shortfalls in staffing.
- Induction processes for newer staff have been variable in quality, given the workload pressures across the service.
- Staff have received very little specialist risk of harm training.
- There has been a turnover of team managers and the current management team are still embedding. The workload of managers has impacted on their ability to attend to the full range of activities expected of them, with the demands of crisis management within cases adding to their workload.
- Completion of appraisals is mixed – in the staff survey, half of the respondents reported that their appraisals were not valuable.
- Staff report that links with the YJS management board are weak. Half of the 16 respondents to the staff survey were not aware of the board's activities.

# 5

- There are minimal reward and recognition arrangements, activities or incentives in place for staff.
- Staff morale has been impacted over the last 12-18 months, with many staff indicating they feel unvalued and not listened to.
- Staff report that the additional demand of covering a specialist court role has caused anxiety and a lack of confidence

### 1.3. Partnerships and services



A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children.

Good

#### Strengths:

- There is a satisfactory strategic and operational analysis of YJS children's desistance needs. Children can swiftly access a range of services and support, and there are specific pathways for universal, targeted, and specialist provision.
- The YJS has a full-time police officer, and a second police officer due to commence in January 2023 to enhance the delivery of preventative work with YJS children further.
- The YJS is co-located with substance misuse services, with designated full- and part-time specialist staff able to undertake swift joint working and deliver interventions with YJS children.
- The YJS has a strong health pathway, with clear processes to ensure children access services. The partnership YJS health staff (speech and language therapist, substance misuse staff, Barnardo's emotional wellbeing therapist, and criminal justice liaison worker) undertake a weekly referrals and allocations meeting to monitor and oversee this work.
- The partnership has a full-time specialist Careers Connect Advisor for YJS children. This had led to a reduction in the rate of YJS children not in education, employment or training (NEET) from 52 per cent in 2018 to 26 per cent currently. The YJS achieved the Association of YOT Managers Youth Justice SEND (special educational needs and disability) Quality Mark in 2022.
- Workers across all operational roles collaborate well, facilitate children's engagement effectively, and foster positive relationships with children. This contrasts with work at a strategic level, which is not strong.
- There are clear arrangements and strong joint working between the YJS and children's services.
- The YJS contributes to a variety of internal and external multiagency operational groups and panels for children deemed to present a high risk of harm to others or a high level of safety and wellbeing concerns.
- Partnership managers have a broad understanding of the specialist work their staff undertake with YJS children, and there is regular supervision, joint oversight, and communication with relevant YJS team managers.
- The YJS has a wide range of preventative and early help provision. Delivery of statutory and prevention casework is enhanced by a range of additional and innovative voluntary sector interventions.
- Inspectors found a varied and bespoke reparation offer, with a breadth of personalised one-to-one projects.

- Links with community safety and antisocial behaviour outreach officers are well-established, with strong information-sharing to support active risk management, desistance, and safety and wellbeing.
- Despite the anxieties and lack of confidence highlighted by YJS staff, survey feedback from the chair of the youth bench stressed the high quality of work carried out by the YJS within the youth court.

**Areas for improvement:**

- The part-time (0.8 full-time-equivalent) seconded probation officer post has been vacant since September 2022. Arrangements need to be strengthened to ensure children's transition needs are met.
- The pre-16 education, training and employment (ETE) worker post has been vacant for several months. The YJS partnership has stated it will recruit to this post once the parameters of the role have been revised to fit with an early help approach.

## 1.4. Information and facilities



Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children.

Requires improvement

### Strengths:

- The YJS has comprehensive policies to deliver its service. These are accessible to staff and include operational guidance and HR policies.
- Referral pathways are clear. There are service level agreements and working protocols between the YJS, key partners, and services.
- Processes for learning lessons are in place across the partnership. Critical learning reviews are shared at board level and disseminated to staff through team meetings, individual supervision, and email.
- The YJS building is in a good location, child friendly, and safe. Children have been consulted and involved in the look/décor of the building.
- Referral order panels take place in a good location at the local fire station.
- The YJS has a participation strategy, developed in August 2022, and holds a YJS children's forum. It publishes a quarterly 'you said, we did' newsletter.
- Victim and restorative justice staff undertake evaluations of all victims and children completing restorative justice.

### Areas for improvement:

- There is mixed evidence that performance and quality systems drive improvement. Managers admit that quality assurance and audit have taken a back seat due to staffing issues, management and staff capacity, and crisis management of the day-to-day service delivery.
- The YJS has developed a disproportionality action plan. However, this plan is basic, not 'SMART' (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound), and needs further development.
- There had been an insufficient response to an independent audit (an external service review) in December 2021, which highlighted governance issues, building issues, and further work needed in the partnership's approach to disproportionality.
- The YJS acknowledges within its strategic improvement plan that further work is needed to develop data analysis and partnership understanding of data.
- The upstairs floor of the building has been closed since Covid-19 because of health and safety work required. This was impacting negatively on staff morale, office space, team management visibility, and team cohesiveness and, therefore, potentially hampering effective work with children.
- Many partnership service level agreements end in March 2023. There is a need to prioritise the formal reviewing of these to ensure service continuity.
- HR processes are bureaucratic and difficult, which has led to challenges in recruitment to posts within the YJS.

## Involvement of children and their parents or carers

The YJS has a participation strategy, developed in August 2022, holds a YJS children's forum and has a 'you said, we did' notice board in the reception area. This was a response to a request by YOS children to display service responses to their suggestions. Alongside the strategy, the YJS has undertaken a range of activity to capture the voice of children in the services they receive.

- The YJS has reviewed planning documents and procedures to develop plans that are more 'child-friendly'. A service update newsletter is circulated quarterly and this includes updates on the YJ forum outcomes.
- Capturing children's voices digitally – at the end of 2021 and early 2022, as part of a programme with CELLS (Choices Education Lifelong Learning Skills); the YJS audio-recorded some children's experiences, which were shared at the YJS partnership board. Going forward, the YJS aims to make more audio/video recordings to diversify how it captures the voice of the child.
- Education awards – the YJS continues to hold termly education awards for children involved in the service to recognise educational achievements, including their qualifications, attendance or behaviour. Each child receives a certificate and voucher. Children are consulted about whether they would prefer to have their award presented at a celebration event or not.
- 'Do It Profiler' – each child open to the YJS is screened using a document called the Do It Profiler. Through the child completing this tool, the YJS is capturing the child's voice in terms of how best to support their learning needs/styles.
- Office improvements – children were consulted about improvements to the YJS office, which included creating a girls' room, choosing the colour scheme for intervention rooms, the outside railings cover, and equipment for the office, including a punch bag, breakfast bar, and table tennis.

The YJS contacted, on our behalf, children who had open cases at the time of the inspection, to gain their consent for a text survey. We delivered the survey independently to the 11 children who consented, and six children replied – although only two completed the survey fully.

When asked how they rated the service they had received from the YJS, two responded with a score of 10 out of 10, two with eight out of 10 and two with a score of seven out of 10. Positive responses included:

*"They are always fair with appointments and would work with you to make sure you get the right session that will work the best for the individual. I think they are very good and should be highly looked at because they have helped me a lot in the past two years."*

Two people responded to the question on how much the YJS had helped either themselves or (if they were a parent) their child to stay out of trouble. One child said:

*"They have helped me by kind of making me understand life more and why it's not worth making bad choices."*

One child responded to our telephone contact and was complimentary about the service received. This child felt that their YJS workers had the right skills to do the work and said that they have been able to access the right services and support to help them stay out of trouble.

## Diversity

Within the current St Helens strategic plan, the YJS partnership recognises that ongoing work is needed. It highlights more needs to be done in terms of recognising diversity, understanding how children are impacted by their diverse needs and ensuring the board effectively utilises this information to provide a diverse services and resources for children. The plan also acknowledges further work needs to be undertaken in relation to addressing the disproportionality of children who are looked after and working with the YJS in St Helens.

The YJS has a diversity and inclusiveness policy, developed in 2022, which sets out explicit terms of reference for a range of groups with protected characteristics. YJS staff were aware of these groups and how to access them. The YJS has developed a subsequent action plan. However, this plan is basic and needs further development.

Background data reveals an over-representation of black and minority ethnic children (11 per cent in the YJS cohort, but 3 per cent in the wider population). Inspectors were pleased to see that there is a specific therapeutic room for interventions with girls in the YJS building. The YJS has worked hard to develop and deliver a reducing reoffending by children looked after (ROCLA) strategy given the over-representation of children looked after within the YJS cohort. This strategy has recently been revised to include regular reviews with partners about direct feedback from this group of children on the issues they believe impact on their offending, and the support systems that could assist in reducing further offending. The CLA figures currently stand at 17 per cent of the cohort (as opposed to 2.5 per cent in the national general children's cohort). The partnership feels the ROCLA strategy is having an impact on St Helens numbers but recognise further work is needed.

We judged that case managers in the inspected out-of-court disposal cases were effective in taking account of the children's diversity needs in their assessments, planning, and the way that they delivered and implemented services. However, the quality of work to address diversity in the court disposal cases (specifically planning and delivery) was more variable.

YJS staff have received some diversity training, including inputs on Islamophobia, unconscious bias, and equality and diversity, but this could be further enhanced (such as including cultural competence training).

Arrangements for work with SEND children are good. The YJS achieved the SEND Quality Mark in 2022 and consideration of such approaches have been evident in many policies, such as out-of-court-disposals, resettlement, and diversity policy. We also saw positive evidence of this work within the inspected cases.

The YJS has no staff from an ethnic minority, which is not fully representative of the general St Helens population (which is 98 per cent white British) and this is an area where recruitment could be improved. Organisational data indicates that 81 per cent of staff are female and the YJS partnership has recognised that it would like to recruit more male staff to work with a cohort of children that is 89 per cent male.

Regarding staff diversity and response to diverse staff need, this is an area where further improvement is needed. In the staff survey, three out of nine staff felt their individual diversity needs had not been met.

## Domain two: Court disposals

We took a detailed look at five community sentences and one custodial sentence managed by the YJS.

### 2.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>2</sup> for assessment is based on the following key questions:

|   | % 'Yes'     |
|---|-------------|
| Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance? | <b>100%</b> |
| Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?            | <b>100%</b> |
| Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?         | <b>100%</b> |

Assessment of desistance factors was consistently strong. Staff gained a thorough understanding of children, their diversity needs, and their wider familial and social contexts. In every case, they achieved this by liaising effectively with partner agencies to access information and previous assessments, and by ensuring that children, and their parents or carers, were central to the assessment process. Assessment of victims' needs and wishes was sufficient in every relevant case, which supported and enhanced opportunities for restorative justice. In all the inspected cases, we saw a strengths-based approach and high levels of attention given to understanding the child's maturity, ability and motivation to change, and the likelihood of engaging with the court disposal.

Assessment clearly identified and analysed any risks to the safety and wellbeing of the child in all inspected cases, again drawing on current and historical information from key agencies, such as social care. Inspectors agreed with classifications of safety and wellbeing in every case.

Assessment work should provide an analysis of how other people will be kept safe when there are signs that the child could present a risk of harm to others. We saw consistent evidence of this in court disposal cases. Case managers drew together current and historical issues or behaviours, which in turn resulted in balanced and well-reasoned assessments. In every case, inspectors saw evidence that case managers had used information from other agencies and sources, including social care, police, the antisocial behaviour team, education and health – all of which informed active and effective risk management where relevant.

<sup>2</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. A more detailed explanation is available on [our website](#).



## 2.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>3</sup> for planning is based on the following key questions:

|  | % 'Yes'     |
|--|-------------|
| Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance? | <b>100%</b> |
| Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?            | <b>100%</b> |
| Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?         | <b>100%</b> |

Planning to support the child's desistance was a strength in all the inspected cases. It built on the assessment of desistance factors and, in the referral orders, agreements made at the panels. Children were fully involved in planning, as were their parents or carers, where appropriate. The inspected cases consistently highlighted strong joint planning between YJS case managers and other agencies and professionals, such as substance misuse, health professionals, the Barnardo's therapist, and ETE workers. This enabled case managers to identify and sequence interventions. Although not as strong as other elements, planning to address the child's diversity was evident in most cases, but it was clear that case managers made every effort to plan for the child's individual needs, personal circumstances, and social context.

Planning to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child was strong and clearly informed by other agencies, such as social care. This led to the necessary controls and interventions being put in place to address the issues of many children within the YJS cohort. Inspectors found strength in the quality of contingency plans for safety and wellbeing in all inspected cases. This is important, as there should be a clear plan of action if the risk to a child were to either increase or decrease. Contingency plans clearly set out adequate actions or responses to be taken if, or when, circumstances changed.

We were pleased to see that planning to manage the risk of harm to others involved other agencies in every relevant case. Despite the complexity of many YJS children, there were examples of planning to address the safety of specific victims. We also saw sufficient plans for the necessary controls and interventions to effectively manage the risk of harm that some children pose to others. Alongside this, circumstances in a child's life can change quickly. Case managers need to consider the potential for change in each case so that, should concerns escalate, they are prepared and more likely to respond effectively. In all relevant cases, inspectors found that contingency planning in relation to public protection was clear and detailed about specific actions to keep others safe.

<sup>3</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. A more detailed explanation is available on [our website](#).

## 2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>4</sup> for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

|  | % 'Yes'    |
|--|------------|
| Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?     | <b>83%</b> |
| Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?    | 100%       |
| Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people? | 100%       |

Implementation and delivery to support the child's desistance was judged sufficient in a large majority of inspected cases. Inspectors found a high level of engagement from children, which reflected the proactive approach of staff (both case managers and specialist or partnership staff) and their capacity to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with them. In the services most likely to support desistance, particularly health pathways and post-16 ETE work, case managers consistently paid sufficient attention to sequencing and the available timescales. However, there was variability in service delivery in reflecting the diversity needs of the child, which was deemed sufficient in only half the cases. Despite this, the wider familial and social context of the child, and the involvement of their parents or carers or significant others, was evident in all but one case.

Inspectors noted that there was a high level of coordination and information exchange between the YJS case managers and partnership staff, both internally and externally. Every relevant case saw implementation and delivery promote the safety and wellbeing of the child. Despite a very complex cohort of children under their supervision, YJS case managers also kept a balance between a strong focus on safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others, and worked consistently with a range of agencies, such as education, health, social care, substance misuse, and third-sector projects. For keeping other people safe, case managers had considered the protection of actual and potential victims in their delivery of all relevant inspected court disposal cases. An inspector noted:

*"The child's health needs [were] prioritised in [the] secure estate to enable an ASD [autism spectrum disorder] assessment to be carried out, which was paramount in providing services to meet this child's individual needs and identify an appropriate placement in the community. Good joint working with the secure estate encouraged compliance and engagement, and the case manager kept parents informed throughout, which was impactful. This involved the use of a consistent interpreter at DTO [detention and training order] meetings. The case manager would have handover meetings with the child and any other staff that would be supporting him."*

<sup>4</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. A more detailed explanation is available on [our website](#).

## 2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers. **Outstanding**

Our rating<sup>5</sup> for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

|   | <b>% 'Yes'</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance? | <b>100%</b>    |
| Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?            | <b>100%</b>    |
| Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?         | <b>100%</b>    |

Reviewing of progress to support the child's desistance was strong. In every relevant case, a written review of desistance was completed, leading to necessary adjustments in the plan of work in all of them. This responsiveness to changing circumstances helped to maintain children's engagement and ensured that the work delivered was effective and meaningful. Reviewing continued to focus sufficiently on building on the child's strengths, enhancing protective factors, and assessing motivation and engagement levels in every relevant case. Importantly, we found that children and their parents or carers were meaningfully involved in their assessment in all relevant cases.

A written review of safety and wellbeing was completed in every relevant case. Reviewing identified and responded to changes in factors relating to safety and wellbeing, and we saw examples where multiagency meetings were arranged to ensure a coordinated partnership approach to addressing the issues to keep the child safe. Inspectors found that reviews completed by case managers led to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan of work in all but one relevant case. Many of the children supervised by the YJS had complex lives, and their circumstances could change rapidly. There were evident links to multi-agency safeguarding arenas, alongside the use of joint review between the child, parent or carer, and relevant professionals (such as social care) in many of the inspected cases.

Reviewing was informed by the necessary input from other agencies to manage the risk of harm posed to others. Inspectors found that case managers consistently completed written reviews, which were supported through the activity of the YJS multiagency risk management panel, sharing of police intelligence, and strong relationships between internal and external targeted, specialist, and mainstream partnership services. As a result, we saw cases that benefited from changes to reporting, increased structure, and positive activities, or allocation of additional police or antisocial behaviour outreach team resource, as determined by the needs of the case.

<sup>5</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. A more detailed explanation is available on [our website](#).

## Domain three: Out-of-court disposals

We inspected nine cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of one youth conditional caution, one youth caution, four community resolutions, and three other disposals. We interviewed the case managers in eight cases.

### 3.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>6</sup> for assessment is based on the following key questions:

|   | % 'Yes'     |
|---|-------------|
| Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance? | <b>100%</b> |
| Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?            | <b>100%</b> |
| Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?         | <b>100%</b> |

Assessments routinely drew on information from multiple sources to get the best understanding of a child's circumstances and history. Full and detailed assessments were completed before the joint decision-making panel met, which assisted in decision-making and determining the support and intervention required. Inspectors found that assessments were balanced, and we saw victim issues and opportunities for restorative justice were considered in all relevant cases. The involvement of the child and their parents or carers was evident in all cases. The case manager had considered the child's diversity in a majority of cases, and their wider social and familial context in all inspected cases.

Assessment of a child's safety and wellbeing consistently included information from other agencies. The YJS had access to the children's social care case management system and could complete checks on past and present contact. YJS case managers were effective in their joint working with colleagues in social care. This was reflected in attention to relevant social, emotional, and physical factors, such as emotional wellbeing, substance misuse, and risks from others. In all cases, we agreed with the safety and wellbeing classification, and there was a clear written record of how to keep the child safe.

Assessments drew on relevant information and, in all but one case, considered who was likely to be at risk from the child's behaviour, and the nature and imminence of any risk occurring. In all cases, the YJS case manager had used available sources of information, including other assessments, to inform their own judgement.

<sup>6</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. A more detailed explanation is available on [our website](#).

## 3.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>7</sup> for planning is based on the following key questions:

|  | % 'Yes'     |
|--|-------------|
| Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?      | <b>100%</b> |
| Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?    | <b>100%</b> |
| Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? | <b>100%</b> |

Planning in relation to desistance was strengths-based, well sequenced, and involved other agencies. Case managers considered victim wishes and the child's social and familial context in all relevant cases. Practitioners took an inclusive approach. They took full account of the family's needs as well as the child's aspirations and interests. The involvement of children and their parent or carers in plans was excellent, while the response to the child's diversity needs was sufficient in a majority of the inspected cases. The work planned was proportionate, could be achieved within the timescale of the out-of-court disposal, and considered the child's levels of maturity, ability, and motivation to change in every case. The main desistance factors identified included education, training and employment, self-identity, lifestyle, and speech, language, and communication. In all cases, planning focused on supporting access to universal services to promote community integration. We saw instances where children continued to be supported by the wider early help service, third sector organisations, and other mainstream, targeted, and specialist services after their out-of-court disposal ended.

In all relevant cases, there was sufficient planning to keep children safe. Inspectors found strong multiagency working, and the YJS plan was aligned with other plans, such as social care and early help. We recognise the need for proportionate planning in out-of-court disposals, where interventions may be brief, and were pleased to see sufficiently detailed contingency planning in all the relevant cases we inspected.

Planning to keep others safe was a strength. In every relevant case, planning focused sufficiently on keeping people safe, and case managers involved other agencies in their planning processes in every instance. Similarly, in all of these cases, planning addressed specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims. As with safety and wellbeing, contingency planning to manage public protection is important, and there should be a clear plan of action in the event of the child's risk of harm to others either increasing or decreasing. Inspectors found contingency planning for risk of harm to others to be sufficient in every relevant case.

<sup>7</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. A more detailed explanation is available on [our website](#).

### 3.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

Outstanding

Our rating<sup>8</sup> for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

|   | % 'Yes'     |
|---|-------------|
| Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?     | <b>100%</b> |
| Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?    | <b>100%</b> |
| Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people? | <b>100%</b> |

The involvement of other agencies across the wider statutory and third sector partnership was evident and well-coordinated. Delivery of services to support children's desistance was strong and built on the assessments and plans made. There was a high level of engagement and compliance with interventions, which were mainly voluntary. Case managers were persistent in gaining the trust of children and their parents or carers. We saw consistent evidence of work undertaken by a broad range of staff from mainstream, targeted, and specialist services, which led to positive outcomes for many YJS children. Practitioners matched interventions to children's needs and learning, and took account of their diversity and other commitments in a large majority of inspected cases.

Where there were issues concerning safety and wellbeing, we found clear multiagency arrangements to support children who were looked after, open to social care, or criminally exploited, or who had emotional wellbeing or substance misuse issues. The YJS consistently worked with a range of agencies and organisations to deliver well-coordinated packages of support. We saw good work by the case managers and other specialist workers in the YJS. Case managers advocated on behalf of children and made timely referrals to specialist and mainstream services, such as social care, substance misuse, and mental health liaison and diversion. The provision of a part-time specialist therapist from Barnardo's supports with interventions and case formulation work for those more complex children within the cohort, which in turn enhances the quality of work delivered.

Services were sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm in all relevant cases. Managing risk of harm often involved developing a better understanding of the victim's perspective, using a number of restorative justice techniques, as well as intelligence from police and other community projects and professionals. We were particularly impressed by the strong interface between the YJS and the antisocial behaviour team and their outreach workers. Inspectors judged that the case manager paid attention to the protection of actual and potential victims in all relevant cases.

<sup>8</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. A more detailed explanation is available on [our website](#).

### 3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision



There is a high-quality, evidence-based out-of-court disposal service in place that promotes diversion and supports sustainable desistance.

Outstanding

We also inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for out-of-court disposals, using evidence from documents, meetings, and interviews. Our key findings were as follows.

#### Strengths:

- There is a clear out-of-court disposal policy, which sets out regional and local arrangements for decision-making, provision, and delivery.
- A full range of disposals was considered; there was a graduated response, which meant that children could be diverted from prosecution where appropriate.
- Referrals to the joint decision-making panel are timely. The panel includes representatives from children's social care and early help services; this ensures that all options for addressing the children's safety and wellbeing are considered.
- There are clear arrangements for escalating and resolving differences when these occurred.
- There is a strong and varied prevention offer, which has enabled positive outcomes for children. The YJS is proactive in engaging children and families before they receive an out-of-court disposal.
- All interventions and services available to children on statutory orders are available to those who receive an out-of-court disposal.
- There is a Merseyside out-of-court disposal scrutiny panel that the YJS Head of Service attends, in her role as the regional YJS representative.
- YJS staff consistently provided children with opportunities for community integration and access to partnership services once they had completed the out-of-court disposal work.
- Policy and provision have been evaluated through pilots and subsequent themed audits, which have led to changes and improvements in practice.
- There is a bespoke assessment tool, which has been developed and refined to include a 'signs of safety' approach to assessment, but still addresses risk of harm issues.
- Arrangements are in place to capture and collate the views of children completing an out-of-court-disposal.

#### Areas for improvement:

- The policy does not explicitly refer to the whole range of protected characteristics across children's diversity. However, this was clearly evident across the out-of-court-disposal casework.
- Further analysis of quantitative data across the full sphere of prevention and out-of-court-disposal work would enable the YJS to demonstrate any additional impact.



## 4.1. Resettlement

### 4.1. Resettlement policy and provision



There is a high-quality, evidence-based resettlement service for children leaving custody.

Good

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings, and interviews. To illustrate that work, we inspected two cases managed by the YJS that had received a custodial sentence. Our key findings were as follows.

#### Strengths:

- There is a written resettlement policy that formalises the resettlement procedures and processes. This is also accompanied by practice guidance which ensures staff and partners have a thorough understanding of their role in resettlement work with YJS children.
- The YJS operates a resettlement tracker to monitor key stages of resettlement children's sentence and the subsequent activities required.
- There are clear and accessible referral and intervention pathways in relation to key areas such as accommodation, ETE, and health.
- Information-sharing and communication between the YJS and the secure estate is strong, reciprocal, and swift.
- Joint working and relationships between the YJS and key partner agencies (such as social care) are mature and collaborative, which ensures best outcomes for resettlement children.
- YJS partner staff (such as the substance misuse worker and post-16 ETE worker) work well with their counterparts in the secure estate, which leads to continuity of relationships and interventions for children.
- The YJS operates a resettlement panel, chaired by a YJS operational manager. This consists of a range of professionals and allows discussion, joint planning, and review of individual resettlement cases to ensure that the children's needs are met.
- There was good management of children's safety and wellbeing, and the risk that they posed to others, through additional internal and multiagency risk management meetings.
- We saw some individual case study evidence of the voices of children and their parents being sought to evaluate resettlement provision.

#### Areas for improvement:

- Not all staff have received specific resettlement training.
- The resettlement policy would be further enhanced by addressing more fully the whole range of protected characteristics across children's diversity.
- Further audit work is needed to scrutinise the quality of practice and draw together some more quantitative analysis around YJS work with resettlement cases.




## Further information

---

The following can be found on our website:

- [inspection data, including methodology and contextual facts about the YJS](#)
- [a glossary of terms used in this report.](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  <p><b>ST HELENS</b><br/>BOROUGH COUNCIL</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Children and Young Peoples<br/>Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>24 April 2023</b></p> |
|---|---|

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Report Title:</b>        | <b>Performance Report – Quarter 3 2022-23</b>   |
| <b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>    | Children and Young People & Education Skills and Business   |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>       | Councillor Nova Charlton &<br>Councillor Kate Groucutt  |
| <b>Exempt Report</b>        | No  |
| <b>Reason for Exemption</b> | N/A   |
| <b>Key Decision</b>         | No  |
| <b>Public Notice issued</b> | N/A   |
| <b>Wards Affected</b>       | All   |
| <b>Report of</b>            | Rob Huntington<br>Assistant Chief Executive<br><a href="mailto:robhuntington@sthelens.gov.uk">robhuntington@sthelens.gov.uk</a>                   |
| <b>Contact Officer</b>      | Chris Collinge<br>Performance, Strategy & Information Manager<br><a href="mailto:chriscollinge@sthelens.gov.uk">chriscollinge@sthelens.gov.uk</a> |

|                           |  |   |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Borough priorities</b> | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life         | X |
|                           | Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities     |   |
|                           | Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all          |   |
|                           | Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy |   |
|                           | Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture  |   |
|                           | Be a responsible Council   |   |

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Quarter 3 Performance Report 2022-23 (Annex A) provides an analysis of progress and performance over the period April to June 2022 against the Children and Young People Services priorities. The report reflects the new Performance Framework and targets aligned to the priorities and outcomes of the Borough Strategy as agreed by Cabinet on the 20th of April 2022. This framework provides the basis for quarterly performance reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny over the course of 2022-23.
- 1.2 The Council acknowledges that effective performance management arrangements are critical to supporting decision making during these challenging times and work continues to ensure the development of the Performance Framework and performance management processes across the Council.

## 2. Recommendations for Decision

**Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**

- i) **Note the performance position at Quarter 3 2022-23.**
- ii) **Note the actions planned by the Children and Young People Services to address specific areas for performance improvement in relation to Priority 1**
- iii) **Consider whether there are any potential items for further scrutiny as a part of the Committee's work program based on performance information received.**

## 3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 The Council remains committed to the regular monitoring and reporting of performance information to ensure the delivery of efficient, effective and value for money services that meet the needs and expectations of the customers and communities it serves. The purpose of the report is to present a summary of progress against the priorities and outcomes of the Borough Strategy 2021-2030 through an overview of performance in relation to key indicators.
- 3.2 The format of the report is split into 2 distinct parts:

- Part 1 of the report is a statistical analysis of the performance position at Quarter 3 2022-23.
- Part 2 of the report is a commentary on performance against delivery of the 6 Borough Strategy priorities and their respective outcomes, summarising performance and action being taken to improve performance where required. Scorecards for each priority area are included to provide further information on individual performance measures.

#### 4. Background /Reasons for the recommendations

4.1 The Quarter 3 Performance Report 2022-23 reflects performance over the 3-month period and many of the continued wide-ranging impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, rising demand for services and a requirement to deliver significant budget savings. As a result, it is more critical than ever that the Council has a clear understanding of what it needs to measure and how it is performing to inform effective decision making. The indicators reported are split between Tier 1 and Tier 2:

- **Tier 1** – A set of high-level strategic indicators and targets that constitute the Outcomes Framework of the Borough Strategy 2021-2030.
- **Tier 2** – A set of performance indicators and targets to address key priority areas of performance within Directorates / Departments linked to the business planning process and the Borough Strategy 2021-2030.

4.2 Annual targets were set where possible within the context of national, Northwest, and local authority comparator group data. Targets equally aspire to be challenging but achievable within the context of the available resources. The targets also take account of performance during 2021-22 and the continued impact of the pandemic, rising service demand and a challenging financial position for local government.

4.3 There are 88 performance indicators, where targets have been set, reported in the Quarter 3 Performance Report 2022-23. Of these:

- **73%** of indicator targets have been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compares to 75% of indicators in the previous quarter and 66% at Q3 2021/22.
- **27%** of indicator targets were not met. This compares to 25% of indicators in the previous quarter and 34% of indicators at Quarter 3 2021/22
- Over the course of the last 12 months **52%** of indicators showed improvement, **7%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **41%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory. The position is a decrease on the position in the previous quarter where 56% of indicators showed improvement. The position is also behind on the position in Q3 2021/22, where 54% of indicators showed improvement.
- **24%** of all indicators where comparison is possible are in the top quartile, compared to 39% at Q3 2021/22, whilst 27% are in the bottom quartile, compared to 32% at Q3 2021/22.

4.4 The continued effect of the pandemic, rising demand for services and the requirement to deliver significant budget savings has impacted the Council's ability to meet targets and demonstrate improvements in performance trends in the 3-month period from October to December 2022. Equally in many areas the impact of the pandemic on performance is yet to be fully realised and understood. However, given the effect of the pandemic on St Helens to date there is the strong likelihood that existing inequalities may be widened. This presents risks for future performance,

particularly in areas such as public health, education and schools, and children's services where current performance is already challenging. Improvement action to address the summary position above is set out within the body of the Quarter 2 Performance Report under the respective priorities and outcomes sections of the report.

4.5 The report takes the format of an executive summary of performance, followed by a more detailed breakdown for each priority and their respective outcomes. Tables have been included to highlight performance against outcome areas, along with a summary of actions that are being taken to improve performance.

4.6 In summary, at Quarter 3 there are a number of areas where performance against outcomes is either some distance from the Quarter 3 target or an outlier in terms of St Helens performance relative to the England average or our nearest neighbours. These areas include:

- *Priority 1*

- The children's social care outcome: This includes rates of Children in Need, Children Looked After, and children and young people supported with a Child Protection Plan where current performance is statistically significantly higher than last published England averages and that of our nearest neighbours. The number of open Early Help assessments has declined and is below the local target.
- The children's aspiration and attainment outcome: Specifically, the timeliness of EHCP completions.
- The children's health and resilience outcome: This includes the number of teenage conceptions for which St Helens has the fifth highest rate in England. Overweight and obesity rates for reception and Year 6 children, which are the second and fourteenth highest rates respectively in the country. Under-18 hospital admissions for alcohol, rates of smoking during pregnancy, and breastfeeding rates remain statistically significantly worse than last published England averages and the performance of our nearest neighbours. Performance against the Healthy Child Programme review indicator also remains challenging.

## 5. Consideration of Alternatives

5.1 None

## 6. Conclusions

6.1 The Quarter 3 Performance Report 2022-23 at Annex A provides an assessment of the Council's performance over the period October to December of the 2022-23 financial year. The impact of the pandemic and sustained financial pressure on local government continue to pose significant challenges for the Council and St Helens Borough. Robust and appropriate performance management arrangements continue to be critical to support effective decision making and enable the delivery of the Council's desired outcomes across the borough and its communities.

## 7. Legal Implications

7.1 Performance data and effective performance management contribute to the Council's governance position.

## 8. Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.1 The performance framework supports the community in understanding the progress the Council makes to achieve its priorities. Consideration will be given to presenting this information in a format that is easily understandable and accessible.

**9. Social Value**

9.1 The indicators include measures relating to the voluntary / community sector, employment, and the local economy.

**10. Sustainability and Environment**

10.1 The indicators include measures relating to sustainability and the environment.

**11. Health and Wellbeing**

11.1 The indicators include measures relating to the health and wellbeing of the local population.

**12. Equality and Human Rights**

12.1 None

**13. Customers and Residents**

13.1 The indicators include measures relating to customers.

**14. Asset and Property**

14.1 None

**15. Staffing and Human Resource**

15.1 None

**16. Risks**

16.1 There is a risk that performance may decline in some areas. Where this occurs action will be taken to address performance issues, these will be outlined in action plans the impact of which will be reported to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.

**17. Finance**

17.1 The council's performance management framework and processes are critical to ensuring the organisation provides value for money.

**18. Policy Framework Implications**

18.1 The recommendations within this report are in line with existing council policies. The performance framework links to the priorities and outcomes of the Our Borough Strategy and related key council strategies.

**19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

# 6

19.1 There is the opportunity to link aspects of the performance framework to the Localities agenda and report elements of performance at a locality level.

## 20. Background papers

20.1 N/A

## 21. Appendices

21.1 **Annex A** – Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee Performance Report  
Quarter 3 2022-23



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE SERVICES  
PERFORMANCE REPORT  
QUARTER 3 2022/23**



## Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. Our Borough Strategy 2021-30 Priorities .....</b>                                 | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>2. Borough Strategy Priorities and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.....</b>     | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>3. Purpose of the Report .....</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>4. Executive Summary .....</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>5. Part 1 - Statistical analysis .....</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>5.1 Performance Against Target .....</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>5.2 The Performance Trend .....</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>5.3 Inter Authority Comparison.....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>5.4 Summary and conclusion of statistical analysis .....</b>                         | <b>10</b> |
| <b>6. Part 2 - Commentary on performance against priority and outcome .....</b>         | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Priority 1 - Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life.....</b> | <b>11</b> |

# 1. Our Borough Strategy 2021-30 Priorities

Performance Management in St Helens Borough Council is focused around achieving the 6 strategic priorities outlined in Our Borough Strategy 2021/30.



**Priority 1 - Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life**

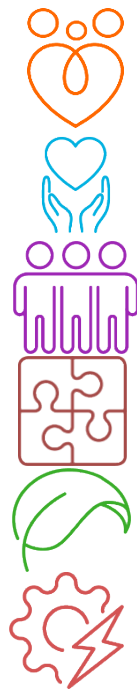
**Priority 2 - Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities**

**Priority 3 - Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all**

**Priority 4 - Support a strong, thriving, inclusive, and well-connected local economy**

**Priority 5 - Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture**

**Priority 6 - Be a responsible council**



## 2. Borough Strategy Priorities and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. Making progress towards the global goals by 2030 depends on local action. SDGs fit with Our Borough Strategy Vision and the Council's approach to Reset and Recovery. All 17 Sustainable Development Goals have been mapped against the 'Our Borough Strategy' priorities and outcomes.

60

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
|  <p>ENSURE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A POSITIVE START IN LIFE</p>    |     <br> |  <p>SUPPORT A STRONG, THRIVING, INCLUSIVE AND WELL-CONNECTED LOCAL ECONOMY</p> |      <br>     |
|  <p>PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH, INDEPENDENCE AND CARE ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES</p> |       |  <p>CREATE GREEN AND VIBRANT PLACES THAT REFLECT OUR HERITAGE AND CULTURE</p>  |      <br>  |
|  <p>CREATE SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR ALL</p>   |      |  <p>BE A RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL</p>   |      <br>    |

### 3. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to inform and update Elected Members on performance against the 6 priorities of the Our Borough Strategy 2021/30 and respective outcomes as set out above. The report covers the period Quarter 3 2022/23 providing the performance position reported over the course of the period. The reporting format splits the report into 2 distinct parts:

**Part 1** of the report is a statistical analysis of the performance position at Quarter 3 2022/23.

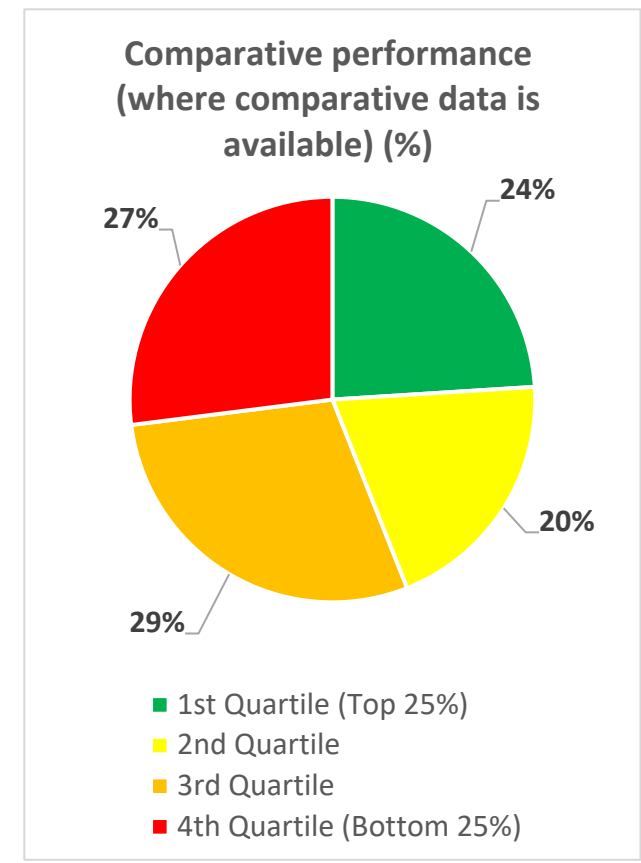
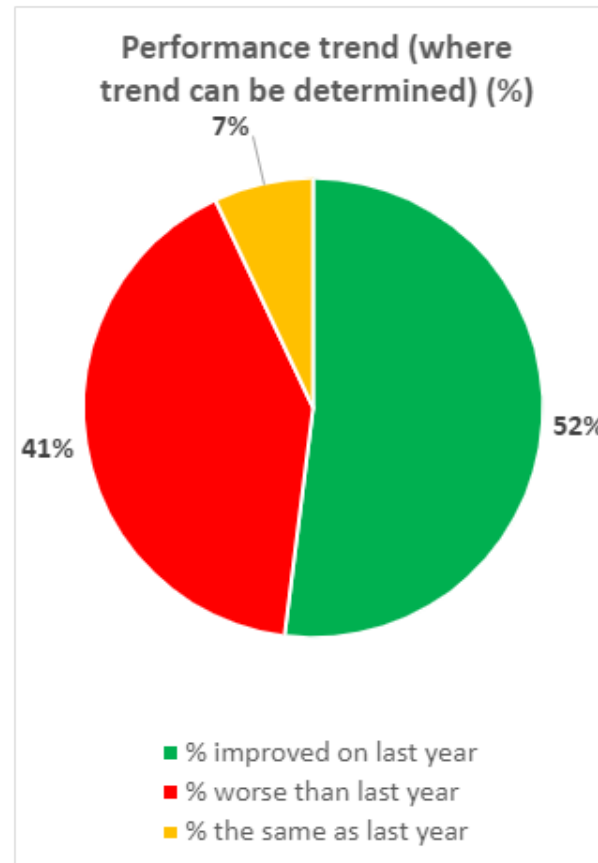
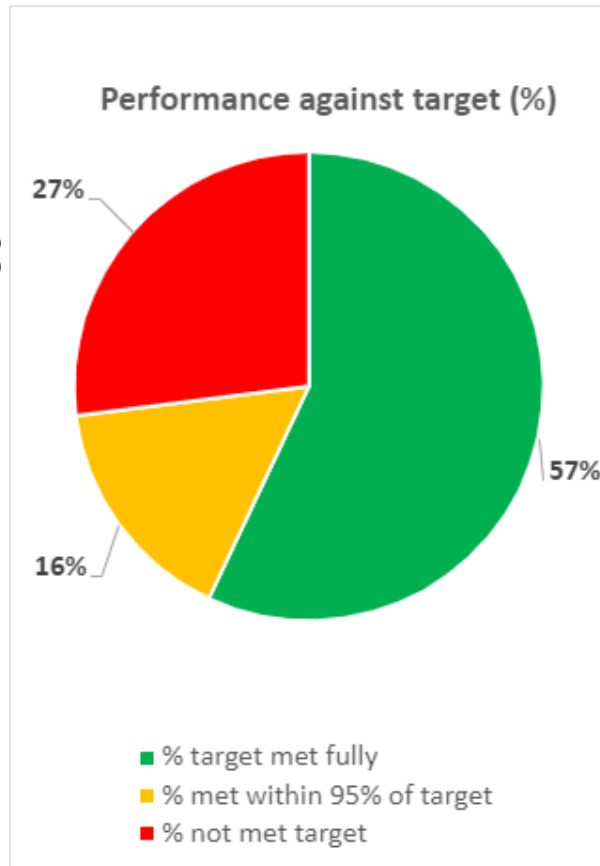
**Part 2** of the report is a commentary on performance against delivery of the 6 strategic priorities and their respective outcomes summarising current performance within the quarter and action being taken to improve performance where required.

## 4. Executive Summary

The charts below provide an overview position of all performance measures across all 6 Borough Strategy priorities as at Quarter 3 2022/23, examining:

- Performance against target.
- Trend - whether performance has improved / worsened since the position 12 months ago.
- Inter Authority performance - how St Helens' performance compares to that of a family group of authorities similar to St Helens.

62



## 5. Part 1 - Statistical analysis

To measure performance at Quarter 3 2022/23, the Council is reporting against a total of **88** performance indicators, where targets were set. The indicators reported are split between Tier 1 and Tier 2:

**Tier 1** – A set of high-level strategic indicators and targets that constitute the Outcomes Framework of the Borough Strategy 2021-2030.

**Tier 2** – A further set of performance indicators and targets to address key priority areas of performance within Directorates / Departments.

In the supporting scorecards for each priority area, this distinction is maintained and both tiers are shown as they are all relevant to an understanding of overall performance.

The Quarter 1 report statistical analysis looks at performance under 3 areas:

1. Performance against targets
2. Trend over 12-months
3. Inter-authority comparison

## 5.1 Performance Against Target

This measure sets out:

- The percentage of indicators by priority where targets have been fully met or exceeded.
- The percentage of indicators by priority that have not fully met target but are within 95% of target.
- The percentage of indicators by priority that have failed to meet the target by more than 5%.

In the supporting scorecards for each priority area, green, amber, and red colours are used to depict indicators in each of the above three bullet point situations.

| Priority  | Number of Indicators with data | % target fully met | % target met within 95% | % target not met |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Ensure children and young people have a positive start       | 25                             | 52% (13)           | 20% (5)                 | 28% (7)          |
| 2. Health, independence, and care                               | 21                             | 62% (13)           | 19% (4)                 | 19% (4)          |
| 3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods               | 13                             | 38% (5)            | 24% (3)                 | 38% (5)          |
| 4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy       | 6                              | 83% (5)            | 0% (0)                  | 17% (1)          |
| 5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture | 11                             | 64% (7)            | 18% (2)                 | 18% (2)          |
| 6. Responsible Council  | 12                             | 58% (7)            | 0% (0)                  | 42% (5)          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>88</b>                      | <b>57% (50)</b>    | <b>16% (14)</b>         | <b>27% (24)</b>  |

A listing of indicators, which have met or exceeded target, have met within 95% of target, or have failed to meet target by more than 5% are shown within each of the 6 priority scorecards.

## 5.2 The Performance Trend

This measure compares performance at Q3 2022/23 with performance at Q3 2021/22 by setting out:

- The percentage of indicators where performance compared to last year has improved.
- The percentage of indicators where performance compared to last year has declined.
- The percentage of indicators where performance compared to last year is the same.

In the supporting scorecards for each priority a black arrow pointing up, downwards or sideways is used to depict indicators in each of the above 3 scenarios.

NB. There are a small number of indicators for 2022/23, where performance data in 2021/22 is not available and therefore it is not possible to show a performance trend. Where this is the case N/A appears.



| Priority  | Number of Indicators with data | % improved on last year | % worse than last year | % the same as last year |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Ensure children and young people have a positive start       | 25                             | 36% (9)                 | 56% (14)               | 8% (2)                  |
| 2. Health, independence, and care                               | 21                             | 57% (12)                | 33% (7)                | 10% (2)                 |
| 3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods               | 13                             | 62% (8)                 | 31% (4)                | 8% (1)                  |
| 4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy       | 6                              | 67% (4)                 | 17% (1)                | 17% (1)                 |
| 5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture | 9                              | 78% (7)                 | 22% (2)                | 0% (0)                  |
| 6. Responsible Council  | 7                              | 29% (2)                 | 71% (5)                | 0% (0)                  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>81</b>                      | <b>52% (42)</b>         | <b>41% (33)</b>        | <b>7% (6)</b>           |

NB – Percentage figures have been rounded to nearest whole number.

### 5.3 Inter Authority Comparison

This measure shows how performance in St Helens compares to the performance of a family group of authorities similar to St Helens. It does this by ranking each authority's performance by quartile. The top performing 25 % are in the first quartile and the bottom 25% in the fourth quartile. Authorities in between are placed in either the 2nd or 3rd quartiles. Comparative national data is only available to be used for 41 indicators.

In the supporting scorecards for each priority, where this measure is used, green indicates that St Helens is in the top best performing quartile, red that it is in the bottom quartile or yellow/amber that St Helens is in either the 2nd or 3rd quartile). The England average figure (Eng, Av) is also now presented, as is the statistical neighbour group average (LA Av.) to provide additional context to comparative performance.

| Priority  | Number of Indicators with data | % in 1st quartile | % in 2nd quartile | % in 3rd quartile | % in 4th quartile |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Ensure children and young people have a positive start | 21                             | 24% (5)           | 24% (5)           | 19% (4)           | 33% (7)           |
| 2. Health, independence, and care                         | 12                             | 17% (2)           | 17% (2)*          | 50% (6)           | 17% (2)           |
| 3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods         | 0                              | 0% (0)            | 0% (0)            | 0% (0)            | 0% (0)            |

| Priority  | Number of Indicators with data | % in 1st quartile | % in 2nd quartile | % in 3rd quartile | % in 4th quartile |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy       | 3                              | 100% (3)          | 0% (0)            | 0% (0)            | 0% (0)            |
| 5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture | 3                              | 0% (0)            | 33% (1)           | 33% (1)           | 33% (1)           |
| 6. Responsible Council  | 2                              | 0% (0)            | 0% (0)            | 50% (1)           | 50% (1)           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>41</b>                      | <b>24% (10)</b>   | <b>20% (8)</b>    | <b>29% (12)</b>   | <b>27% (11)</b>   |

NB – Percentage figures have been rounded to nearest whole number.

The latest available picture of inter authority performance largely relates to the 2021/2 financial year. Therefore, St Helens position vis-a-vis its quartile position is based on St Helens performance in that particular year relative to its statistical neighbours. Future reports will be updated to reflect the 2021/22 comparative performance position as and when verified data is published.

#### 5.4 Summary and conclusion of statistical analysis

- **73%** of indicator targets have been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compares to 75% of indicators in the previous quarter and 66% at Q3 2021/22.
- **27%** of indicator targets were not met. This compares to 25% of indicators in the previous quarter and 34% of indicators at Quarter 3 2021/22.
- The trend measure indicates over the course of the last 12 months that **52%** of indicators showed improvement, **7%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **41%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory. The position is a decrease on the position in the previous quarter where 56% of indicators showed improvement. The position is also behind on the position in Q3 2021/22, where 54% of indicators showed improvement.
- **24%** of all indicators where comparison is possible are in the top quartile, compared to 39% at Q3 2021/22, whilst 27% are in the bottom quartile, compared to 32% at Q3 2021/22.
- Annual targets were set where possible within the context of national, Northwest, and local authority comparator group data. Equally targets aspire to be challenging but achievable within the context of the available resources. The targets also take account of performance during the last 2 years which has been an unprecedented period due to the onset and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on performance within St Helens whether direct or indirect was highlighted within the Performance Outturn Reports for 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- Performance should therefore be viewed within the context of what has continued to be a challenging operational period for the Council. The continued effect of the pandemic, rising demand for services and the requirement to deliver significant budget savings has impacted the Council's ability to meet targets and demonstrate improvements in performance trends. Equally in many areas the impact of the pandemic on performance is yet to be fully realised and understood. However, given the effect of the pandemic on St Helens to date there is the strong likelihood that existing inequalities may be widened. This presents risks for future performance, but particularly in areas such as public health, education and schools and children's services where current performance is already challenging.

## 6. Part 2 - Commentary on performance against priority and outcome

### Priority 1 - Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life



#### Outcomes

- Children and young people are safe from harm and the lives of children in care improve
- Children and young people's aspirations, attainment and opportunities are raised
- Children and young people are healthy, resilient, confident, involved and achieve their potential

#### Overview of Priority Performance

The tables below provide an overview of performance at Quarter 3 2022/23 for the indicators reported

#### Performance Against Target

| Number of Indicators with data | % target fully met | % target met within 95% | % target not met |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 25                             | 52% (13)           | 20% (5)                 | 28% (7)          |

#### The Performance Trend

| Number of Indicators with data | % improved on last year | % worse than last year | % the same as last year |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 25                             | 36% (9)                 | 56% (14)               | 8% (2)                  |

#### Inter Authority Comparison

| Number of Indicators with data | % in 1st quartile | % in 2nd quartile | % in 3rd quartile | % in 4th quartile |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 21                             | 24% (5)           | 24% (5)           | 19% (4)           | 33% (7)           |



## Priority 1 - Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life

### Tier 1

| Outcome  | Ref     | Performance Indicator   | Reporting Frequency | Higher / Lower is better? | 21/22 Outturn | 22/23 Target | Q1<br>June | Q2<br>Sept | Q3<br>Dec | % Variance from Target (Dec) | Trend | Comparative Performance                                    |
|--|---------|---|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------------------------|-------|--|
| Children and young people are safe from harm and the lives of children in care improve | CYP-001 | The number of open Early Help assessments per 10,000 population (aged 0-17 years)   | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 240           | 250          | 222        | 196.5      | 189.4     | -24.24%                      | ↓     | N/A  |
|  | CYP-002 | The number of early help episodes that have been closed and have subsequently not gone on to have a social care intervention in the following 12 months as a percentage of total closures | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 73.80%        | 74%          | 85.6       | 86.3       | 86.5      | 16.89%                       | ↑     | N/A  |
|  | CYP-003 | Number of children in need at 31 March, per 10,000 children aged 0-17 years   | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 478.4         | 420          | 474.5      | 461.2      | 458.6     | -4.23%                       | ↓     | 3rd Quartile<br>Eng Av. 334.0<br>LA Av. 438.2<br>(2021/22) |
|  | CYP-004 | Rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 under 18-year-olds   | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 57.50%        | 54           | 66.9       | 66.7       | 71.1      | -29.27%                      | ↓     | 2nd Quartile<br>Eng Av. 42<br>LA Av. 60.6<br>(2021/22)     |

| Outcome | Ref     | Performance Indicator   | Reporting Frequency | Higher / Lower is better? | 21/22 Outturn | 22/23 Target | Q1<br>June | Q2<br>Sept | Q3<br>Dec | % Variance from Target (Dec) | Trend | Comparative Performance                                 |
|---------|---------|---|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------------------------|-------|---|
| 69      | CYP-005 | Percentage of children starting a child protection plan (CPP) who had never had a plan previously | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 73.80%        | 72%          | 72.9       | 76.4       | 77.3      | 7.36%                        | ↑     | N/A   |
|         | CYP-006 | Number of looked after children per 10,000 children within the Borough                            | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 128.2         | 127          | 126        | 127.9      | 129.7     | -2.13%                       | ↓     | 4th Quartile<br>Eng Av. 70<br>LA Av. 108.6<br>(2021/22) |
|         | CYP-008 | Percentage of Children Looked After ceased due to Special Guardianship Order (SGO)                | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 19.00%        | 15%          | 20         | 21         | 22.6      | 50.67%                       | ↑     | 3rd Quartile<br>Eng Av. 13<br>LA Av. 20<br>(2021/22)    |
|         | CYP-009 | Percentage of former care leavers aged 19-21 years with whom the LA is in touch                   | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 97%           | 95%          | 94         | 96.6       | 94        | -1.05%                       | ↓     | 1st Quartile<br>Eng Av. 92<br>LA Av. 93.7<br>(2021/22)  |
|         | CYP-010 | Percentage of former care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation                            | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 95.30%        | 95%          | 97         | 96.6       | 95        | 0%                           | ↔     | 1st Quartile<br>Eng Av. 88<br>LA Av. 90<br>(2021/22)    |



| Outcome   | Ref     | Performance Indicator   | Reporting Frequency | Higher / Lower is better? | 21/22 Outturn   | 22/23 Target | Q1<br>June | Q2<br>Sept | Q3<br>Dec | % Variance from Target (Dec) | Trend | Comparative Performance                                  |
|---|---------|---|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------------------------|-------|--|
|   | CYP-011 | Percentage of former care leavers aged 19-21 years in employment, education, or training                      | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 55%             | 54%          | 59.4       | 57         | 57.7      | 3.04%                        | ↓     | 2nd Quartile<br>Eng Av. 55<br>LA Av. 53.5<br>(2021/22)   |
| Children and young people's aspirations, attainment and opportunities are raised                  | CYP-012 | Percentage of Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans completed within a 20-week period                       | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 86.2%           | 70%          | 24.4       | 26         | 23.7      | -66.09%                      | ↓     | 1st Quartile<br>Eng Av. 57.9<br>LA Av. 74.7<br>(2020/21) |
|   | E&S-005 | Percentage of young people academic age 16-17 not in education, employment or training and not known combined | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 4.91%           | 4.91%        | 4.6        | 17.4       | 5.14      | -14.22%                      | ↓     | 1st Quartile<br>Eng Av. 5.5<br>LA Av. 5.3<br>(2021)      |
|   | E&S-006 | Percentage of state funded schools judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted                                       | Annual              | Higher                    | 83%             | 84%          | 85         | 87         | 87        | 3.57%                        | ↑     | 2nd Quartile<br>Eng Av. 88<br>LA Av. 84 (Dec 2021)       |
| Children and young people are healthy, resilient, confident, involved and achieve their potential | PH-002  | Percentage of children in reception year who are overweight or obese  | Annual              | Lower                     | 28.3% (2019/20) | 28.30%       | N/A        | N/A        | 28.7      | -1.41%                       | ↓     | 4th Quartile<br>Eng Av. 22.3<br>LA Av. 25.0<br>(2021/22) |
|   | PH-003  | Percentage of children in Year 6 who are overweight or obese  | Annual              | Lower                     | 41% (2019/20)   | 41%          | N/A        | N/A        | 43.8      | -6.83%                       | ↓     | 4th Quartile<br>Eng Av. 37.8<br>LA Av. 40.9<br>(2021/22) |

| Outcome | Ref     | Performance Indicator   | Reporting Frequency | Higher / Lower is better? | 21/22 Outturn | 22/23 Target | Q1<br>June | Q2<br>Sept | Q3<br>Dec | % Variance from Target (Dec) | Trend | Comparative Performance                                    |
|---------|---------|---|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------------------------|-------|--|
| 71      | PH-004  | Under-18 conception rate per 1,000 females, 15-17 years (single year rate)  | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 30.2 (2020)   | 30.1         | 30.5       | 27         | 26        | 13.62%                       | ↑     | 4th Quartile<br>Eng Av. 12.8<br>LA Av. 19.1<br>(June 2021) |
|         | CYP-013 | Number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system who receive their first substantive outcome or court disposal per 100,000 population aged 10-17 | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 155           | 174          | 30         | 67         | 110       | 15.71%                       | ↓     | 1st Quartile<br>Eng Av. 169.2<br>LA Av. 157.5<br>(2021)    |
|         | CYP-014 | The percentage of children re-offending   | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 41%           | 43%          | 44         | 40         | 32.2      | 25.12%                       | ↑     | 4th Quartile<br>Eng Av. 35.6<br>LA Av. 31.3<br>(2019)      |

## Tier 2

| Outcome   | Ref     | Performance Indicator  | Reporting Frequency | Higher / Lower is better? | 21/22 Outturn      | 22/23 Target | Q1<br>June | Q2<br>Sept | Q3<br>Dec | % Variance from Target (Dec) | Trend | Comparative Performance                                  |
|---|---------|--|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------------------------|-------|--|
| Children and young people are safe from harm and the lives of children in care improve<br>72      | CYP-007 | Percentage of children looked after at 31 March with three or more placements during the year. | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 9.10%              | 9%           | 10         | 10.4       | 10.3      | -14.44%                      | ↓     | 2nd Quartile<br>Eng Av. 10.0<br>LA Av. 10<br>(2021/22)   |
|   | CYP-015 | Average actual number of cases per children and family social worker                           | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 16.4               | 18           | 16         | 15         | 16        | 11.11%                       | ↑     | N/A  |
| Children and young people are healthy, resilient, confident, involved and achieve their potential | PH-005  | Percentage of infants being breastfed at 6-8 weeks   | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 31.3%<br>(2021/22) | 31.60%       | 32.2       | 27         | 30.3      | -4.11%                       | ↑     | 4th Quartile<br>Eng Av. 49.3<br>LA Av. 34.5<br>(2021/22) |
|   | PH-006  | Smoking status at the time of delivery   | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 13.4%<br>(2021/22) | 12.70%       | 11.8       | 14.6       | 11.4      | 10.24%                       | ↑     | 3rd Quartile<br>Eng Av. 9.1<br>LA Av. 12.2<br>(2021/22)  |



| Outcome | Ref    | Performance Indicator   | Reporting Frequency | Higher / Lower is better? | 21/22 Outturn          | 22/23 Target | Q1<br>June | Q2<br>Sept | Q3<br>Dec | % Variance from Target (Dec) | Trend | Comparative Performance                                      |
|---------|--------|---|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------------------------|-------|--|
| 73      | PH-007 | Under 18 admissions to hospital for alcohol specific reasons per 100,000 population                       | Quarterly           | Lower                     | 81.4 (2018/19 - 20/21) | 81.4         | 68.2       | 68.8       | 68.1      | 16.34%                       | ↔     | 4th Quartile<br>Eng Av. 29.3<br>LA Av. 40.1<br>(18/19-20/21) |
|         | PH-009 | Percentage of children who received a 2-2.5-year Healthy Child Programme review by the time they were 2.5 | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 81% (2021/22)          | 84.00%       | 63         | 63         | 64.7      | -22.98%                      | ↓     | 3rd Quartile<br>Eng Av. 74.0<br>LA Av. 86.4<br>(2021/22)     |
|         | PH-010 | Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2 1/2 years                             | Quarterly           | Higher                    | 86.1% (2021/22)        | 82.90%       | 88.2       | 85         | 82.9      | 0%                           | ↓     | 2nd Quartile<br>Eng Av. 80.9<br>LA Av. 80.3<br>(2021/22)     |

## Summary of performance against outcome and action for improvement

### Outcome – Children and young people are safe from harm and the lives of children in care improve

#### Current Performance

- Performance against the outcome at Quarter 3 shows some areas of good performance against target, but also some ongoing challenges, notably in the areas of numbers of children looked after and numbers of children subject to child protection plans.
- A total of 695 children and young people in St Helens were receiving early help intervention at the end of Quarter 3 delivered either directly by St Helens Council services or local partners, primarily local schools. The number of children in December 2022 receiving an early help intervention (189.4 rate per 10,000) is currently not meeting target and has decreased since June 2022, when 820 children were receiving an early help intervention. The

current rate is also below the rate recorded in December 2021 (252.3 rate per 10,000). The most common reasons for an early help episode being in place for those children related to parenting capacity, SEND, Emotional wellbeing and Child Mental Health.

- The majority of early help episodes cases closed in the last 12-months did not result in a subsequent referral to St Helens Children’s Social Care. In the period January 2021 to December 2021 a total of 1,196 early help episodes were closed and stepped down to universal services. Of these early help episodes closed and ‘stepped down’, 86.5% did not, in the 12 months following closure, subsequently progress to a referral to St Helens Children’s Social Care.
- There has been a further reduction in the numbers of children and young people open to St Helens Children's Social Care in Quarter 3. A total of 1,683 children and young people were open to St Helens Children's Social Care at the end of December, equating to a Children in Need (CIN) rate of 458.6 per 10,000 under 18-year-olds. This compares to 1,751 children and young people at June 2022. Most children open to CSS is due to reasons related to Abuse and Neglect (80%.) The indicator remains marginally below target and St Helens rate of CIN per 10,000 (461.2) continues to be higher than the most recently published (March 2022) comparable rates nationally (334), regional (384), but similar to statistical neighbour averages (449).
- The rate of children supported with a Child Protection Plan remains high and is not meeting target. At the end of December 2022, a total of 261 children and young people were supported with a Child Protection (CP) Plan, equating to a rate of 71.1 children per 10,000 under 18 years olds in the borough. Rates have increased over the last 12 months. St Helens current rate stands above the most recently published (March 2022) Child Protection Plan rates reported nationally (42), regionally (49) and for statistical neighbours (61). The percentage of children starting to be supported by a child protection plan who had never had a plan previously is meeting target. Over the first 3 quarters of 2022 a total of 255 children and young people have been made the subject of a Child Protection (CP) Plan in St Helens, with the majority of the children (77.3%) having never been the subject of a CP Plan previously. Performance has improved over the course of the year to date. The proportion of children starting a CP Plan having never been the subject of a CP Plan previously is slightly higher (better) in St Helens than was the case regionally (2021-22) (76%) and similar to the national (77%) average, showing St Helens to have a slightly lower proportion of children experiencing repeat CP Plans, which is the right outcome sought.
- Numbers of children in care remain very high. At the end of December 2022, a total of 476 children and young people were cared for by St Helens Council, an increase on the Quarter 1 figure of 464. This is a rate of 129.7 children looked after (CLA) per 10,000 under 18-year-olds, above the target of 127. The overall CLA population reported for St Helens continues, to be significantly higher than the 2022 comparable regional (97) and national rates (70), and above statistical neighbour rates (107).
- The percentage of children and young people discharged from care as a result of a special guardianship order (SGO) between April and December 2022/23 was 22.6% of all children and young people discharged from care. A total of 106 children and young people ceased to be cared for by St Helens Council with discharged from care as a result of a special guardianship order (SGO). The indicator is better than target and performance is above the most recent 2021/22 national (13%) and regional (16%) averages.
- In the 12-month period to the end of December 2022, 49 children and young people experienced three or more placement moves, equating 10.3% of the total CLA population supported by St Helens. The percentage of children experiencing short term placement instability has increased compared to December 2021 (7.8%) and compared to the outturn in March 2022 (9%). Current performance is similar to 2021/22 national position (10%) but above the regional average for 2021-22 (9%) and above the local annual target of 9%.
- Performance against the 3 key outcomes for care leavers remains strong, that being care leavers in suitable accommodation, care leavers the local authority is still in touch with, and care leavers in employment education and training. St Helens performance compares favourably to regional, national

74

and comparator authorities. In Quarter 3 there has been a small reduction in the number of care leavers the local authority is in touch with, but performance remains good. A total of 78 Former Relevant care leavers have turned 19, 20 or 21 years old between 1 April and 31 December 2022 and the LA was in touch with 73 of the young people in question at the time of their most recent birthday via its dedicated care leaver service.

- The average actual social worker case workloads indicator met target during Quarter 3 and has improved on the figure reported in Quarter 3 in the previous year. However, the data should continue to be considered cautiously as it is based on the average caseloads across the service and variability across social work teams remains, where in some teams the volume is higher.

#### • Action for Improvement

- The pandemic has impacted on the delivery of some key services and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSEs) organisations with limited support, and business continuity plans having been implemented. The Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) has completed a review of Early Help and reported the findings. In summary work across the partnership is ongoing to ensure the effective delivery of the Early Help service to families to ensure that children are not entering the child protection system without receiving appropriate early intervention and that risks are not becoming more acute. The Early Help strategy is being refreshed and partners are being encouraged to be pro-active in supporting families on the understanding that early intervention is everybody's business. Historically there has been too much emphasis placed upon Early Help Assessment (EHAT) completion. The Supporting Families programme and the transformation to Family Hubs with subsequent funding will assist in early identification of needs and support within communities avoiding more intrusive statutory services.

75

- However, Q3 states the number of children receiving Early Help services has slightly reduced, this is in contrast to the number of children on CP plans increasing, which evidences the growing levels of complexity, deprivation, and poverty, as the main increase is in areas around neglect and abuse.
- With regard to the increasing number of children in need of protection (CIN), we have identified that our CIN response needs to be more robust, especially recognising and intervening in neglectful parenting. There is a child in need panel and a dedicated co-ordinator. New systems are being put in place to ensure CIN work is being improved to prevent escalation to Child Protection Plans and Children being looked after. There is a thematic review of neglect currently under way by the children safeguarding partnership.
- We will continue to dip sample children entering the Child Protection and care system to better understand the presenting needs and how to support them at the earliest opportunity. It is noted that children and families are becoming increasingly complex, and this is reflected in regional and national trends. The most deprived local authorities are seeing this to a greater extent. Undoubtedly this is linked to causal factors such as poverty, the pandemic, and the greater prevalence of mental health issues for all ages. This is also a contributory factor in the increase in placement breakdowns. This is reflected in Regional Information Group (RIG) data and North West placement data reports.
- The stability rate has increased, this is partly due to the complexity of placements and challenging behaviour resulting in a number of external foster care placement disruptions and therefore children moving into residential care .

## Outcome - Children and young people's aspirations, attainment and opportunities are raised

### Current Performance

- The majority of indicators relating to this outcome relate to the attainment of children and young people and are published annually.
- Performance for the completion of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) to timescale has shown a significant dip over the first 3 quarters. The 9 months April to December 139 EHCPs were finalised, 33 of which were within 20 weeks. This is a consequence of increasing demand and significantly reduced capacity within the SEND Assessment Service and Educational Psychology Service.
- At the end of December 2022, a total of 61 state funded schools (Nursery Schools, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Special Schools, and Pupils Referral Units) in St Helens were judged by Ofsted to be good or better for overall effectiveness, equating to 87% of all state funded schools in St Helens. There were 16 schools that are currently judged by Ofsted to be outstanding and a further 45 schools that were judged to be good. The position reported for St Helens at the end of December 2022 was marginally below both the comparable national (88%) and the regional NW (89%) average.
- The performance against numbers of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET) and Not Known at December 2022 was 5.14%, marginally worse than the target of 5%. There has been an increase in numbers of 16–17-year-olds who are NEET from 126 (3.1%) young people in December 2021 to 172 (4.21%) young people in December 2022. There were 38 (0.935) young people in the Not Known category in December 2022, a small reduction on the 0.98% in December 2021.

76

### Action for Improvement

- To address the performance challenges in the timeliness of EHCP's, the risk has been added to the corporate risk register and a recovery plan has been produced. Recruitment continues to fill vacancies to the SEND Assessment Team and Educational Psychology Service, and funding for 2 additional posts have been agreed in light of increasing demand. The SEND Assessment Service has successfully recruited to 7 vacant posts and it is hoped that the service will be back up to strength by Easter. Cases are risk assessed and prioritised to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils needs are assessed. The challenges have been communicated to all partners and parent carers.
- The following actions are being taken to address the increase in NEET:
  - Analysis and risk assessment of all the 16-year-olds and development of bespoke support plans.
  - Undertaking Case Conference meetings for young people that continue to find it a challenge to positively engage. This will also identify to providers the gaps that have been left by the reduction in provision.
  - Work with partners to review all available means of tracking addresses and telephone numbers for all young people where the last known contact details are out of date
- Those schools judged to be not yet good are being supported and challenged by the School Effectiveness Team through achievement and improvement board meetings, termly on-site reviews and a bespoke training package. There is only one school presently judged to be RI that is in scope for inspection this year.

## Outcome - Children and young people are healthy, resilient, confident, involved and achieve their potential

### Current Performance

- Performance within the outcome of improving children's health and resilience remains challenging.
- Reducing St Helens rates of children overweight and obese remains a challenge. The latest St. Helens data for the proportion of Reception children in 2021/22, classed as overweight or obese (28.7%) was similar to the figure seen in previous years (28.2% and 28.3% in 2018/19 and 2019/20 respectively). However, the North West rate decreased to 23.3% and the National rate decreased to 22.3%. St. Helens now has the highest rate in the North West and the 2nd highest rate in England for Reception age overweight and obese children. St Helens' proportion of Year-6 children classed as overweight or obese in 2021/22 (44%) was much higher than the figure seen in previous years. The NW rate increased to 39%, and the National rate increased to 37.8%. St. Helens has the 2nd highest rate in the North West and the 14th highest rate in England.
- The latest nationally published provisional teenage conception data relates to the 12-month period to September 2021 and shows there were 76 under 18 conceptions for St Helens, with 17 in the last quarter. The annual rolling rate up to September 2021 has now decreased slightly from 27.0 to 26.0 per 1,000, which is below the target of 28.0. However, St. Helens had the 5th highest rolling 12-month annual rate in England, significantly higher than the England average rate of 12.8 and North West rate of 16.1.
- Provisional quarterly data for Quarter 2 2022/23 (3 year rolling average) for under-18 admissions to hospital for alcohol specific reasons was a rate of 68.1 admissions per 100,000 aged Under 18, which is below the target of 83 and a small reduction on the previous quarter's figure of 68.8. However, the latest verified national data for the number of under-18 admissions to hospital for alcohol specific reasons, per 100,000 population for the period 2018/19 - 2020/21 was a rate for St Helens of 81.4 per 100,000 aged under 18, significantly higher than regional (43.6) and national (29.3) rates.
- The latest provisional data for Quarter 2 2022/23 for the percentage of children receiving a 2-2.5-year Healthy Child Programme review is 64.7% which is below the target of 84%, but a marginal improvement on the previous quarter. This is considerably lower than St Helens recently published verified outturn for 2021/22 of 81% and the national and North West averages of 74% and 79.9% respectively.
- The latest provisional data for Quarter 2 2022/23 showed 85% of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2.5-years, better than the target of 82.9%. St Helens' performance has been consistently above last published national averages.
- Historically, St Helens has had low rates of breastfeeding. The most recent data which relates to Q3 2022/23 shows that the percentage of infants being breastfed at 6-8 weeks is 30.3%, which is below the target of 31.6%. This is an increase on the previous quarter's reported rate of 27%. The recently published comparator data for 2021/22 confirms the percentage of infants being breastfed in St. Helens 31.3% remains well below the National and Regional averages (49.3% and 41.1% respectively).
- The proportion of women smoking at the time of delivery is showing improvement. The latest data Quarter 2 - 2021/22 showed 11.4% smoking at the time of delivery. This is lower than the target of 12.7% and lower than St Helens' published 2021/22 figure of 13.4%. Local rates however remain worse

77

than the recently published North West average (10.6%) and the national average (9.1%). In 2021/22 St Helens had the 17th highest rate in England, a small improvement from 8th highest in 2020/21.

- During Quarter 3 there were 6 young people who became first-time entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System. This brings the total for the period April to December to 18. This compares to a total of 16 FTEs over the same period in the previous year. Although this represents a small increase, comparative performance remains very strong. The continual reduction in FTEs is reflected nationally across most youth offending teams given the increased emphasis on prevention and diversion as a means of improving child trajectories and positive life outcomes. Whilst this is excellent performance in relation to our regional and national counterparts, the small local increase seen here is reflective of the nature of the seriousness of the offences being committed.
- Reoffending over the last few years has been the Youth Justice Service's biggest challenge in St Helens. Reoffending rates are based time-lagged Police PNC data. The latest data covering the period January to December 2020 has shown a significant decrease in the rate of offending. The reoffending rate reported in Quarter 1 was 44%, which reduced to 40% at Quarter 2. The reoffending rate at Quarter 3 has reduced significantly to 32%, which is below the annual target of 43%. The data should possibly be treated with caution as the time period for the data coincides with the period of Covid which impacted the Court sentencing across England.

### Action for Improvement

78

- The National Child Measurement Programme data for the academic year 21/22 is the highest recorded level of overweight and obese Reception children (28.6%) on record for St. Helen's. This is the highest rate in the region and second highest in England, which is a cause for concern. The proportion of Year-6 children classed as overweight or obese in 2021/22 (44%) was much higher than the figure seen in previous years. St. Helens has the 2nd highest rate in the Northwest and the 14th highest rate in England. Childhood obesity is strongly associated with poverty, and previous local efforts have focussed on access to food via foodbanks and food pantries. St Helens was hit hard by the pandemic with reduced opportunity or support for being physically active as a consequence of prolonged periods of lockdowns. For this coming year, the focus and efforts will shift to improving the nutritional quality of food available and additional support/information for parents/carers to eat healthier and adopt daily physical activity behaviours for themselves and their children. Plans are in place to refresh the Healthy Weight Declaration, a review of food in schools, active travel plans (to/from school), re-introducing the daily mile, and funded training places for two practitioners to become HENRY 0-5 parenting partitioners.
- Teenage conception rates remain very high; however, we have seen a reduced rates for two consecutive quarters. A spotlight review on Teenage Pregnancy (TP) was delivered for CYP Scrutiny members in December with a follow up session planned for January, which will make recommendations for a range of partners and inform the local TP plan. Teenage Pregnancy data and the need for quality age appropriate RSE was delivered to primary school head teachers during Quarter 3, and a follow up survey to audit RSE provision in all schools will be distributed in Quarter 4. Further engagement work is planned to seek the views of young people on RSE, attitudes and behaviours. The TAZ team are leading a teenage pregnancy campaign for March, which will target parents/carers of teenagers, schools, partners, and workplaces (Council and hospital staff) to access the online DIYRSE training (as parents/carers). Work is in progress to increase access to contraceptive services, via community pharmacies, GP training, and via the sexual health service. A 10 TP point action plan will be updated once local data, views, insights, and intelligence has been collated and analysed.
- Young Peoples alcohol admissions continue on a downward trend, although still high compared with the latest known figures for England and North West . The council's Young Peoples Drug and Alcohol team (YPDAAT) regularly review the data to understand which young people are at risk and



target preventative work accordingly. The YPDAAT engage with young people via group sessions and on a 1-1 basis across school's colleges and various other locations. In 2023 the national drugs strategy funding has been made available to improve access to and capacity of treatment services, including the YPDAAT. The prevention of drugs and alcohol harm to young people is a priority within that work along with reducing the stigma of accessing services. A renewed focus will be developed to ensure support for those young people who are identified as being most at risk. The YPDAAT also engage with young people who have already had a hospital admission to reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

- The data for the proportion of children who received a 2-2.5 year check this quarter (July-Sept) shows a slight improvement compared to Q1, however this is significantly below target. The 0-19 Healthy Child Programme service continued prioritising reviews for children who did not receive a face-to-face visit as a result of the pandemic. In addition, a monitoring and reporting error was identified whereby visits were completed but could not be included as outside the time boundaries. A service improvement plan has been put in place to improve reporting for this indicator, which will be monitored by the commissioner. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2.5 years, appears to be better than regional and national averages, however, this data should be viewed with caution. It is expected that as the proportion receiving a check improves to above 85% through focused work to reduce DNAs, it is expected that the number of children receiving a 'good' development at their 2-2.5year old review will reduce.
- This reporting period (July-Sept 2022) for Breast Feeding (BF) rates shows an improvement from last quarter as services begin to recover from the worst of the Omicron wave. Unfortunately, restrictions to the maternity wards continued until June due to enhanced infection and prevention control measures. The Infant Feeding (IF) Team (Wellbeing Service) contacted new mothers quickly when referrals were received for breastfeeding support in the community, and successfully supported 78 (88%) referred mums to reach 6-8 weeks BF continuation. Going forward, the IF team are working to develop their offer via Family Hubs developing plans, and scoping/costing of a full-time IF Co-ordinator is in progress. Once in post, the IF Co-ordinator will lead on implementing the WHO Baby Friendly Initiative quality standards in for community services (Health visitors, GPs, early help/family support workers, volunteers etc). Other action in place includes a campaign to recruit businesses to become Baby Friendly during World Breastfeeding Week and Lowe House Hub building will also provide a community provision for mums with the Infant Feeding Team including a lactation clinic.
- This quarters data (July-Sept) for smoking at time of delivery shows an improvement compared to the last, which is now better than the local target, although still higher than both regional and national averages. The Smoking in Pregnancy (SIP) practitioner, who commenced in February 2022, has worked well to deliver risk perception to pregnant smokers and their partners and families to affect behaviour change. Training and support has been provided to midwives and Healthcare Assistants to improve brief interventions and referrals for stop smoking support. A standard smoking in pregnancy pathway is being adopted across Cheshire & Merseyside which asks about smoking at every contact, monitors carbon monoxide levels and offers an automatic stop smoking support referral for all pregnant smokers. The 12-month funding for the SIP Practitioner is due to end in February 2023, however we are in discussions with the ICB Beyond programme / Core20 Plus5 inequalities workstream to seek further funding to continue the post given that it is working well.
- The latest Youth Reoffending data represents an improvement in performance small dip in performance, but this was anticipated in the outturn report based on the impact of the pandemic, which is likely to play out for some time. Indeed, the impact of court closures and police being unable to process offenders for much of the last 2 years has therefore meant that although we are now returning to a 'business as usual' approach in terms of interventions, the unprecedented nature of the time period experienced means that some anomalies in terms of the data are likely to remain. Indeed, the projected impact was largely unknown and as the data continues to come in over the coming financial year, we should get a clearer picture of the overall impact. That said, despite the fact that we are performing less well than our regional counterparts – our YJS is matched by the YJB to a

79


demographically similar area to enable the service to get a clearer and more balanced view of our current performance. Stockton on Tees is this YJS's match, and we are performing at an equivalent rate to them which is reassuring. The Service has again recently commissioned CELLS to deliver 2 further programmes of intervention designed to target our children most at risk of reoffending. One began in August 2022 for 3 months and another will begin in January through until the end of the financial year in 2023.

For more information about individual performance indicators that support the achievement of these outcomes please see the scorecard.





This page is intentionally left blank

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <br><b>ST HELENS</b><br>BOROUGH COUNCIL | <h2 style="margin: 0;">Children and Young People<br/>Services<br/>Scrutiny Committee</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">24 April 2023</h3> |
|--|---|

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Report Title</b>         | <b>Improving Employment Opportunities for Looked After Children and Care Leavers Task and Finish Group Recommendations Update</b> |
| <b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>    | Children and Young People   |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>       | Councillor Nova Charlton  |
| <b>Exempt Report</b>        | No  |
| <b>Reason for Exemption</b> | N/A   |
| <b>Key Decision</b>         | No  |
| <b>Public Notice issued</b> | N/A   |
| <b>Wards Affected</b>       | All   |
| <b>Report of</b>            | Paula Swindlehurst<br>Assistant Director - Children's Social Care<br>paulaswindlehurst@sthelens.gov.uk                            |
| <b>Contact Officer</b>      | Dominic Tumelty<br>Head of CWLA/CI/CWD/Residential<br>dominictumelty@sthelens.gov.uk  |

|                           |  |   |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Borough Priorities</b> | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life         | X |
|                           | Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities     |   |
|                           | Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all          |   |
|                           | Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy |   |
|                           | Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture  |   |
|                           | Be a responsible Council   |   |

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 In June 2021, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny group received a report from a Task and Finish Group which explored work opportunities for care experienced young people.
- 1.2 The report contained a number of recommendations and an update on those as they relate to children's social work, including colleagues in the Virtual School.

## 2. Recommendation for Decision

**Children's and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**

- (i) **Note the progress of actions associated to the recommendations.**

## 3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 To update members on the progress of actions associated to the recommendations.

## 4 Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 On the 23 June 2021 Cabinet approved the action plan and resolved that the response to the recommendations be submitted to the Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee on 12 July 2021.
- 4.2 Since that time, services have continued to develop for our care experienced young people, with several very positive developments, in turn leading to performance which compares favourably to both statistical neighbours and national data.

## Update information

The table below contains the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group alongside the relevant actions from the service to date.

| <i>Recommendation</i>  | <i>Update</i>  | <i>RAG<br/>Completion Date</i>                     |
|--|--|--|
| <p>85</p> <p>To ensure aspiration is built into our care, the development by Children &amp; Young Peoples Services of a standalone, aspiration-raising careers advice and guidance strategy for children we look after with a focus on Care Leavers was essential.</p> | <p>The St Helens Care Leaver offer includes information and guidance from a variety of arenas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Careers Advice and Career connect</li> <li>• Traineeships</li> <li>• Apprenticeships</li> <li>• T levels</li> <li>• Supported Internships</li> <li>• Pathways to employment</li> <li>• Access to local colleges</li> <li>• Higher education</li> </ul> <p>The offer is introduced to the children we look after when a personal advisor joins them, which is on or before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and in year 11 of school.</p> <p>Practice is highly aspirational for our young people and the service incentivises success, for example by the funding of driving lessons being linked to strong attendance in education, employment and training.</p> <p>The Life skills programme has been developed and implemented which enables our young people to manage well in their home as well as in their workspace.</p> <p>In the time since the group made this recommendation, the Corporate Parenting Forum has approved a refreshed Corporate Parenting strategy.</p> <p>Within this, there are 5 workstreams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotional Health and wellbeing</li> <li>2. Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood</li> <li>3. Safe and Stable Homes</li> </ol> | <p>The new process will be embedded by Sept 23</p> |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | <p>4. Being Heard<br/>5. Raising Aspirations</p> <p>Each workstream has an elected member attached and reports to the Corporate Parenting Forum appropriately. It is not felt that a separate strategy is needed given the focus of workstream 5.</p>  |   |
| <p>Children &amp; Young Peoples Services review the local training of Social Workers and foster carers so that they can provide aspirational careers guidance to augment other guidance provided.</p> <p>Children &amp; Young Peoples Services review the training and support for Social Workers and foster carers so they are better prepared to help foster children's understanding of financial life skills, including benefits, in preparation for becoming an independent person at the age of 18 yrs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A joint review of the Introduction to fostering training is underway and a team member from Futures is planned to deliver part of the session.</li> <li>• A newsletter now goes out bi-monthly to all foster carers which will feature opportunities, success stories and personal experiences by way of example.</li> <li>• Foster Carer Forums are now set for the year. Post 18 life will feature as a specific theme for a Forum, ideally co-produced by some of our young people.</li> <li>• The Vision, a group of care experienced young people, will be invited to lead a session with foster carers and supervising social workers to share what works well and what needs to happen.</li> </ul> | <p>June 23</p> <p>April 23</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Sept 23</p> |
| <p>Children &amp; Young Peoples Services arrange for training and accessible information on financial life skills, including benefits to the children we look after and care leavers.</p>   | <p>A wide range of information is available on the Care Leaver offer web page, which is augmented by links and comments on private WhatsApp and Instagram groups specific for our young people.</p> <p>In addition, the Hub has benefitted from a variety of drop-in sessions from a wide cross section of agencies, from DwP to St Helens College and a full programme will be developed for the new provision.</p> <p><a href="http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/futures">www.sthelens.gov.uk/futures</a></p>   | <p>Completed</p>  |
| <p>To improve retention and progression rates for looked after individuals, school and college and training provider staff in the borough should be offered training/awareness raising sessions on the challenges of looked after children and care leavers, their additional support needs and techniques to encourage them to invest in education.</p>  | <p>This area of work is led by the Virtual School who deliver regular training on all these areas as well as termly forums for Designated Teachers.</p> <p>A review of the training is currently underway, and providers are being consulted on what they feel they need, what has worked and where any future provision should focus.</p> <p>The Head of the Virtual School has very strong links with the Participation manager and opportunities to deliver co-produced sessions will be taken forward.</p> <p>The Head of the Virtual School leads the Raising Aspiration work stream, which will ensure a consistent approach.</p>  | <p>Completed</p>  |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>The Council encourage its local partners (particularly in the NHS and other public/community sectors) to consider developing policies and resourcing to provide more work experience and employment opportunities specifically to our children we look after and care leavers.</p> | <p>Whilst there has been some work undertaken both within the Council and with partners, the number of opportunities taken up by our young people remains very low. This area of work will be a key part of future service planning and will be given additional impetus and focus by two of the work streams, Transitions to adulthood and Raising aspiration. Building on the Council leading during National Apprentice Week in February, work continues will colleagues across Children’s Centres, with further opportunities offered. In addition, there will be 3 apprentice opportunities in the new Family Hub.</p>   | <p>Partially completed further work via CPF workstream 2023-24</p> |
| <p>Children &amp; Young Peoples Services considers how young care leavers, who are single parents and without traditional family childcare support networks, can be supported with childcare so that they can access education and employment.</p> <p>87</p>                          | <p>The Futures team has an established record of working both on the practical and financial provision of childcare for our care leaver’s children. For example, one young mother has been able to work part time as well as access counselling support to meet her needs whilst her baby was cared for.</p> <p>Futures team have worked closely with children’s centre managers to enable Care Leavers to access services with the 2-year offer with personal advisors also ensuring maximum benefit of that offer is made.</p> <p>All Pathway Plans and reviews consider parenting issues and tailor support accordingly. Young care leavers who become parents access a variety of support via our Local Offer, including childcare, access to children's centres and any additional support and counselling identified via their pathway plan. The parent is supported by the multi-agency team around the care leaver to enable them to maintain either their education or employment.</p> | <p>Completed</p>   |
| <p>That Members of the Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee undertake a site visit to MD Creatives Pilot Scheme based at Tyrer’s when and if appropriate.</p>  | <p>The Hub has now become well established and over 70 of our care experienced adults have visited. It has moved to a new building recently, but members are of course welcome to visit.</p>  | <p>Completed</p>   |

**5. Consideration of Alternatives**

5.1 None

**6. Conclusions**

6.1 None

**7. Legal Implications**

7.1 None

**8. Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications**

8.1 None

**9. Social Value**

9.1 None

**10. Sustainability and Environment**

10.1 N/A

**11. Health and Wellbeing**

11.1 For our care leavers to be gainfully engaged in education, employment or training has clear positives for young people's mental and physical health and any support for the to achieve this is welcomed.

**12. Equality and Human Rights**

12.1 N/A

**13. Customer and Resident**

13.1 Implementation of this work will benefit our young people as well as those with whom they learn and work, across the Borough.

**14. Asset and Property**

14.1 N/A

**15. Staffing and Human Resources**

15.1 N/A

**16. Risks**

16.1 N/A

**17. Finance**

17.1 N/A

**18. Policy Framework Implications**



18.1 None

**19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

19.1. None


**20. Background Documents**

20.1 None

**21 Appendices**

21.1 None

This page is intentionally left blank

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <br><b>ST HELENS</b><br>BOROUGH COUNCIL | <h2>Children and Young People Services Committee</h2> <h3>24 April 2023</h3> |
|--|--|

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report Title</b>         | <b>Improving School Attendance Spotlight Review</b>  |
| <b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>    | Children and Young People  |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>       | Councillor Nova Charlton   |
| <b>Exempt Report</b>        | No   |
| <b>Reason for Exemption</b> | N/A  |
| <b>Key Decision</b>         | No   |
| <b>Public Notice issued</b> | N/A  |
| <b>Wards Affected</b>       | All  |
| <b>Report of</b>            | Jan Bakewell<br>Director of Legal & Governance<br><a href="mailto:janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk">janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>Contact Officer</b>      | Karl Allender<br>Scrutiny Support Officer<br><a href="mailto:karlallender@sthelens.gov.uk">karlallender@sthelens.gov.uk</a>    |

|                           |  |   |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Borough Priorities</b> | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life         | X |
|                           | Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities     |   |
|                           | Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all          |   |
|                           | Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy |   |
|                           | Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture  |   |
|                           | Be a responsible Council   |   |

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is a summary of the evidence that was submitted to the Children and Young People Services Task Group, Improving school attendance in St Helens. It concludes with five recommendations to ensure that a culture of **“Attendance Matters”** is developed as a *borough* wide obsession linking into the priority contained within the Council Strategy of **“Ensuring Children and Young People Have a Positive Start in Life”**.

## 2. Recommendations for Decision

**The Children and Young People Services Committee is recommended to:**

- (i) **Approve the Task Group Report and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1.**
- (ii) **Submit the recommendations to Cabinet for response.**

## 3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 This report presents the Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee with the findings from the spotlight review ‘Improving School Attendance’.
- 3.2 Based on its findings, the committee’s main objective is to contribute to strategies to improve school attendance rates in St Helens, thereby improving pupil achievement, well-being, life chances and reducing the potential of children and young people’s vulnerability to harm.

## 4. Background/Reason for recommendations

- 4.1 At the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Workshop on 6 July 2022, it was agreed to hold a spotlight review on 3 November 2022 to contribute to wider work to improve school attendance in St Helens.
- 4.2 This focus was agreed because overall absences in St Helens for the 21/22 Autumn and Spring Term are higher than regional and national averages.
- 4.3 The primary school absence rate in St Helens is 6.7% compared to the northwest average of 6.0% and 6.2% in England. The secondary school absence rate in St Helens is 10.2% compared to the northwest average of 8.8% and 8.6% in England.
- 4.4 St Helens also has higher rates of persistent absences for this period than regional and national averages. The primary school absence rate in St Helens is 21.3% compared to 17.7% and 18.2% in the northwest and England respectively. St Helens’ secondary school persistent absence rate is 31.6% compared with 27.3% and 26.7% in the northwest and England respectively.
- 4.5 Absenteeism affects learning, attainment, social and emotional well-being, and the life chances of those children and young people. For some, it is also a factor safeguarding concern relating to criminality and various forms of exploitation. It was agreed to

scrutinise examples of work being carried out in three St Helens schools and to look at how the Council supports the work on improving attendance across the borough.

4.6 Members of the Children’s and Young People Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the spotlight review. The members were as follows:

- Councillor Trisha Long (Chair)
- Councillor David Banks
- Councillor Donna Greaves
- Councillor Terry Maguire
- Councillor Anne McCormack
- Councillor Bisi Osundeko
- Councillor Michelle Sweeney

The following officers attended the Task Group meeting held on 3 November 2022

- Joanne Davis - Assistant Director for Education and Learning
- Jason Pickett – Head of Access and sufficiency
- Helen McCabe – Team Manager, Education Welfare Service
- Karl Allender – Scrutiny Support Officer
- Justin McCauley – Deputy Headteacher, St Cuthberts Secondary School
- Andrew Maley – Headteacher, Carr Mill Junior School
- Katie Alexander – Carr Mill Junior School
- Rachael Guyer – Interim Headteacher, Alternative Education Provision

#### **Overview of reports presented to members and discussion.**

- 4.7 The Task Group was provided with an overview of the importance of school attendance. School attendance is a legal requirement because children and young people are entitled to an education. Being in school also means that children and young people are safe, are nurtured and are being prepared for their adult life.
- 4.8 It was outlined that the law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education, either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school, for example, suitable provision of home education.
- 4.9 It was noted that where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- 4.10 However, absence from school is a significant issue in St Helens since the pandemic. In primary school, there is a churn of children with an attendance record of below 90% whereas in secondary school, there is a significant number of entrenched poor attenders. There is also a challenge with “part day” absence as well as whole day absence, and persistence absence. A further recent challenge relates to holidays being taken during term-time.

- 4.11 The committee heard about the significant safeguarding risks linked to school absenteeism which include sexual and criminal exploitation.
- 4.12 It was agreed that high levels of attendance are essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including for their attainment, social and emotional well-being, and wider life chances; and that poor attendance is a significant factor in reducing life chances. The latter is particularly the case for children from areas of deprivation where, according to a DfE report published in 2016, persistent absence is more common: “Nearly half of persistent absentees live in the 30% highest areas of child poverty”.
- 4.13 The link between absenteeism and attainment was discussed in detail. The committee heard that nationally, pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stages compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard.
- 4.14 Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected attainment standard was higher than among those meeting the higher attainment standard. At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grades 4 and 3.7%. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).
- 4.15 The committee explored reasons for school absence, which are multi-faceted and often complex.
- 4.16 Discussion points on absence from school included the following:
- Unhappiness in school arising from additional needs not being met for some children
  - Home routines being disrupted following the pandemic
  - Children struggling to re-engage with school, preferring home learning they have become used to during the pandemic, due to anxiety
  - The increase in poor mental health arising from Covid, including an increase in anxiety and, particularly for girls, a rise in eating disorders
  - Non-essential appointments being made in school time
  - Holidays being taken in term time
  - A lack of understanding generally that a 90% attendance is *not* good and means that a child is absent from school lessons for the equivalent of one-half day every week. Over five years, this is the equivalent of about one half of a school year.
  - A lack of value ascribed to education and its relation to life chances by some parents, carers and young people
  - An increase in the number of parents and carers choosing to provide home learning for their child or children, over which the Council has very little legal power to oversee
  - Potential insufficiency of aspirational and motivational careers education with children and young people preventing them, and their parents and carers, from understanding career opportunities, the underpinning personal qualities for

progression - such as attendance, the qualifications and pathways needed to progress into those careers, and the difference to their lives that a career can have.

- Linked with the concern about careers education, the committee was concerned that staff working with children and young people may not all have the training or knowledge to provide children and young people with the basic careers research skills to enable them to manage their own learning about current and future careers.

4.17 The Assistant Director for Education and Learning provided an overview of the work carried out by the Local Authority to support attendance including:

- The tracking of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% and who have other associated vulnerabilities. For example, those who have an Education Health and Care Plan or have a social worker
- Multi-agency work to identify appropriate interventions
- Conversations with social workers to emphasise the importance of their role in identifying and resolving barriers that parents, carers and children may face in relation to attending school
- Tracking children who are NIROFTE (not in receipt of full-time education) and challenging schools to return these children to a full-time timetable; and tracking children with a social worker and those with an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan)
- The introduction of Youth Engagement Officers based within the Education Welfare Service. This resource works with children disengaged from education with their focus being on building relationships with children and families to understand the reasons for poor attendance and to deliver interventions to reduce and remove the barriers to attendance
- Fining and prosecuting parents and carers whose children who do not attend and where issues have escalated.

4.18 However, she also explained that due to staffing challenges, the Authority was struggling to complete EHCPs and that support for children with SEND was under great strain.

4.19 The Committee heard about the ongoing and extensive work that schools are doing in tackling absenteeism through presentations provided by

- Mr Justin McCauley, Deputy Head of St Cuthbert's Secondary School
- Mr Andrew Maley and Mrs Katie Alexander, Head and Deputy Head Teacher respectively of Carr Mill Primary School
- Mrs Rachael Guyer, Head of Alternative Education in St Helens.

4.20 The presentations identified several strategies being deployed to address absenteeism and to support cultural and behaviour change in the borough towards good attendance:

- A clear and consistently implemented School Attendance Policy, regularly promoted to parents and carers
- Strategies to ensure clear and consistent information to parents and carers, and children and young people, about the importance of school to attainment, social and emotional well-being, life chances and safeguarding

- The provision of clear and consistent information to parents and carers about their child or children’s attendance rate or rates
- The recruitment of Attendance Officers responsible for building effective relationships with families and children, carrying out home visits and working closely with partners including the police and children’s services
- Increased mental health support in schools. At Carr Mill, this includes a dedicated Deputy Head Teacher role dedicated to safeguarding, mental health, and pastoral support alongside support from a dedicated team of staff. In Carr Mill, and other schools, the PATHS programme which teaches children mental health resilience and positive behaviours is delivered. Many schools have mental health support workers in place
- Implementing strategies to encourage children to be excited about going to school so that they are self-motivated to attend
- A consistent response to parents and carers regarding term time holidays.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The committee agreed that improving attendance is “*everyone’s business*” and that Attendance Matters.
- 5.2 It was clear that the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. It was also clear that the pandemic has had a significant impact on some children and young people and their families in St Helens. Improving attendance cannot therefore solely be the preserve of schools and instead, must be a concerted effort by everyone who works with families in St Helens.
- 5.3 The committee therefore agreed that multi-agency working to improve attendance rates in St Helens is key to ensuring all partners who work or engage with children and young people, and their parents and carers, are aware of the impact of school absence on the safeguarding, well-being, attainment and life chances of children and young people and that they take steps to support good attendance. This includes ensuring that everyone is clear that even a 90% attendance is not good and will impact on a child’s progress.
- 5.4 The Committee commented that School Governors had a huge role in improving school attendance. A dedicated session on improving attendance has been delivered to the Borough’s Governors’ Forum. The contribution made by the LA and how Governors are supporting this improvement so that good practice between Governors could be shared, would be an effective action.
- 5.5 The committee agreed that a clear, accessible, and widely shared School Attendance Policy, based on pupil and parent and carer consultation, and which was consistently implemented, was at the heart of positive attendance.
- 5.6 The committee was clear that the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be, ensuring additional activities to encourage children to want to come to school are very effective in motivating children to improve their attendance and not stay off for insignificant reasons.



- 5.7 The Committee was clear that the development of children and young people's resilience and that good and effective support to help children and young people with their mental health challenges were essential and were glad to learn of the positive impact of PATHS and mental health support workers in school. However, members were concerned about how resourcing coupled with staff recruitment and retention challenges were impacting on the timely completion of EHCPs which would result in delays in the provision of appropriate support for children with additional needs.
- 5.8 The committee felt strongly that aspirational, motivational age-appropriate careers education, starting in primary school, was essential to ensure children and young people were clear about the impact of attendance on their employability and their career options. Members questioned whether children and young people knew about different sectors, the careers within each sector, the qualifications, skills and personal qualities needed for specific careers and the pay and progression. One member reported that in regular discussions she had with children and young people that there was a clear deficit in their knowledge. This included a recent care leaver who expressed sadness that she had not been given this information to inform her choices.
- 5.9 Members discussed the usefulness of <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk> which is a government careers information tool. The website provides easy access to information on careers in every sector, the educational qualifications, skills and personal qualities (e.g. good attendance) needed to progress into those careers and pay and progression opportunities.
- 5.10 Members felt that if children and young people were introduced to this website, they would have a wealth of free, accessible, and up to date information to be informed about current and future opportunities. It was felt that this would contribute to enhancing and improving aspirations, may well impact on the motivation of some pupils to attend school and gain qualifications, and give young people the information they need when making choices and decisions which impact on their future lives.
- 5.11 Members discussed the importance of **developing a borough-wide culture and expectation that "Attendance Matters"**. This would entail, for example, everyone who works with families, as well as parents and carers themselves, working to promote and support school attendance e.g., by not organising appointments within school time; using opportunities when speaking to children and young people to discuss the importance of attending school; and, when unaccompanied children are seen outside school in school hours, taking action, if possible and as appropriate.
- 5.12 In promotion, and extension of the above. Members discussed the potential, and delivery **of a "Attendance Matters" campaign** The campaign would focus on clear messaging about the importance of school attendance and the consequences of school absence and emphasising everyone's role to promote and support good attendance at school. This would be linked to key times when attendance is compromised e.g., parents booking annual holidays, keeping children off before holidays, students not returning after holidays. This would include:
- Council media stories, website material
  - Council supplying to all schools a termly attendance chart for all schools to identify common themes as a means of providing peer support
  - Council working with health partners to secure support for Attendance Matters

- Continuing collaboration on attendance between the Council’s Education & Learning service and Children and Young People’s social care service.

5.13 Members discussed the importance of collaboration and to **Establish a Multi-Agency ‘Behaviour and Attendance Board’ and an annual Governors’ Forum “Attendance Matters” agenda item.**

The group would:

- Review attendance trends and develop training and support for improving attendance
- Develop a model Attendance Policy.
- Develop and promote Governors’ training on improving attendance
- Support an annual Governors’ Forum item on attendance covering challenges and sharing good practice

5.14 Discussion extended to careers education and **raising the profile of Careers Education and its ability to raise young people’s aspirations and motivate them to attend and value school** by:

- Ensuring *all* staff who work with children and young people know about the national careers service website and use it in conversations with them and their parents or carers, so that all our children, young people and their parents and carers have access to this information.
- Identifying how careers education is delivered in our schools
- Sharing and celebrating good practice

5.15 Members suggested a **focus on children’s mental and emotional wellbeing** by

- Continue to monitor schools accessing PATHS and share good practice
- CYPS scrutiny to request a report on the efficacy of the mental health offer for children and young people in St Helens

5.16 Members discussed the need to continue to monitor attendance and for Scrutiny to receive reports, including a focus on persistent absenteeism and the work of the Council and partners do to support families who experience this issue.

## 6. Legal Implications

6.1 This supports the authority’s responsibility to promote and ensure school attendance.

## 7. Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implication

7.1 Improving school attendance may have a positive impact on anti-social behaviour, improved attainment and safeguarding from harm.

## 8. Social Value

8.1 The social value of improving school attendance will mean that inequalities are reduced through improved safeguarding, attainment, well-being and life-chances of children and young people in St Helens.

## **9. Sustainability and Environment**

9.1 None

## **10. Health and Wellbeing**

10.1 **Actions** to improve school attendance is intended to have a positive impact on the physical and mental health of children and young people in St Helens.

## **11. Equality and Human Rights**

11.1 To reduce inequalities through improving attainment and well-being

## **12. Customer and Resident**

12.1 Improving attendance will make a significant contribution to safeguarding, attainment, social and mental wellbeing and therefore life chances of the children and young people who do not have optimal school attendance.

## **13. Asset and Property**

13.1 None

## **14. Staffing and Human Resources**

14.1 The recommendations may include further work.

## **15. Risks**

15.1 Failure to improve school attendance would have a detrimental impact on children's lives through lower attainment and may impact on their wellbeing and safety.

## **16. Finance**

16.1 None

## **17. Policy Framework Implications**

17.1 None

## **18. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

18.1 Priority 1. Ensuring Children have a positive start in life

## **19. Background Documents**


19.1 PowerPoint presentations

## **20. Appendices**

## Appendix 1. Improving School Attendance Spotlight Review Recommendations

**Appendix 1- Improving School Attendance Spotlight Review Recommendations**

| Rec No | Recommendations   | Responsible Officer        | Agreed Action and Date of Implementation |
|--------|---|----------------------------|--|
| 1      | <b>Develop a borough-wide culture and expectation that <i>Attendance Matters</i></b>  | Jason Picket and Jo Davies |  |
| 2      | <b><i>Each year deliver an Attendance Matters campaign</i></b>  | Jason Picket               |  |
| 3      | <b>Establish a multi-agency Attendance Matters Board <i>and</i> an annual Governors' Forum Attendance item</b>  | Jason Picket and Jo Davies |  |
| 4      | <b>Raise the profile of Careers Education and its ability to raise young people's aspirations and motivate them to attend and value school through the Learning Partnership Board and Achievement and Improvement Board</b> | Sarah Platt / Sharon Fryer |  |
| 5      | <b>Continue a focus on children's mental and emotional wellbeing through encouraging PATHS rollout and CYPS scrutiny</b>  | Sharon Fryer/ Matt Davies  |  |
| 6      | <b>Continue to monitor attendance through reports to Scrutiny, including a focus on persistent absenteeism and the work of the Council and partners in supporting families who experience this issue</b>                    | Jason Picket and Jo Davies |  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <br><b>ST HELENS</b><br>BOROUGH COUNCIL | <b>Children and Young People Services<br/>Committee</b><br><br><b>24 April 2023</b> |
|--|---|

|                             |  |   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Report Title</b>         | <b>Reducing Teenage Pregnancy in St Helens Spotlight Review</b>  |   |
| <b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>    | Children and Young People  |   |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>       | Councillor Nova Charlton   |   |
| <b>Exempt Report</b>        | No   |   |
| <b>Reason for Exemption</b> | N/A  |   |
| <b>Key Decision</b>         | No   |   |
| <b>Public Notice issued</b> | N/A  |   |
| <b>Wards Affected</b>       | All  |   |
| <b>Report of</b>            | Jan Bakewell<br>Director of Legal & Governance<br><a href="mailto:janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk">janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk</a> |   |
| <b>Contact Officer</b>      | Karl Allender<br>Scrutiny Support Officer<br><a href="mailto:karlallender@sthelens.gov.uk">karlallender@sthelens.gov.uk</a>    |   |
| <b>Borough Priorities</b>   | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life   | X |
|                             | Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities.  |   |
|                             | Create safe and strong communities and neighborhoods for all   |   |
|                             | Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy   |   |
|                             | Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture  |   |
|                             | Be a responsible Council   |   |

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is a summary of the evidence that was submitted to the Children and Young People Services' Spotlight Review: "Reducing Teenage Pregnancy in St Helens".
- 1.2 It concludes with twelve recommendations which link to and support the first of the six borough priorities "Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life."

## 2. Recommendation for Decision

**The Children and Young People's Services Committee is recommended to:**

- (i) **Approve the Task Group Report & Recommendations as set out in Appendix 1**
- (ii) **Submit the Recommendations to Cabinet for Response**

## 3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 This report presents the evidence submitted to and findings of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee Spotlight Review 'Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Rates in St Helens', held on December 5, 2022, and January 26, 2023.
- 3.2 Based on the committee's findings, the main purpose of this report is to contribute to strategies to reduce teenage pregnancy rates in St Helens, thereby reducing inequalities; improving the well-being, life chances, and aspirations of children and young people; and reducing their potential of vulnerability to harm.

## 4. Background to the recommendations

- 4.1 At the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Workshop on 6 July 2022, members noted that the Under 18 conception rate in St Helens was the 4<sup>th</sup> Highest in England at 27 per 1000.
- 4.2 Members also noted that the under 18 teenage (15–17-year-olds) live births' rate in the borough of St Helens was the second highest out of twenty-three north west local authorities, and the sixth highest in England out of 152 local authorities, at 8.2 per 1000.
- 4.3 Although all young mothers want to do their best for their children, and some do very well, teenage pregnancy overall continues to have a significant impact on inequalities including on education, well-being, and life chances, and is a factor in the cyclical prevalence of disadvantaged families.
- 4.4 Members therefore felt that a spotlight review of strategies to reduce teenage pregnancy in the borough would be useful.
- 4.5 Members of the Children's and Young People Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the spotlight review. Participating members were as follows:
  - Councillor Trisha Long (Chair)
  - Councillor Donna Greaves

- Councillor Terry Maguire
- Councillor Anne McCormack
- Councillor Bisi Osundeko
- Councillor Michelle Sweeney

4.6 The following officers attended the Spotlight review meeting held on 5 December 2022.

- Shirley Goodhew – Public Health Consultant
- Hayley Hamlett – Health Improvement and TAZ Outreach Manager (St Helens Sexual Health Service, St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals Trust)
- Jeanette Reddin, Lead Nurse/Service Manager, St Helens Sexual Health Services, St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals Trust
- Karl Allender – Scrutiny Support Officer

4.7 The following officers and staff from Education attended the meeting held on 26 January 2023

- Shirley Goodhew – Public Health Consultant
- Heather Addison (Interim Head Teacher of Virtual Schools)
- Jason Pickett (Head of Access and Sufficiency)
- Olubunmi Sokale (Public Health Student on placement)
- Karl Allender – Scrutiny Support Officer

#### **Overview of reports presented to Members and discussion.**

4.8 Members were provided with an overview of teenage pregnancy in the borough; data in relation to regional and national figures; and the local impact on high rates of teenage births in St Helens.

4.9 It was highlighted that teenage pregnancy had previously been high on the public agenda. The ten-year strategy to reduce teenage pregnancy, implemented by the Labour Government between 1999 and 2010 and the work of councils and their partners, had resulted nationally in the reduction of teenage pregnancy by 60 percent and the doubling of the proportion of teenage mothers in education and training.

4.10 However, the teenage birth rate in England is still higher than many other western European countries and, as the 2018 LGA and Public Health Report, “Good progress but more to do” Report indicates: “The teenage birth rate still remains higher than a number of western European countries and progress has been uneven across England.” There is an eight-fold difference in the rate between local authorities and 60% of councils have at least one high-rate ward.

4.11 Inequalities in England include:

- Children born to women under twenty are 63% at higher risk of living in poverty
- Women by the age of 30 and who were teenage mothers are 22% more likely to be living in poverty than mothers giving birth aged 24 or over
- Young fathers are twice as likely to be unemployed compared to older fathers.
- Infant mortality rate is 75% higher for babies born to women under 20.

4.12 St Helens is in the lowest quartile of our statistical neighbour borough group. This matters because teenage pregnancy is a cause and a consequence of health, education and life chances inequalities for children, young people and their families in

St Helens. Unfortunately, localities' data was not available for the Review Group, but work in is progress to obtain this for service planning purposes.

- 4.13 The ten point 'Teenage Prevention Pregnancy Framework', published in January 2018 by Public Health England, was highlighted as best practise to inform the development of a local strategy and action plan.
- 4.14 Groups of young people at risk of teenage pregnancy were highlighted. As detailed in the Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Framework 2018, these are:
- Free school meals eligibility: a poverty indicator
  - Persistent school absence by year 9 (aged 14)
  - Slower than expected academic progress: between ages 11-14
  - First sex before 16: associated with higher levels of regret and no contraceptive use.
  - Looked after children and care leavers: approximately 3 times rate of motherhood.
- 4.15 Young fathers are more likely than older fathers and other young men:
- To have been subjected to violent forms of punishment at home.
  - To have been sexually abused (twice more likely)
  - To have pre-existing serious anxiety, depression and conduct disorder, have poor health and nutrition.
  - To drink, smoke and misuse other substances
  - And young men under 25 accessing drug and alcohol services are more likely to be young fathers.

At a strategic level, getting prevention right:

- is key to giving every child the best start in life, ensuring better life chances and breaking inequalities.
  - is integral to safeguarding, emotional health and wellbeing and early help.
  - helps address young people's alcohol and substance misuse.
  - reduces future demand on health and social services.
  - contributes to Public Health and NHS Outcomes.
  - maximises cost effectiveness of sexual and reproductive health services.
  - integrates with Chlamydia screening and STI prevention.
- 4.16 It was noted that over recent years, the focus on teenage pregnancy has lost a degree of emphasis, in large part due to the reductions in funding provided by central Government which impacted on specialist staff. It was agreed, however, that in St Helens, a focus was needed to reduce teenage pregnancy and its impact.
- 4.17 The Review Group was informed, that the international evidence for reducing teenage pregnancy is clear. Building the knowledge, skills, resilience, and aspirations of young people, and providing easy access to welcoming services, helps young people to delay sexual relationships until they are ready to enjoy healthy, consensual relationships and to use contraception to prevent unplanned pregnancy. An open culture and ease of



parental communication around sexual issues are also associated with lower teenage pregnancy rates.

- 4.18 It was also discussed that learning from the last eighteen years has shown that a whole system approach, involving effective partnership working, is vital to the success of reducing teenage pregnancy. This means that Health, Education, Social Care, and Safeguarding agencies are clear about the relevance of healthy relationships and teenage pregnancy to their own priorities, understand how they can contribute to the solution in partnership with each other, and take appropriate and joined up action.
- 4.19 The Review Group felt that it was clear that building young people's resilience needs a family, community, and service response, so that there is no 'wrong door' for a young person seeking advice.
- 4.20 Members commented that supporting young people to develop safe, healthy relationships and prevent unplanned pregnancy is key to enabling them to fulfil their aspirations and potential, and laying the foundations of prevention at an early age was important.
- 4.21 The Review Group commented that fewer young people progressed to tertiary education in St Helens compared to other boroughs. Raising aspirations was felt to be critically important in ensuring all children and young people were clear about realistic and achievable pathways for their adult lives. This entails ensuring good careers education from an early age and the promotion of successful local people as role models.
- 4.22 The Review Group also felt that some young people may feel that early pregnancy and having a baby would fill an emotional gap in their lives. Members agreed on the importance of young people understanding the impact of teenage pregnancy so that they could make informed choices.
- 4.23 The Health Improvement and Teenage Advice Zone (TAZ) Outreach Manager gave the Review Group an overview of the TAZ service in St Helens. The sexual health service has two features: genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics and sexual health improvement.
- 4.24 The TAZ GUM clinic is a young people's clinic, specifically aimed at those under 19 years of age. Services on offer include.
- Advice and provision on all aspects of contraception
  - Pregnancy testing
  - Counselling
  - Referral for termination of pregnancy
  - Chlamydia testing
  - General advice on sexual health.
- 4.25 The TAZ health improvement provision focuses on:
- Health Improvement – via its website, non-clinical support, LGBTQ+ support, and the provision of contraceptives
  - Outreach activity - school drop in and hubs, referrals, training, education, and social media

- 4.26 TAZ informed members of the work they did in schools which includes with at risk individual young people; group sessions on healthy relationships; and increasing awareness and choice of different forms of contraception.
- 4.27 Increasing awareness and use of more reliable forms of contraception such as LARC (Long-Acting Reversible Contraception) in comparison to oral contraceptives and reliance on Emergency Contraception from community pharmacies.
- 4.28 It was agreed that healthy relationships advice and guidance was key to the topic of teenage pregnancy so that young people could make informed choices. It was noted that TAZ are commissioned to work with children from 13 years old. It was considered that this was too late, and that engagement work on healthy relationships should start from Primary school.
- 4.29 The Review Group asked what school uptake of the TAZ offer was. It was fed-back that uptake has reduced. It was also noted that there may well be inconsistencies in the delivery of Healthy Relationship education. Members expressed concern especially because teenage pregnancy and healthy sexual relationships are an essential component of safeguarding education.
- 4.30 Members agreed that closer links with all schools would be helpful and that the issue of teenage pregnancy and the contribution of TAZ in reducing teenage pregnancy should be promoted to all schools and uptake monitored.
- 4.31 In extension of this, the TAZ Outreach manager highlighted the importance of multi-agency work and a collaborative approach with other partners and that multi-agency and joined up working underpins the team's holistic approach, and that relationships forged with key agencies allows the team to target those hard-to-reach groups, explore engagement techniques, and signpost to appropriate agencies allowing young people to receive the most appropriate care based on individual need.
- 4.32 Members suggested that awareness raising of the issue via presentations to Head Teachers, School Governors and Children's Services staff would be helpful to sharpen the focus on teenage pregnancy.
- 4.33 The TAZ online training focusing on conversations about sex with young people was discussed and it was agreed that this would be beneficial for all staff who work with children and young people, and count towards their CPD.
- 4.34 It was discussed that an open culture of communication between parents and carers and their children was critical, and the importance of all parents and carers engaging in conversations with children and young people about healthy relationships.
- 4.35 Members agreed that some parents and carers may not find it easy to talk to their children about sexual relationships. It was agreed that TAZ resources may be helpful and to that end, members felt that it would be useful if all school websites contained a TAZ area that parents and carers could access for advice.
- 4.36 Members felt that parent/carer leaflets explaining and promoting TAZ information and its website should be available e.g. at Parent and Carer Evenings.

- 4.37 Members felt that TAZ should also be widely promoted to young people throughout the borough via a media campaign.
- 4.38 Access to contraceptives by young people was discussed including condom schemes and LARC. It was agreed that these were important. However, condom schemes needed to be reviewed and refreshed and LARC needed to be promoted to ensure understanding.
- 4.39 A recommendation was made that a second meeting should be held, focusing on Children and Young People Services' contributions to reducing teenage pregnancy in the borough, given the fact that 'Looked after children'(LAC) and care leavers two key at risk groups for this issue. Input from schools and colleges was also requested.
- 4.40 At its second meeting on 26 January the following officers attended:
- Shirley Goodhew (Public Health Consultant)
  - Jason Pickett (Head of Access and Sufficiency)
  - Heather Addison (Interim Head Teacher of Virtual Schools)
  - Olubunmi Sokale (Public Health Student on placement)
- 4.41 It was noted that teenage pregnancy is a cross cutting agenda requiring Public Health leadership, a whole system approach is required, whereby the Children and Young People Services, Education, schools, and colleges have a key role in contributing to tackling this complex issue in partnership. Children & Young Peoples Services are they a key partner in best practice of multi-agency working, but also children who are looked after and care leavers, along with other vulnerable children, are at increased risk of Under 18 conceptions and becoming teenage parents.
- 4.42 From this, it was realised that cross cutting work was required across various forums and was essential, including the Corporate Parenting Forum.
- 4.43 It was also recommended that a key aspect to reducing under 18 conceptions and teenage pregnancy rates, and as suggested by Public Health guidance, was that a Local Authority strategic lead was identified to "own" this issue, and that a strategy was developed, so that work to was progressed and monitored, and data was robust, to ensure best outcomes.
- 4.44 There was a consensus with members and officers that training for social workers on teenage pregnancy would be beneficial as part of their annual continuous professional development (CPD) training requirements. Furthermore, training for foster carers, along with social workers should also be considered to ensure that those who engage with our most vulnerable children and young people are able to make an enhanced contribution to this issue.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 Teenage pregnancy in most cases has a negative impact on the life chances of young people across our borough with the potential for serious health, social and economic inequalities. In most cases, but not all, teenage pregnancy often affects vulnerable children and young people whereby health and economic social inequalities are already a factor.

- 5.2 It is important that children and young people have all the necessary age-appropriate information to make informed decisions and choices about healthy relationships and have a full understanding of what pregnancy and parenting entails.
- 5.3 The impact of high teenage pregnancy rates on council and local NHS services can be extensive and expensive (both emotionally for the young people involved and financially), particularly when support and intervention is needed.
- 5.4 Having a whole system approach is key to ensure a downward trend in teenage pregnancy rates in the borough. This approach should be concentrated around key themes such as:
- The appointment of a strategic teenage pregnancy reduction lead, the development of a multi-agency teenage pregnancy reduction strategy, and a bi-annual multi-agency meeting to monitor progress.
  - Collaboration with commissioned and non-commissioned services to ensure effective data recording, monitoring, and reporting to inform planning and quality assurance.
  - Stronger use of data for commissioning and progress monitoring.
  - The inclusion of teenage pregnancy prevention on agendas of all relevant forums and working groups e.g., Corporate Parents and the Children's Improvement Board.
  - Information sessions for those with influence, such as Head Teachers, Governors, and Children's Services managers, to ensure action is taken forward appropriately in their settings.
  - The delivery of enhanced training on relationships and sexual education (RSE), advice and guidance for all frontline professionals, including Social Workers and Foster Carers, who work directly with children and young people and, where relevant, to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to speak about this issue.
  - The delivery of consistent high-quality relationship and sex education and support in schools' and colleges with high quality PSHE sessions and targeted prevention support for young people at risk.
  - Advice, signposting, and access to contraceptive services in non-health, education, and youth settings e.g. schools, colleges, libraries, leisure centres and sports clubs.
  - Support for parents and carers to help them to discuss relationships and sexual health with their children e.g. the inclusion of TAZ information and links in school and College websites that can be accessed by parents and carers, and the development of parent and carer leaflets about TAZ displayed at Parent and Carer Event.
  - Ensure borough wide, youth friendly, contraceptive and sexual health services. This would include a review of the condom scheme and the promotion of LARC.

- Consistent messages and service publicity to young people, parents and carers, and practitioners about sexual health advice and support.
- Enhanced support for pregnant teenagers and their parents and carers, including to prevent subsequent pregnancies.
- Enhanced focus on raising aspiration work in meetings with head teachers, governors and social workers, including the promotion of local female role models and quality careers education.

## **6 Legal Implications**

6.1 None

## **7. Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications**

7.1 None

## **8. Social Value**

8.1 Preventing teenage pregnancy can improve the social and economic well-being of those at risk.

## **9. Sustainability and Environment**

10 None

## **11. Health and Wellbeing**

11.1 Prevention of Teenage pregnancy contributes to Public Health and NHS Outcomes.

## **12. Equality and Human Rights**

12.1 None

## **13. Customer and Resident**

13.1. Teenage pregnancy can pose a health risk to mother and child and result in consequences such as poverty and deprivation, early school dropout, lower levels of school achievement and potentially limited opportunities.

13.2 This report is a focus on Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Rates in St Helens and, in turn, improving aspiration and reducing deprivation and health inequalities in the Borough.

## **14. Asset and Property**

14.1 None

## **15. Staffing and Human Resources**

15.1 None

## **16. Risks**

16.1 None

## **17. Finance**

17.1 None

## **18. Policy Framework Implications**

18.1 None

## **19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

19.1 The impact on a reduction in teenage pregnancy rates in St Helens, may contribute to reducing inequalities and improving the well-being, life chances, and aspirations of children and young people.

## **20. Background Documents**

20.1 Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Framework (Supporting young people to prevent unplanned pregnancy and develop healthy relationships)

## **21 Appendices**


1. Appendix: Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Rates Spotlight Review Recommendations

### Appendix 1- Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Rates Spotlight Review Recommendations

| Rec No | Recommendations  | Responsible Officer                           | Agreed Action and Date of Implication |
|--------|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1      | Appoint a Teenage Pregnancy Reduction Lead Officer to lead on the creation of a whole system approach and to ensure a biannual multi-agency meeting to monitor progress.   | Shirley Goodhew                               |                                       |
| 2      | Commissioned and non-commissioned service collaborate to ensure stronger and more effective data recording, monitoring and reporting to inform planning and quality assurance.   | Shirley Goodhew                               |                                       |
| 3      | Strengthen the use of data for commissioning and progress monitoring.  | Rachel Brown                                  |                                       |
| 4      | The inclusion of teenage pregnancy prevention on agendas of all relevant forums and working groups e.g. Corporate Parents and the Governors Forum  | Cllr Charlton<br>Lisa Bundock                 |                                       |
| 5      | Deliver information sessions for those with influence, such as Head Teachers, Governors and Children's Services managers to ensure that appropriate action is taken forward.   | As above and<br>Sarah Platt /<br>Rachel Brown |                                       |
| 6      | Explore the potential for enhanced training on relationships and sexual health, advice and guidance for all professionals who work directly with children and young people.  |   |                                       |
| 7      | Encourage advice, signposting and access to contraception in non-health, education, and youth settings e.g. pharmacies.  | Sexual Health                                 |                                       |
| 8      | Request TAZ information and links to be included in school and college websites so that information can be accessed by parents and carers. Also, develop a generic parent and carer leaflet about TAZ which schools and colleges can display at Parent and Carer Events. | Shirley Goodhew / Jo Davies                   |                                       |
| 9      | Support a review of the condom scheme and the promotion of LARC to enhance borough wide, youth friendly, contraceptive and sexual health services.   | Shirley Goodhew                               |                                       |
| 10     | Support consistent messages and service publicity to young people, parents, carers and practitioners about sexual health, advice and support through the Family Hubs   | Shirley Goodhew /<br>Vicky Velesco            |                                       |

|    |  |                            |  |
|----|--|----------------------------|--|
| 11 | Enhance the support for pregnant teenagers and their parents and carers, including to prevent subsequent pregnancies.  | 0-19s service              |  |
| 12 | Strengthen the focus on raising aspiration work via the Health Inequalities Commission and engaging with young people to help inform future service provision and approach | Ruth du Plessis/ Jo Davies |  |



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <br><b>ST HELENS</b><br>BOROUGH COUNCIL | <h2>Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee</h2> <h3>24 April 2023</h3> |
|  |   |

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report Title</b>         | <b>Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022/23</b>  |
| <b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>    | Finance and Governance   |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>       | Councillor Martin Bond   |
| <b>Exempt Report</b>        | No   |
| <b>Reason for Exemption</b> | N/A  |
| <b>Key Decision</b>         | No   |
| <b>Public Notice issued</b> | N/A  |
| <b>Wards Affected</b>       | All  |
| <b>Report of</b>            | Jan Bakewell<br>Director of Legal & Governance<br><a href="mailto:janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk">janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>Contact Officer</b>      | Karl Allender<br>Scrutiny Support Officer<br><a href="mailto:karlallender@sthelens.gov.uk">karlallender@sthelens.gov.uk</a>    |

|                           |  |   |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Borough Priorities</b> | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life         | X |
|                           | Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities     |   |
|                           | Create safe and strong communities and neighborhoods for all           |   |
|                           | Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy |   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture |  |
|  | Be a responsible Council  |  |

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information to the Committee about the work programme setting process. Managing the work programme is an important part of an efficient and effective Overview & Scrutiny Function.

## 2. Recommendation for Decision

**Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**

- (i) **Agree items for its work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year based on the prioritisation process and topic selection criteria set out in this report.**

## 3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 To inform the Scrutiny Committee about the work programme setting process to support their decision-making regarding items for the Scrutiny Committee work programme 2022/23.

## 4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 A comprehensive work programme is fundamental to the effectiveness of the Scrutiny Committees as it enables them to plan and manage their workloads to make best use of the available time and resources, ensure a focus on the Borough's priorities and add the most value to the performance of the Council and outcomes for residents.
- 4.2 Following the Council's all-out Elections in May 2022 a new Committee membership has been established following the Committee's previous meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022. With a new membership the opportunity to create a new work programme has been taken and the Committee held a work programming workshop on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022. At the workshop, members of the Committee discussed possible options for items to be included in the Committee's work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year. Based on the findings of its workshop the Scrutiny Committee should agree items for its work programme to enable planning for agendas of future committee meetings and the establishment of any review work (e.g. task and finish groups).
- 4.3 The Scrutiny Committee is required to review and agree its work programme at every public committee meeting. When reviewing the work programme, new items can be added and items that no longer require scrutiny or are not considered to be a priority for action or monitoring can be removed.
- 4.4 When considering whether to add, remove and prioritise items for consideration Members should be mindful of the following:
- Would the Committee be able to add value through its work on the issue?
  - Is the issue linked to a Borough Priority?

- Is the issue a priority/concern for partners, stakeholders, and the public?
- Is the issue related to poorly performing services?
- Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends?
- Are there significant levels of public/service user dissatisfaction with the service?
- Has there been media coverage of the issue?
- Is the issue related to new Government guidance?
- Would consideration of the issue be timely?
- Are there sufficient resources (e.g. officer capacity to support a review or provide a report) to effectively consider the issue at this time?
- Would Scrutiny be duplicating work being undertaken elsewhere?
- Is the matter subject to judicial review (sub judice)?

4.5 The Work Programme Prioritisation Aid attached is designed to assist members in considering whether a suggested addition to the work programme is suitable and meets the necessary criteria. If members consider that a suggestion would not be suitable for scrutiny, the Scrutiny Committee could choose to refer the matter elsewhere. If an item is considered important issue but not a priority at this time an item may be added to the end of the work programme to be monitored for further consideration in the future.

## **5. Consideration of Alternatives**

5.1 None

## **6. Conclusions**

6.1 The Scrutiny Committee is requested to discuss its work programme and set priorities for future Committee meetings and agree any review work (i.e., task and finish) to be commenced in the near future or scheduled for a later date.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 N/A

## **8. Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications**

8.1 N/A

## **9. Social Value**

9.1 N/A

## **10. Sustainability and Environment**

10.1 N/A

## **11. Health and Wellbeing**

11.1 N/A

## **12. Equality and Human Rights**

12.1 N/A

## **13. Customer and Resident**

13.1 N/A

## **14. Asset and Property**

14.1 N/A

## **15. Staffing and Human Resources**

15.1 N/A

## **16. Risks**

16.1 Failure to effectively manage the work programme could lead to inefficient use of the Committee's time and resources, negatively affecting the Committee's ability to add value and help the Council achieve its priorities. By examining the work programme regularly and following the prioritisation aid as recommended, the Committee should minimize the risk of using time and resources on ineffective items.

## **17. Finance**

17.1 N/A

## **18. Policy Framework Implications**

18.1 N/A

## **19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

19.1 N/A

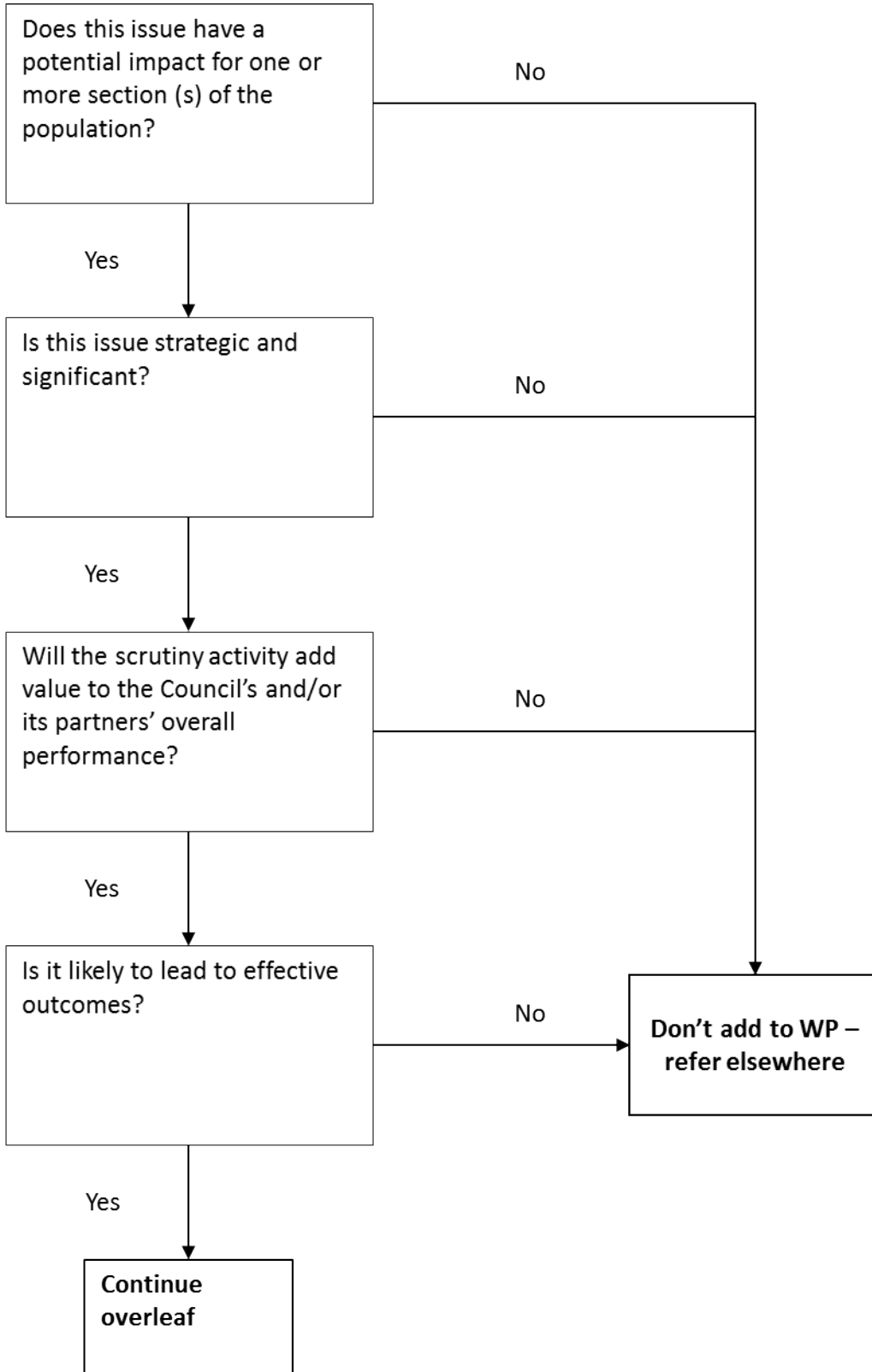
## **20. Background Documents**

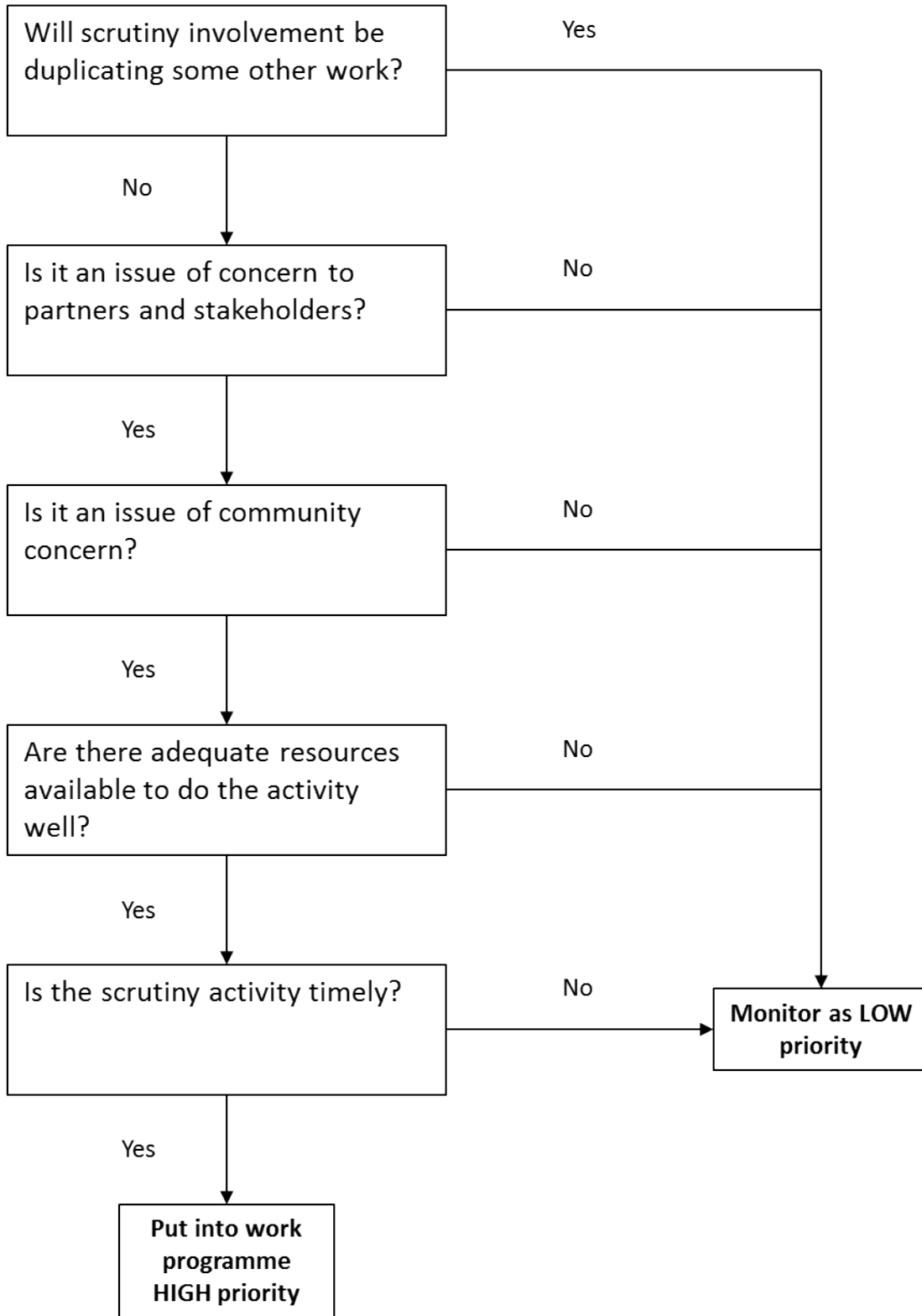
20.1 None

## **21. Appendices**

1.Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

**Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Prioritisation Aid**





**Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022 - 2023**

| Corporate Priority   |  | Next Meeting  |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life |  | Date: 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2023<br>Time: 10am<br>Venue: Room 10 |  |

| Title                                       | Description  | Purpose  | Portfolio                               | Lead Officer                                  | Corporate Priority   | Method   | Date    |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|---------|
| 119<br>Children's Services Improvement Plan | Ofsted ILACS Inspection took place 23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept -4 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2019. Ofsted gave an inadequate rating requiring Council to produce Action Plan for improvement. The committee will monitor the improvement process on an ongoing basis, including the outcomes and action arising from Monitoring Visits. | To monitor the Council's progress in improving Children's Services including Ofsted monitoring visit feedback. | Children and Young People Cllr Charlton | Director Children's Services<br>Hilary Brooks | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | Report to committee<br><br>Standing Committee Agenda Item as Director's Report | 24/4/23 |
| Quarterly Performance Report                | Scrutiny Committees are responsible for reviewing the performance reports for priorities relevant to their remit.  | To monitor the performance of services within portfolios and to hold Cabinet                                   | Children and Young People Cllr Charlton | Director Children's Services<br>Hilary Brooks | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | Report to committee<br><br>Standing Committee Agenda Item                      | 24/4/23 |

| Title                       | Description  | Purpose  | Portfolio  | Lead Officer  | Corporate Priority   | Method                  | Date  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|-------------------------|---|
|                             |  | Members to account.  | Economy, Business and Skills<br>Cllr Groucutt<br><br>Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage<br>Cllr Burns | Director Public Health<br>Ruth du Plessis                 |  |                         |   |
| Improving School Attendance | At 22.3%, pupil absenteeism in St Helens is higher than the national average in England of 19%. Absenteeism affects learning, well-being, life chances and is a factor in safeguarding issues. | To contribute to strategies to improve school attendance rates in St Helens thereby improving pupil achievement, well-being, life chances and reducing the potential of children and young people's vulnerability to harm. | Children and Young People<br>Cllr Charlton   | Jo Davies<br>Assistant Director<br>Education and Learning | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | <b>Spotlight Review</b> | Tasks Group<br>Report to Committee<br><br>24 April 23 |



Appendix 1

| Title  | Description   | Purpose   | Portfolio   | Lead Officer   | Corporate Priority   | Method                | Date   |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|-----------------------|--|
| Reducing teenage pregnancy   | National 2020 teenage conception data show that teenage pregnancy rates remain very high comparatively in St Helens. The Nuffield Trust has recently reported (March 2022) that research shows that teenage pregnancy is associated with poorer outcomes for both young parents and their children. | To clarify the data in relation to St Helens and explore how teenage pregnancy rates can be reduced.                | Children and Young People<br>Cllr Charlton  | Shirley Goodhew<br>Public Health Consultant  | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | Spotlight Review      | Monday 5 December 2022.<br><br>Tasks Group Report to Committee 24 April 23 |
| Improving School Attainment  | Overall secondary school attainment, pre-Covid was below the England average in St Helens.  | To scrutinise strategies to improve secondary school attainment and raise pupil aspirations.                        |   | Jo Davies  | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | Task and Finish Group | TBC 2023   |
| Improving Employment for Care Leavers – Progress following Task and Finish Group recommendations | Care leavers face enormous barriers to accessing education, work or training with the consequent adverse impacts on their life chances. In 2019, care leavers aged 19-21 in England were over three times more likely to be   | To monitor the implementation of the action plan to improve employment opportunities for care leavers in St Helens. | Children and Young People<br>Cllr Charlton<br><br>Economy, Business and Skills<br>Cllr Groucutt | Assistant Chief Executive<br>Rob Huntington<br><br>Director Children’s Services<br>Hilary Brooks | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | Report to committee   | 24 April 2023  |

| Title  | Description   | Purpose   | Portfolio   | Lead Officer  | Corporate Priority   | Method              | Date |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|---------------------|------|
|  | NEET than their peers, made more difficult by the twin impacts of the pandemic and Brexit. In February 2020, a CYPs Scrutiny Task and Finish Group made a number of recommendations to help the children and young people, for whom St Helens Council is a corporate parent, prosper when they leave our care.. |   |   | Director<br>Children's<br>Services<br>Hilary Brooks   |  |                     |      |
| Listening to the Voices of Children and Young People | Commissioned by the Council, The Good Childhood Enquiry reported, in October 2020, on young people's views of life in St Helens and a consequent set of recommendations on how to address issues identified.  | To review progress in relation to the action plan developed in response to the Good Childhood Enquiry | Children and Young People / Economy, Business and Skills / Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage<br><br>Cllr Charlton<br>Cllr Groucutt<br>Cllr Burns) | Assistant Chief Executive<br>Rob Huntington<br><br>Senior Commissioning and Transformation Manager<br>Julie Dunning<br><br>Head of Send and Inclusion<br>Sharon Fryer | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | Report to Committee | TBC  |

Appendix 1

| Title  | Description   | Purpose  | Portfolio                                 | Lead Officer   | Corporate Priority   | Method  | Date                |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|---------------------|
| Reducing alcohol and substance misuse during pregnancy   | To understand the serious harm done in uterus as a result of parental alcohol and substance misuse and the consequent impact on child development and life chances, families and services; and to scrutinise the work currently undertaken by the Council and partner agencies to address this issue. | To raise awareness of this issue to result in more healthy pregnancies so that more children have the best start in life and life chances. | Children and Young People (Cllr Charlton) | Public Health Consultant<br>Michelle Loughlin  | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | Spotlight Review                              | Commence April 2023 |
| Reducing Self Harm in young people aged 10 – 24 years old.   | St Helens is in the 4 <sup>th</sup> quartile, the highest in the northwest and second highest nationally for admissions to hospital for self-harm.  | To review and monitor the impact of work being done to address self-harm in young people in St Helens.                                     | Children and Young People (Cllr Charlton) | Director of Public Health<br>Ruth Du Plessis<br><br>Assistant Director Education and Learning<br>Jo Davies | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | Report to committee                           | TBC                 |
| Mental Health and Well Being Services for Children and Young People – Progress following recommendations | In December 2021, members of the committee conducted a spotlight review of children’s mental health services in St Helens. Several recommendations  | To monitor the provision to ensure timely and appropriate support for children and young people.   | Children and Young People (Cllr Charlton) | Director of Public Health<br>Ruth Du Plessis   | Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life | Briefing via email Before the April Committee | 24 April 23         |

| Title | Description  | Purpose | Portfolio | Lead Officer | Corporate Priority | Method | Date |
|-------|--|---------|-----------|--------------|--------------------|--------|------|
|       | <p>were agreed in January 2022. It was agreed that this topic remain on the Scrutiny Work programme in view of the increase in children and young people needing support and an update on provision to be provided in twelve months.</p> |         |           |              |                    |        |      |