



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

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Agenda

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 16 October 2023 Time: 10.00 am Venue: Room 10

Membership

Lab 6 Councillors **D Banks, T Long (Chair), McCormack, Murphy MBE, Osundeko and Sweeney**

Grn 1 Councillor **van der Burg**

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)

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At a meeting of this Committee held on
6 September 2023

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

(Not Present) **Councillors Murphy MBE and Sims**

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

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Murphy MBE and Sims and Mr D Thorpe.

2 **MINUTES**

* **Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2023, be approved and signed.**

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest from Members were made.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP**

No Declarations of party whip were made.

5 **DIRECTORS REPORT ON PROGRESS IN CHILDRENS SERVICES**

A report was presented which provided an overview and update of progress in Children's Services, highlighting the peer reviews undertaken since the last meeting of this Committee, along with improvements made within the service and work already being undertaken in respect of the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILAC) and Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) inspection preparation.

Members acknowledged that it had been a busy period with two peer reviews having been recently undertaken, one in the Fostering Service by the Local Government Association (LGA) and one for the Children we look after service (CWLA) by Salford City Council as part of the North-West sector led improvement offer.

It was reported that the service still had a strong focus on recruitment and retention of social work staff. The first tranche of five international social workers joined the local authority in April, one more social worker was due to join at the end of June and a further five in the summer.

Priorities from the Children's Improvement Plan continued to be achieved. September 2023 had shown another reduction on children subject to child protection plans and

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children in pre proceedings. There had also been a focus on achieving permanency for children, evidenced through the feedback from the recent monitoring visits and initial feedback from the peer review.

The report detailed the activity in relation to:

- The Fostering Peer Review;
- The CWLA Peer Review;
- Children's Improvement Plan Update;
- School Attendance; and
- SEND.

Members acknowledged that Childrens Services were continuing with their improvement trajectory and could evidence progress across most areas. Challenges still existed within the placement / sufficiency arena, but progress had been made in creating the Council's own residential homes, with the tendering process being entered into, inviting external organisations to run the Council's children's homes on its behalf.

The Director of Children's Services provided an overview of the recent St Helens ILAC inspection that had taken place, in accordance with the new Ofsted inspection framework, and highlighted the rigorous processes and the main key findings, judgements and very positive outcomes which rated St Helens as overall 'Good'. It was also acknowledged that areas for development still existed, and work was ongoing to address the key recommendations and challenges as detailed within the report.

Members were advised that a more detailed report would be provided at the next meeting.

Following the provision of a verbal overview of the report, the following comments and questions were raised:

- following a request, a response was provided to indicate the ongoing work and activity to address pupil absence rates, especially those identified as severe absences;
- information was provided for regulated accommodation placement provision for asylum seeking young people in St Helens, which was in line with national policy, and the associated funding arrangements currently in place;
- an update was provided upon the progress of recruitment for the international social worker cohort, which highlighted some complexities in the process that had been identified in terms of required expectations of external partner organisations;
- it was reported that a concerted recruitment campaign was underway for the appointment of experienced social workers;
- information was provided in regard to the current position for recruitment/ development and retention of social worker apprentices; and
- assurances were provided for meeting needs due to the demand on fostering services arising from the overarching priority of Neglect combined with accommodating asylum-seeking children and young people via placements, which would be achieved through a whole system approach, with development of the family hubs and via strategic work in educational and social work services.

The Director of Children's Services was thanked for the thorough and comprehensive report.

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* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the progress achieved to date be noted; and**
- (2) thanks be expressed to all involved for their commitment and dedication to improve services for the children and young people in St Helens, and for the outcomes achieved.**

6 UPDATE ON OFSTED SEND LOCAL AREA INSPECTION PREPARATION ACTIVITY

A report was presented which highlighted the key areas from the previous Ofsted SEND local area inspection. This gave an overview of the new inspection framework following its publication earlier this year, explained the inspection preparation that had already taken place and highlighted the current risks that had been identified.

Members were made aware of the strengths, the areas for development and the changes in the new inspection framework.

It was reported that between 29 January to 2 February 2018, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the local area of St Helens to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

The findings of the inspection were contained in the Ofsted report, which was appended for information and were split across three general categories, which judged the effectiveness of the local area in:

- identifying children and young people's SEN and/or disabilities;
- meeting the needs of children and young people who had SEN and/or disabilities; and
- improving outcomes for children and young people who had SEN and/or disabilities.

The report detailed, and provided an update, upon the significant progress that had been made against these areas.

It was reported that Health and Social care information were now both routinely sourced in the production of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) and a co-produced Quality Assurance Framework was now in place to judge EHCPs against five agreed quality assurance standards.

The framework was attached as an appendix to the report.

The report also detailed the new Ofsted SEND Local Area Inspection Framework which was updated in April 2023 which informed Members of:

- what the inspection reports would include;
- inspection outcomes;
- alternative provision;
- inspection preparation; and
- current risks, which were set out as being accessibility of the Disabled Children's register, short breaks provision, current Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

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performance, educational psychology capacity, co-production and SEND cohort school attendance.

A presentation entitled 'An Update of SEND Local Area Inspection Activity' was delivered to accompany the narrative within the report outlining the new SEND Local Area Inspection Framework. The presentation detailed what the new framework was expected to look like, in addition to partnership working and working with others.

The presentation focused upon:

- previous inspection outcome;
- new inspection framework: What's Changed?;
- current risks;
- mitigations; and
- current service priorities.

Following the provision of a verbal overview of the key headlines of the report, the following comments and questions were raised:

- following query, reassurance was provided that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) had indicated that the current arrangement of a Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) supported by a Deputy DCO would not be reduced;
- in response to a question about SEND pupil absences and capacity, clarification was provided upon needs being met in mainstream school provision and utilising specialist support services, and the places that were available in various other high-quality settings to meet required needs;
- an update was provided to inform Members of ongoing work to address an area of development identified in the 2018 joint local area SEND inspection report in regard to short breaks, which had indicated that the local area's short-break provision was ineffective at that time;
- activities around service provision and educational offers for Post 16 and, in particular, for 18–25-year-old provision for young people were provided with a detailed summary of ongoing work strategy being provided for preparation for adulthood;
- following a request for an update on progress for outstanding/overdue backlogs of EHCPs, reassurance was provided that no child or young person had been waiting more than 18 months for assessment, with a prioritisation system being used to clear backlogs within a 12-month period;
- it was confirmed that all schools, including academy trusts, attended and were co-operative with partnership meetings and challenge/engagement sessions with the local authority; and
- discussion took place around the aspirational focus for, and creation of, employment opportunities for SEND children and young people. The funding for internships was acknowledged.

It was agreed that this area of work could be included in the work item 'Listening to the Voices of Young People in St Helens' to be considered at a future meeting.

It was agreed that an update on progress towards the preparation for SEND inspection be provided at every meeting of this Committee.

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* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the findings of the report and the progress made be noted;**
- (2) an update on the progress of preparation for the SEND Local Area Inspection made be provided at every meeting; and**
- (3) the aspiration and employment opportunities for SEND children and young people be included as part of the work item 'Listening to the Voices of Young People in St Helens' at a future meeting.**

Councillors Sheldon and Sweeney left the meeting during discussion of the following item.

7 PERFORMANCE OUTTURN REPORT 2022/23

The Performance Outturn Report 2022-23 (Annex A) provided an analysis of progress and performance over the period April to March 2023 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 and work continued to ensure the development of the performance framework and performance management processes across the Council.

The Performance Outturn Report 2022-23 – Priority 1 focus for this Committee was attached at Appendix 1 and reflected performance over the 12-month period April 2022-March 2023 and the legacy impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, rising demand for services and a requirement to deliver significant budget savings.

As a result, it was more critical than ever that the Council had a clear understanding of what it needed to measure and how it was performing to inform decision making.

There were 108 performance indicators, where outturn performance against target were available to be reported in the Performance Outturn Report 2022-23. Of these:

- 73% of indicator targets had been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compared to 64% of indicators at outturn 2021-22;
- 27% of indicator targets were not met. This compared to 36% of indicators at outturn 2021-22;
- the trend measure indicated over the course of the last 12 months that 55% of indicators showed improvement, 6% of indicators maintained the same performance and 39% of indicators showed a downward trajectory. The position was similar to that at outturn 2021-22, where 51% of indicators showed improvement, 10% maintained the same performance and 39% of indicators showed a downward trajectory; and
- 15% of all indicators where comparison was possible were in the top quartile, compared to 27% at outturn 2021-22. 22% of indicators were in the second

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quartile compared to 16% at outturn 2021-22, 31% of indicators were in the third quartile and 32% in the bottom quartile, compared to 18% and 38% respectively at outturn 2021-22.

In summary, at outturn 20223-23 there were a number of outcome areas which demonstrated strong and/or improving performance. Equally, there were areas where performance against outcomes was either some distance from the annual target or an outlier in terms of St Helens performance relative to the England average or St Helens statistical neighbours.

In Priority 1 there were three areas of challenge, which were outlined in the report.

Following the provision of a verbal overview of the key performance outcomes in the report, the following comments and questions were raised:

- specifications around smoking cessation services and advice were briefly outlined;
- conspiracy theory issues did not factor in any outcomes for vaccine uptake;
- concerns were expressed around the performance indicator for hospital admissions for self-harm aged 10-24 years and the narrative that indicated St Helens had the highest rates of hospital admission in England, and it was reported that this issue was a key priority to be addressed with numerous programmes, workshops, pathways and strategies supporting the ongoing work in place across all partner organisations.

It was agreed that the detailed reports that had been produced by Public Health around underlying reasons and findings on this issue be provided to this Committee before consideration of the work item entitled 'Review of the Provision of Mental Health Services for Young People in St Helens';

- the main reasons and context for the reported data being in the third and fourth quartiles were explained, it being added that wider data indicated a much better position; and
- local programmes and strategies around addressing childhood obesity issues were outlined.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the report be noted; and**
- (2) **reports that had been produced by Public Health around underlying reasons and findings on hospital admissions for self-harm aged 10-24 years be provided prior to the work item entitled 'Review of the Provision of Mental Health Services for Young People in St Helens'.**

8 CABINET RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

A report was presented which provided Members with the Action Plan response to the recommendations of the Improving School Attendance Task Group, which had been agreed by this Committee.

At the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Workshop held on 6 July 2022, it was agreed to hold a spotlight review in November 2022 to contribute to the wider work to improve school attendance in the borough.

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The focus of the review was in response to overall absence rates in St Helens reported for the Autumn and Spring Term 2022/23 which were higher than regional and national averages.

The Action Plan attached at Appendix 1b to the report set out the Cabinet response to the recommendations from the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee Task Group on school attendance.

- * **Resolved that the Action Plan attached at appendix 1b that set out the recommendations from the Task Group into improving school attendance in St Helens be noted.**

9 **CABINET RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF REDUCING TEENAGE PREGNANCY**

A report was provided which provided Members with the Action Plan response to the recommendations of the Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Task Group, which had been agreed by this Committee.

At the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Workshop held on 6 July 2022, it was agreed to hold a spotlight review in December 2022 to contribute to the wider work and developing strategy and action plan to reduce the high rates of under 18 conceptions and teenage pregnancy rates in St Helens reported for the Autumn and Spring Term 2022/23 which were higher than regional and national averages.

The Action Plan at Appendix 1b set out the Cabinet response to the recommendations from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Task Group into reducing Teenage Pregnancy.

- * **Resolved that the Action Plan attached at Appendix 1b that set out the recommendations from the Task Group into improving school attendance in St Helens be noted.**

10 **SPOTLIGHT REVIEW OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE IN PREGNANCY – COLLECTIVE ACTION TO REDUCE RISK AND HARM TO CHILDREN**

A report was provided which presented the evidence submitted to and findings of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee Spotlight Review 'Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy – Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children' held on 28 April 2023.

Based on the Review's findings, the principal purposes of the report were:

- to contribute to raising awareness of this issue to result in more healthy pregnancies so that more children had the best start in life and life chances;
- to highlight the serious harm done *in utero* arising from parental alcohol and substance misuse and the consequent impact on child development and life chances, families, and Council and other services; and
- to scrutinise the work currently undertaken by the Council and partner agencies to address the issue.

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It was reported that at the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Workshop on 6 July 2022, Members had suggested a study group to establish further understanding on the issue of alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy and the subsequent problems this may cause.

The topic was highly relevant to the Borough because St Helens had:

- higher rates of teenage pregnancy than the national average;
- significantly high levels of under-18 admissions to hospital for alcohol-specific reasons per 100,000 population; and
- widespread issues with substance misuse, including the highest rate of hospital admissions linked to drug poisoning in England and the highest rate for women.

The report detailed the evidence provided from:

- Consultant in Public Health, St Helens Council;
- Children and Young People's Services, Futures Team;
- The Principal Education Psychologist at St Helens Council;
- Care Grow Live (CGL);
- Young People's Drug and Alcohol Team;
- The Wellbeing service;
- The 0-19 Enhancing Families Service; and
- The Interim Virtual Head.

The findings and subsequent conclusions were also detailed in the report and a set of recommendations for action were attached at Appendix 1. These recommendations linked to and supported the first and second of the six borough priorities "Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life".

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 be approved; and**
- (2) **the recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for response.**


11 WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

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 topics listed on the draft programme were circulated to Members for consideration.

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

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	<h2>Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee</h2> <h3>16 October 2023</h3>
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Report Title	Directors Report on Progress in Childrens Services
Cabinet Portfolio	Children and Young People
Cabinet Member	Councillor Nova Charlton
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
Report of	Hilary Brooks Director of Children's Services HilaryBrooks@sthelens.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Hilary Brooks Director of Children's Services HilaryBrooks@sthelens.gov.uk

Borough Priorities	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, since my last report 24th July 2023. It includes the outcome and recommendations of the ILAC inspection July 2023 and plans to take the service to Outstanding. This report also highlights progress and developments towards the SEND inspection.

2. Recommendation for Decision

- i. To note progress achieved to date.

3. Purpose of this report

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

4. Background

- 4.1 This has been a busy period, with the ILAC inspection July 2023 which graded us as Good overall, with Outstanding in care leavers, preparation for the SEND inspection and future planning for children services to sustain continued improvements.
- 4.2 Ofsted ILAC finding and report states, 'Since a judgement of inadequate for overall effectiveness at the last inspection in 2019, St Helens children's services have been on an improvement journey. Monitoring visits found that this was initially too slow in delivering improvements for children. A new senior leadership team began work in 2022. Since then, there has been a determination to improve at pace, and a renewed focus and impetus which has led to significant improvements in all areas. Children and young people in St Helens now benefit from much better help, support, and care. Concerns are identified and addressed more swiftly, and children's situations improve.'
- 4.3 They recognised 'Leaders have improved their understanding of the quality of frontline practice by developing a robust quality assurance framework, by ensuring that they hear regularly from the children's workforce and from children, young people, and their families, and by engaging in peer reviews. This has led them to invest in improving practice and in developing specialist roles and resources that are effective in helping children and their families.'
- 4.4 Children's needs are identified and responded to swiftly at the lowest possible level. Most problems are prevented from escalating. When concerns do escalate, immediate action is taken to safeguard children. Children who are looked after by St Helens make good progress and young people who are leaving care receive outstanding support. However, some children in St Helens have experienced neglect for too long, and service improvements are not leading to better experiences for all children. Leaders have credible and realistic plans to further improve service effectiveness.
- 4.5 Recommendations
- The effectiveness of the response to children experiencing neglect.
 - The timeliness of entering pre-proceedings for children who need this support.
 - The response to 16- and 17-year-olds who are homeless.
 - The stability and consistency of children's social workers.
 - Safeguarding of disabled children.

Future planning

- 4.6 The Children's Improvement plan is being replaced with a new "Getting to Outstanding plan". This will include actions to address the recommendations above and the ambitions for the Sufficiency Programme, SEND and Early Help provision. We are currently transitioning the governance arrangements from the Improvement Board to an "Outstanding Board". This will be chaired by the Chief Executive and membership will include senior representation from both council and external partners who will drive the improvements and be accountable for the delivery and outcomes required to achieve outstanding at the next inspection.
- 4.7 From October the Assistant Director Social Care, will chair a monthly meeting with relevant leaders to focus on the tasks necessary for each service area to achieve outstanding status. This work will inform future iterations of the SEF and progress will be shared with the "outstanding Board" for scrutiny and challenge.

Childrens Update

- 4.8 We are continuing to see high levels of demand, with the rate of CIN on the 31st August 2023 being 459 children per 10,000 under 18-year-olds, which continues to be higher than the Northwest average (384), but comparative to our statistical neighbours (449). Currently there are 489 looked after children in St Helens, a rate of 132 per 10,000 children, this figure has shown an increase since March 2023.
- 4.9 Child protection plans have decreased from 280 children in March 23 to 237 in August 2023, however, the number of children in care has increased from 469 children in care in March 2023 to 489 children in care in August 2023. The number of children in care and placed with parents has remained broadly the same, decreasing marginally from 40 children placed with parents on the 31st March 2023 to 39 children placed with parents on the 31st August 2023. The number of children subject to pre proceedings has increased from 35 in March 2023 to 48 at the end of August 2023 that mean they are no longer looked after, however we have issued on several which has led to an increase in the overall number of proceedings.
- 4.10 The number of children in a residential placement has marginally increased since March 2023 with 64 children in a residential placement at the end of August 2023, these figures continue to be monitored weekly.
- 4.11 The number of Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) cared for by St Helens has increased from 12 children on 31st March 2023 to 21 children on the 31st August 2023.

Workforce

- 4.12 Four social work apprentices have commenced in September, with welcome meetings being held with DCS and AD. Two apprentices qualify in December and will be appointed into social work roles, whereupon a further two will take up apprenticeships.
- 4.13 Presently there are numerous staff onboarding which leaves a vacancy rate for social workers of less than 7%. Whilst 6 international social workers have started there are a further 7 still to arrive. There has been a back log with approvals from Social Work England that has caused delay we anticipate that we will see progress within the next few weeks.
- 4.14 A refreshed recruitment campaign emphasising the recent ILACs result, and positive staff morale is being launched. Several staff have participated in videos sharing their reflections of working in St Helen's.

We are also making good use of social media and other forums such as Community Care, MJ magazine and the local press to raise our profile with the intention of encouraging experienced social workers to complete our staffing establishment with permanent staff.

Sufficiency Programme

- 4.15 In recognition of the importance of securing safe and stable homes for our children who are looked after, we have established a dedicated internal Sufficiency Programme Lead to ensure that the Edge of Care service, children's homes growth, specialist foster homes and care leaver homes are developed at pace. Governance arrangements have been put in place with participation from relevant strategic leaders from across the council, with the DCS chairing to ensure that there is whole system accountability and that the individual projects are delivered within required timescales to achieve the Sufficiency Programme aims.
- 4.16 The internal children's homes project is progressing with two properties potentially being purchased in the very near future and plans to re-purpose the Grove moving forward. The tendering process is about to begin to secure a provider who will run the home on our behalf.
- 4.17 There has been a relentless focus on fostering recruitment. Since April 2023 there have been four households approved as mainstream carers, and 6 assessments are currently in progress with 12 post enquiry visits taking place that could lead to further assessments. Regarding specialist carers who will care for children with more complex needs, it is expected there will be 4 or 5 approved by early next year.
- 4.18 A robust, refreshed recruitment campaign is taking place during September which we hope will attract more interest and lead to further growth of our internal foster carers.
- 4.19 Simultaneously consideration is being given to determine which children currently placed outside St Helen's can move into local foster placements and the new homes. This will meet their needs for a local safe and stable home and reduce the expenditure on high-cost placements.

School Attendance

- 4.20 The Department for Education guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' was due to become statutory legislation by September 2023. However, this remains in guidance form. Notwithstanding the delay in the guidance converting to statutory legislation, the Council, supported by the DFE, have continued to make progress in-line with the requirements of the guidance.
- 4.21 As part of the ILAC's, the Education HMI analysed attendance data of all statutory school age pupils and conducted deep-dive activities linked to the attendance of children with a social worker and scrutinised the associated support and challenge posed by local authority officers. As part of the inspection, the team reviewed the council's processes in relation to 'elective home education', 'children missing education' and use of a 'part-time timetable'. Considerable amounts of evidence were provided by officers and the inspectors were fully assured and satisfied with the processes and quality of information provided.
- 4.22 Whilst there remain areas where absence rates reported for St Helens continue to remain above comparable national averages and much higher than the pre-Covid period. The figures show areas of emerging improvements. For example, reductions in overall absence rates across the primary and secondary sectors, compared to the previous year, plus reductions in the percentage of persistent absentees for both primary and secondary schools. In terms of other areas to note, there are increasing numbers of severely absent pupils (attendance below 50%) across all school sectors.

- 4.23 During the school's summer break, officers within education and learning have worked diligently and creatively to action requests made by from The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education: Call to support strong attendance from the first day of term, July 2023. This has included contacting identified families and offering support and advice in relation to attendance, launching the council's media campaign and linking with external services to provide bespoke packages of support for young people.
- 4.24 As we move into the new academic year, there will be a continued effort to support and challenge schools to improve attendance across primary, secondary and special schools. This will happen through spot-light reviews where good practice can be showcased, attendance review boards and cluster group meetings. Improving attendance remains a key area of focus across education and learning teams; this involves engaging the wider partnership. For example, a presentation will be given to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership board highlighting the roles and responsibilities of key partners in ensuring there is a collective and collaborative approach to removing barriers and continuing to see an improvement in overall attendance figures.

SEND

- 4.25 The SEND team have been working closely with partners from across the local area to prepare for the new local area SEND inspection. They have designed a self-evaluation form which reflects the new framework and have been integral in establishing a multi-agency SEND inspection preparation group. This group has identified related workstreams, the work of which will be monitored by the SEND Partnership Board and the SEND Strategic Board.
- 4.26 Annexe A data is being collected and centralised and there have been training and briefing sessions delivered to partners around the new inspection framework and the expectations on them.
- 4.27 Vacant SEND caseworker roles have now been recruited to and the team is working diligently to improve the timeliness of EHCP completion. Completion rates from July suggest that the number of EHCPs completed in the 20-week timescale could be at national average by December 2023. A multi-agency audit tool has also been developed to ensure quality and value of cases.
- 4.28 The SEND team are working alongside the DfE, Newton Europe and CIPFA on Delivering Better Value (DBV) in the SEND programme. This programme will support the local authority and its partners to improve delivery of SEND services for children and young people whilst working towards financial sustainability. The team are being supported to identify the highest impact changes that can be made to improve outcomes for young people with SEND, and to optimise the use of finances. The local authority will receive dedicated technical support to create a plan to deliver improvement across the local system, which will build on existing initiatives and address underlying challenges in the SEND system.

5. Consideration of alternatives

- 5.1 N/A

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Children's Services are continuing with their improvement trajectory and can evidence progress across most areas. Challenges still exists within the placement / sufficiency arena, but progress has been made in creating our own internal residential homes, we are now entering the tendering stage, inviting external organisations to run our children's homes for us.

6.2 The decline in numbers around child protection plans and pre proceeding is welcome in respect of our statutory reporting and highlights the work undertaken to prevent children entering care.

6.3 This quarter has also seen a focus on Early Help, ensuring those in greatest need are able to readily access our services. This work will be ongoing over the next few months as we look at how the service will interlink with the Family hubs and support families more, thus preventing children entering our statutory services.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 N/A

8. Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 N/A

9. Social Value

9.1 N/A

10. Net Zero 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 Children Services have been on a continual improvement journey since 2019. The ILAC's demonstrates significant improvement resulting in the "good" outcome. However, the service is seeing an increase in demand especially around poverty, neglect and physical violence. This service is undertaking current strategies to address this and continue our improvement journey to outstanding.

14. Asset and Property

14.1 N/A

15. Staffing and Human Resources

15.1 Staffing is now stable within Children's Services. However, we still have a high degree of agency staff, and are looking forward to welcoming the second cohort of international social workers.

16. Risks

16.1 N/A

17. Finance

17.1 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.

18. Policy Framework Implications

18.1 N/A

19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

19.1 N/A


20. Background Documents

20.1 N/A

21. Appendices

21.1 N/A

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Children and Young People's Services</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Scrutiny Committee</h3> <h3 style="margin: 0;">16 October 2023</h3>
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Report Title	Quarter 1 Performance Report – 2023-24
Cabinet Portfolio	Corporate Services
Cabinet Member	Councillor Martin Bond
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
Report of	Victoria Willett Director Policy and Transformation vickiwhillet@sthelens.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Chris Collinge Performance, Strategy & Information Manager chriscollinge@sthelens.gov.uk

Borough Priorities	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 1 Performance Report 2023-24 (Annex A) provides an analysis of progress and performance over the period from the 1st of April to the 30th of June 2023-24 against each of the Council's 6 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 26th of April 2023. This framework provides the basis for quarterly performance reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny over the course of 2023-24.
- 1.2 The Council acknowledges that effective performance management arrangements are critical to supporting decision making and work continues to ensure the development of the performance framework and performance management processes across the Council.

2. Recommendation for Decision

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

- i) Note the performance position at Quarter 1 2023-24.**
- ii) Work with appropriate Executive Directors to address specific areas for performance improvement.**
- iii) Work with appropriate Executive Directors to progress the Council's performance framework that forms the basis for quarterly performance reports to Scutiny over the course of 2023-24.**

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 1 2023-24.
 - 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 / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 The Quarter 1 Performance Report 2023-24 reflects performance over the period April to June 2023 and the legacy impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, 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 took account of performance during 2022-23 and the legacy impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, rising service demand and a challenging financial position for local government.
- 4.3 There are **84** performance indicators, where Quarter 1 performance against target is available to be reported. Of these:
- **81%** of indicator targets have been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compares to 73% of indicators at Q1 2022-23.
 - **19%** of indicator targets were not met. This compares to 27% of indicators at Quarter 1 2022-23.
 - The trend measure indicates over the course of the last 12 months **51%** of indicators showed improvement, **13%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **37%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory (NB percentages rounded to nearest whole number). The position in Quarter 1 2022-23 was that **46%** of indicators showed improvement, **6%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **48%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory.
 - **21%** of all indicators where comparison is possible are in the top quartile, compared to 35% at Q1 2021/22, whilst **24%** are in the bottom quartile, compared to 32% at Q1 2022/23. 21% and 33% of indicators are in the 2nd and 3rd quartile respectively, compared to 14% and 19% in Q1 2022-23.
- 4.4 Performance should continue to be viewed within the context of what has continued to be a challenging operational period for the Council. The legacy impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, 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 comparative performance is already challenging.
- 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 1 2023-24 there are a number of outcome areas which demonstrate strong and / or improving performance. Equally there are areas where performance against outcomes is either some distance from target or an outlier in terms

of St Helens performance relative to the England average or our statistical neighbours. Areas of challenge include:

- *Priority 1*
 - *The children's social care outcome:* This includes rates of Children in Need, Children Looked After, and children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time where current performance is statistically significantly higher than last published England averages and that of our nearest neighbours. The percentage of Children Looked After ceased due to Special Guardianship Order (SGO) is also below target at Quarter 1 and 3rd quartile compared to statistical neighbours.
 - *The children's aspiration and attainment outcome:* This includes the timeliness of EHCP completions and the percentage of young people NEET.
 - *The children's health and resilience outcome:* This includes the number of teenage conceptions for which St Helens has the seventh highest rate in England. Under-18 hospital admissions for alcohol, breastfeeding rates and MMR vaccination take up for 5-year-olds remain statistically significantly worse than last published England averages and the performance of our nearest neighbours.

5. Consideration of Alternatives

5.1 None

6. Conclusions

6.1 The Quarter 1 Performance Report 2023-24 at Annex A provides an assessment of the Council's performance over the period April to June. The legacy of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis 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. Equality Impact Assessment

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. Net Zero and Environment

10.1 The indicators include measures relating to Net Zero 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. Customer and Resident

13.1 The indicators include measures relating to customers

14. Asset and Property

14.1 None

15. Staffing and Human Resources

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 Borough Strategy and related key council strategies.

19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

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 Documents

20.1 N/A

21. Appendices

21.1 **Annex A** – Children and Young People's Services Quarter 1 Performance Report 2023-24

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2023-24



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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

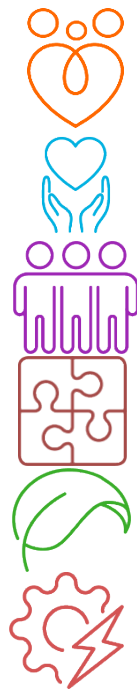
Priority 2 - Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities

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.

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

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 1 2023-24 providing the performance position reported over the course of the period. The reporting format splits the report into 2 distinct parts:

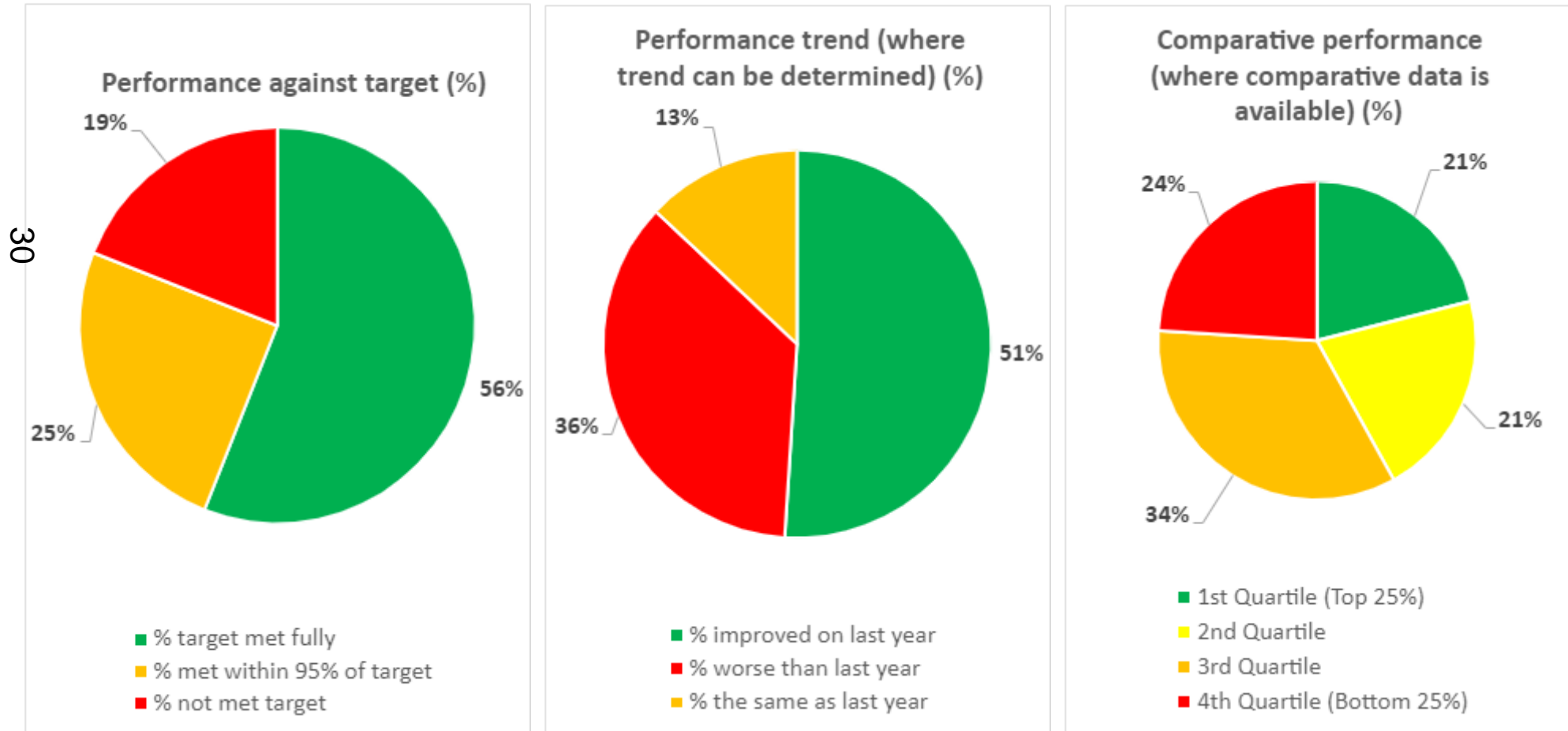
Part 1 of the report is a statistical analysis of the performance position at Quarter 1 2023-24.

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.

3. Executive Summary

The charts below provide an overview position of all performance measures across all 6 Borough Strategy priorities as at Quarter 1 2023-24, 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.



4. Part 1 - Statistical analysis

To measure performance at Quarter1 2023-24, the Council is reporting against a total of **84** 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

4.1 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	23	52% (13)	26% (7)	22% (3)
2. Health, independence, and care	20	50% (10)	35% (7)	15% (3)
3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods	14	50% (7)	7% (1)	43% (6)
4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy	8	50% (4)	25% (2)	25% (2)
5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture	6	50% (3)	50% (3)	0% (0)
6. Responsible Council	13	77% (10)	8% (1)	15% (2)
Total	84*	56% (47)	25% (21)	19% (16)

* Some new indicators do not have targets set for the year as baseline data is being collected in 2023-24. See individual priorities for details.

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.

4.2 The Performance Trend

This measure compares performance at Quarter1 2023-24 with performance at Quarter 1 2022-23 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.

St Helens Borough Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2023/24

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 2023-24, where performance data in 2022-23 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	22	64% (14)	32% (7)	5% (1)
2. Health, independence, and care	20	40% (8)	50% (10)	10% (2)
3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods	12	50% (6)	42% (5)	8% (1)
4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy	6	17% (1)	17% (1)	66% (4)
5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture	6	34% (2)	50% (3)	16% (1)
6. Responsible Council	13	69% (9)	23% (3)	8% (1)
Total	79	51%* (40)	37%* (29)	13%* (10)

NB – *Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

4.3 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 **42** 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	22	23% (5)	27% (6)	18% (4)	32% (7)
2. Health, independence, and care	10	20% (2)	20% (2)	50% (5)	10% (1)

Priority	Number of Indicators with data	% in 1st quartile	% in 2nd quartile	% in 3rd quartile	% in 4th quartile
3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods	0	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy	6	33% (2)	17% (1)	50% (3)	0% (0)
5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture	2	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	50% (1)
6. Responsible Council	2	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	50% (1)
Total	42	21%* (9)	21%* (9)	33% (14)	24% (10)

NB – Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

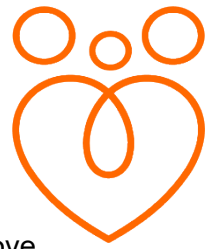
The latest available picture of inter authority performance largely relates to the 2021-22 financial year. Therefore, St Helens position vis-a-vis its quartile position is based on St Helens performance in that particular year relative to its statistical neighbours. Future reports will be updated to reflect the 2022-23 comparative performance position as and when verified data is published.

4.4 Summary and conclusion of statistical analysis

- **81%** of indicator targets have been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compares to 73% of indicators at Quarter1 2022-23.
- **19%** of indicator targets were not met. This compares to 27% of indicators at Quarter 1 2022-23.
- The trend measure indicates over the course of the last 12 months **51%** of indicators showed improvement, **13%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **37%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory (NB percentages rounded to nearest whole number). The position in Quarter 1 2022-23 was that **46%** of indicators showed improvement, **6%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **48%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory.
- **21%** of all indicators where comparison is possible are in the top quartile, compared to 35% at Quarter 1 2021-22, whilst **24%** are in the bottom quartile, compared to 32% at Quarter 1 2022-23. 21% and 33% of indicators are in the 2nd and 3rd quartile respectively, compared to 14% and 19% in Quarter 1 2022-23.
- 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 3 years which has been an unprecedented period due to the onset and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, a cost-of-living crisis, increasing demand for services and severe financial constraints.
- Performance should therefore be viewed within the context of what has continued to be a challenging operational period for the Council. The legacy impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, 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 comparative performance is already challenging.

5. 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 1 2023-24 for the indicators reported

Performance Against Target

Number of Indicators with data	% target fully met	% target met within 95%	% target not met
23	52% (13)	26% (7)	22% (3)

The Performance Trend

Number of Indicators with data	% improved on last year	% worse than last year	% the same as last year
22	64% (14)	32% (7)	5% (1)

NB - figures rounded to nearest whole number

Inter Authority Comparison

Number of Indicators with data	% in 1st quartile	% in 2nd quartile	% in 3rd quartile	% in 4th quartile
22	23% (5)	27% (6)	18% (4)	32% (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?	22/23 Outturn	23/24 Target	Q1 June	% Variance from Target (JUN)	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 episodes starting	Quarterly	Higher	N/A	1500	421	12.27%	↑	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	87	87	To be reported in Q2	N/A	N/A	N/A
	CYP-003	Number of children in need at 31 March, per 10,000 children aged 0-17 years	Quarterly	Lower	440.7	440	451	-2.5%	↑	3rd Quartile Eng Av. 334.0 LA Av. 438.2 (2021/22)
	CYP-004	Rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 under 18-year-olds	Quarterly	Lower	76.2%	67	66.9	8.36%	↔	2nd Quartile Eng Av. 42 LA Av. 60.6 (2021/22)

St Helens Borough Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2022/23

37	CYP-005	Percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time.	Quarterly	Lower	25.1%	24%	25	-4.17%	↑	4th Quartile Eng Av. 23.3 LA Av. 23.5 (2021/22)
	CYP-006	Number of looked after children per 10,000 children within the Borough	Quarterly	Lower	129.3	127	127	0%	↓	4th Quartile Eng Av. 70 LA Av. 108.6 (2021/22)
	CYP-008A	Percentage of Children Looked After ceased due to adoption	Quarterly	Higher	8%	10	10	0%	↑	2nd Quartile Eng Av. 10 LA Av. 10 (2021/22)
	CYP-008B	Percentage of Children Looked After ceased due to Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	Quarterly	Higher	26.8%	22	15	-31.82%	↓	3rd Quartile Eng Av. 13 LA Av. 20 (2021/22)
	CYP-009	Percentage of former care leavers aged 19-21 years with whom the LA is in touch	Quarterly	Higher	95%	97%	93	-2.11%	↓	1st Quartile Eng Av. 92 LA Av. 93.7 (2021/22)
	CYP-010	Percentage of former care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	Quarterly	Higher	93%	99%	98	-1.01%	↑	1st Quartile Eng Av. 88 LA Av. 90 (2021/22)
	CYP-011	Percentage of former care leavers aged 19-21 years in employment, education, or training	Quarterly	Higher	61%	63%	58	-4.92%	↓	2nd Quartile Eng Av. 55 LA Av. 53.5 (2021/22)

<p>Children and young people's aspirations, attainment and opportunities are raised</p>	CYP-012	Percentage of Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans completed within a 20-week period	Quarterly	Higher	19.5%	30%	6.25	-79.17%	↓	1st Quartile Eng Av. 57.9 LA Av. 74.7 (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	5.1%	5.3%	6.6	-24.53%	↓	1st Quartile Eng Av. 4.7 LA Av. 5.0 (2022)
	E&S-006	Percentage of state funded schools judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted	Annual	Higher	89%	90%	90	0%	↑	2nd Quartile Eng Av. 88 LA Av. 84 (Dec 2022)
<p>38</p> <p>Children and young people are healthy, resilient, confident, involved and achieve their potential</p>	PH-004	Under-18 conception rate per 1,000 females, 15-17 years (single year rate)	Quarterly	Lower	25.9%	28%	25.9	7.5%	↑	4th Quartile Eng Av. 12.8 LA Av. 19.1 (June 2021)
	PH-005	Percentage of infants being breastfed at 6-8 weeks	Quarterly	Higher	32.6%	31.6%	37.1	17.41%	↑	4th Quartile Eng Av. 49.3 LA Av. 34.5 (2021/22)
	PH-008	Percentage of children aged 5 with MMR vaccination (2 doses)	Quarterly	Higher	88.1%	90%	85.8	-4.67%	N/A	4th Quartile Eng Av. 85.7 LA Av. 90.1 (2021/22)
	CYP-013	Number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system who receive their first substantive outcome or court disposal	Quarterly	Lower	186	159	6	85%	↑	1st Quartile Eng Av. 169.2 LA Av. 157.5 (2021)

St Helens Borough Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2022/23

		per 100,000 population aged 10-17								
	CYP-014	The percentage of children re-offending	Quarterly	Lower	31.9%	36%	28.6	20.56%	↑	4th Quartile Eng Av. 35.6 LA Av. 31.3 (2019)

Tier 2

Outcome	Ref	Performance Indicator	Reporting Frequency	Higher / Lower is better?	22/23 Outturn	23/24 Target	Q1 June	% Variance from Target (JUN)	Trend	Comparative Performance
Children and young people are safe from harm and the lives of children in care improve	CYP-007	Percentage of children looked after at 31 March with three or more placements during the year	Quarterly	Lower	8%	9%	7.7	14.4%	↑	2nd Quartile Eng Av. 10.0 LA Av. 10 (2021/22)
	PH-006	Smoking status at the time of delivery	Quarterly	Lower	13.7%	12%	12.2	-1.67%	↓	3rd Quartile Eng Av. 9.1 LA Av. 12.2 (2021/22)
Children and young people are healthy, resilient, confident, involved and achieve their potential	PH-007	Under 18 admissions to hospital for alcohol specific reasons per 100,000 population	Quarterly	Lower	66.1% (Q3 - 2022-23)	68	62.5	8.09%	↑	4th Quartile Eng Av. 29.3 LA Av. 40.1 (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	82.7%	84%	90.5	7.74%	↑	3rd Quartile Eng Av. 74.0 LA Av. 86.4 (2021/22)
	PH-010	Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2 1/2 years	Quarterly	Higher	86.2%	85%	85.1	0.12%	↑	2nd Quartile Eng Av. 80.9 LA Av. 80.3 (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

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- Performance against the outcome showed a mixed picture at Quarter 1 with some improvements shown but also some ongoing challenges in the area of Children’s Social Care.
- **CYP-001** - In Quarter 1 2023-24 a total of 421 early help episodes were initiated across the St Helens partnership. The most common reasons for an early help episode starting in the period were related to Parenting Capacity (27% of episodes started), Domestic Abuse (15%), SEND (12%) and Emotional Wellbeing support (11%). The majority of episodes initiated in the period were led by the Council's dedicated Early Help Team (52%) with education providers and schools being the next largest (36%) contributor of episodes initiated in the period. The number of episodes started in the period (421) is higher than that reported in the April-June period of the previous year (364), with activity showing a 17% increase in early help episodes initiated compared to the previous year.
- **CYP-002** - Quarter 1 data for 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 will be reported cumulatively along with the Quarter 2 data in the Quarter 2 Performance report.
- **CYP-003** - At the end of Quarter 1 2023-24, a total of 1,667 children and young people were open to St Helens Children's Social Services, a rate of 451 per 10,000 under 18-year-olds. The number of children open to St Helens Children's Social Services has increased marginally from 1,638 on the 31st of March 2023 to 1,667 on the 30th of June 2023, an increase of 2% over the quarter 1 period. However, the rate is lower than the rate of 474.5 recorded in June 2022. The rate of Children In Need per 10,000 0-17 population reported for St Helens continues to above comparable regional and national averages.

- **CYP-004** - At the end of Quarter 1 2023-24, a total of 247 children and young people were the subject of a Child Protection (CP) Plan and supported by St Helens Children's Social Services, a rate of 66.9 children per 10,000 under 18-year-olds. The number of children the subject of a CP Plan has decreased from 280 children at 31st March 2023 to 247 on the 30th of June 2023, a decrease in the CP population of 12% over the period. The current rate remains the same as that at the end of June 2022. However, St Helens' rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan continues to higher than the most recent published (2021-22) comparable regional (49) and national (42) rates. The majority of children supported with a CP Plan are supported due to concerns related to Neglect (56%), Emotional abuse (29%) or Physical abuse (13%).
- **CYP-005** – Over the course of Quarter 1 2023-24, a total of 48 children became the subject of a Child Protection (CP) Plan, with 12 of the children (or 25%) becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time. The percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time. (25%) is marginally higher than the local target (24%) and the position reported at the end of the previous financial year (23%). The latest position is an improvement on the 27% of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time over the course of Quarter 1 2022-23, but marginally above the last published national average of 23.3%.
- **CYP-006** - At the end of Quarter 1 2023-24, a total of 470 children and young people were cared for by St Helens Council, equating to a rate of 127 children per 10,000 under 18-year-olds. The number of Children Looked After (CLA) reported for St Helens on the 30th of June 2023 is broadly the same as the 469 reported at the end of March 2023, and slightly higher than the 464 at the end of Quarter 1 2022-23. The latest CLA population rate reported for St Helens (127) continues to be higher than the most recently published (2021-22) comparable regional (97) and national (70) CLA population rates.
- **CYP-008A** - Over the course of Quarter 1 2023-24, a total of 40 children and young people have been discharged from care with 4 of the children discharged due to adoption, equating to 10% of total care discharges in the period. The percentage is broadly similar to the position reported over the course of 2022-23 (9%) and in line with comparable regional (10%) and national (10%) positions.
- **CYP-008B** - Over the course of Quarter 1 2023-24, a total of 40 children and young people have been discharged from care with 6 of the children discharged due to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), equating to 15% of total CLA discharges in the period. The percentage of CLA discharges via SGO in the period (15%) is lower that the position reported over the course of 2022-23 (21%) but in line with comparable regional (16%) and national (13%) positions.
- **CYP-009-010-011** - Performance against the 2 of the 3 key outcome indicators for care leavers, that being care leavers in suitable accommodation, and care leavers the local authority is still in touch with remains comparatively strong. Although, the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation and care leavers the local authority is still in touch are both marginally below target at the end of Quarter 1 2023-24. The indicator for care leavers in employment education and training with St Helens performance has marginally decreased over the course of Quarter 1 2023-24. compares favourably to regional, national and comparator authorities. In total, 78 of the 134 care leavers were engaged in some form of education, training, or employment (58%) and while performance is slightly behind the local target for the period (63%) it is above the most recently published national average of 55% in 2021-22 and above the regional average of 52% in 2021-22. It should be noted that this is a snapshot measure and due to the relatively small number of care leavers a small number of children can lead to noticeable fluctuations in percentages month on month
- **CYP-007** - In the 12-month period up to and including June 2023, a total of 36 children and young people experienced three or more placement moves in the previous 12-month period, equating to 7.7% of the total CLA population supported by St Helens' Children's Social Care. Current performance is marginally better than the full 2022-23 performance reported for St Helens (8.3%) and continues to be better that the most recent published national (10%) and regional average for 2021-22 (9%).

Action for Improvement

- **CYP-001** - Quarter 1 states the number of children receiving Early Help services has slightly improved. However, we recognise that there is much work to do to improve our Early Help offer to reduce the demand for specialist services. New governance and oversight arrangements via an Early Help Board are in progress to strengthen the Early Help partnership offer across St Helens. This work along with the Supporting Families Programme and the transformation to Family Hubs (with additional funding) will assist in earlier identification of needs and support within communities avoiding more intrusive statutory services.
- **CYP-003** - We have seen a slight reduction in the numbers of children defined as Children in Need (CIN) compared to June 2022. However, our CIN numbers are higher than our comparators. This reflects the high prevalence of neglect. We are continuing to strengthen our response to CIN, especially recognising and intervening in neglectful parenting. Monitoring systems are in place to ensure CIN work is being improved to prevent escalation to Child Protection plans and children becoming looked after. Neglect remains the primary focus of the CSP.
- **CYP-004 / 005** - We continue to have high numbers of children on Child Protection plans and performance at end of Quarter 1 continues to show us above both the statistical neighbours and England averages. 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. We will continue to dip sample repeat child protection episodes to both to monitor effective decision making and gain a deeper understanding of the presenting needs and how to support them at the earliest opportunity. A review of our duty service and subsequent feedback received during our ILACs Ofsted Inspection affirms good application of thresholds and effective decision making.
- 42 • **CYP-006** - Our CLA (Children Looked After) population continues to be high, and our numbers remain above our comparators. We have put in place robust monitoring to scrutinise decision making when children enter care. We have plans to further develop our Edge of Care offer over the next 12-months. We have seen an increase in UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children) this now forms 4% of our CLA population and is impacting on the number of Care Leavers. We have developed our tracking systems to ensure permanency is achieved and that exits from care are timely. Some protracted court cases have impacted on this figure during 2022-23 and have carried over into 2023-24. More timely court proceedings will see an impact on this figure as we progress through 2023/24. We are predicted to see an increase in the number of children exiting care to adoption and Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) within the next few months. Feedback from inspectors during the Ofsted ILACs Inspection was positive in relation to our performance management rigour via tracking systems and processes.
- **CYP-011** - Whilst there has been a slight dip in Quarter 1 on the number of care leavers who are in employment, education, and training (EET) we are confident that we have effective systems in place to support these young people and will continue to address this with enthusiasm and rigour. Inspectors were complimentary about our approach to EET, and we remain confident that the annual target is achievable for this indicator.

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

Current Performance

- The majority of indicators under this outcome relate to the attainment of children and young people and are only published annually.
- **CYP-012** - Performance for the completion of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) to timescale has shown further decline as predicted over the course of Quarter 1 2023-24 and now stands at 6.25%. This is due to the current backlog of overdue cases carried forward from the previous year. The overall volume of plans issued this quarter has increased significantly on last year's figures, and there has been a slight improvement in performance in June, which indicates that the deterioration expected in Q2 may not be as severe as anticipated due to the measures put in place.
- **E&S-005** - Performance against numbers of young people 16 to 17 years old not in employment, education, or training (NEET) and those whose status is not known at the end of June 2023 stands at 6.6%, an increase of 1.2% on the previous year (5.4%). St Helens has seen a significant increase in the number of 16-yr-old young people NEET at the end of the first quarter of 2023-24, 106 young people compared to 57 in the same period of the previous year. The number of 17-year-olds NEET was 132 compared to 99 in the same period of the previous year. The September Guarantee (an offer of education or training) for all yr. 11s is currently underway.
- **E&S-006** - At the end of June 2023, a total of 63 state funded schools (Nursery Schools, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Special Schools, and Pupils Referral Units) in St Helens are judged by Ofsted to be good or better for overall effectiveness, equating to 90% of all state funded schools in St Helens. There are 16 schools that are currently judged by Ofsted to be outstanding and a further 47 schools that are judged to be good. The position reported for St Helens at the end of June 2023 is marginally above both the comparable national (88%) and the regional NW (89%) average.

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Action for Improvement

- **CYP-012** - 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. Since November 2022, the SEND Assessment Service has successfully recruited to 9 vacant posts, substantially increasing the capacity of the team. Cases continue to be risk assessed and prioritised to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils needs are assessed. The challenges are regularly communicated to all partners, including parent carers.
- **E&S-005** - The increase in NEET and lack of provision is an issue across LCR, this has been highlighted to ESFA, however the response is that there is enough funding and provision to support the increase in NEET numbers. The LCR LAs over the summer will be producing a paper identifying by borough the specific areas of need and recommendations to address the increasing NEET challenges. This initially will be presented to the Combined Authority.

Analysis of the needs of NEET young people specifically in St Helens has been completed which has identified two main areas where there are gaps in provision, re-engagement provision and online learning curriculum. These findings have been shared with local FE and Training Providers which have resulted in a new re-engagement programme on offer for 16 yr. olds from September, this will be delivered by St Helens College. Discussions about on-line learning is ongoing with a local training provider.

- **E&S-006** - As described in the School Effectiveness Strategy, schools will be supported to attain at least 'Good' status when inspected by the Ofsted as the external regulator. The School Effectiveness team continues to analyse all data (GLD, Phonics, KS1, KS2, KS4, attendance, suspensions, and exclusions) and tailor support to all maintained schools accordingly. Where there are issues with an academy school's performance, this will be raised with the school's headteacher and relevant executive officer within the trust. Good and Outstanding schools will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own improvement as well as receiving a core of support from the Local Authority. The core offer for all schools includes access to headteacher briefing sessions, Learning Partnership, Governors' Forum, comprehensive CPD / training package for all schools, access to TESSA (Triage for education support and specialist advice), support / challenge linked to monitoring and moderation duties (completed and quality assured during Summer 23 and will be repeated in the new academic year) and support from statutory services such as Virtual School and SEND. Where schools are vulnerable for not maintaining / achieving at least a 'Good' outcome, a banded package of specialist advice and support is offered through the School Effectiveness Team. This can involve Achievement and Improvement Boards, bespoke school reviews and use of specialist consultants. Schools are sent a weekly bulletin from across all services within Education and Learning. This bulletin allows information from the LA, DfE, Ofsted and other key partners to be disseminated to schools, thus strengthening information sharing and aiding compliance.

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

Current Performance

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- Performance within the outcome of improving children's health and resilience continued to remain challenging in areas, but also shows areas of improvement.
- **PH-004** – Further data on the under-18 conception rate has yet to be published following the data reported within the Performance Outturn Report 2022-23. Therefore, the latest figure relates to Quarter 4 December 2021 where the rolling 12-month rate for St. Helens was 25.9 conceptions per 1,000 females aged 15-17. This was higher than the England and North West rates of 13.1 and 16.4 per 1,000 respectively. In Quarter 4 (Dec 2021) St. Helens had the 7th highest rate in England, which was a reduction from 4th highest in Quarter 2 and 5th highest in Quarter 3.
- **PH-005** – Historically, St Helens has had low rates of breastfeeding. Data for Quarter 1 2023-24 shows that 37.1% of infants being breastfed at 6-8 weeks in St. Helens. This is an improvement on the 2022-23 Quarter 4 figure of 32.6%, but lower than the England and North West figures of 49.5% and 42.9% respectively.
- **PH-008** - The most recently published data for the percentage of children aged 5 have had 2 doses of the MMR vaccination relates to Quarter 4 2022-23 which showed that 85.8% of children in St Helens had 2 doses of the vaccine. This is a decrease from the previous quarter where, 86.9% of children aged 5 had 2 doses of the MMR vaccination. St. Helens had a slightly higher percentage uptake compared to England and the North West averages of 85% and 85.4% in Quarter 4 2022-23.

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- **CYP-013** – Over the course of Quarter 1 2023-24, one young person in St Helens became a first-time entrant to the Youth Justice System, which equates to a rate of 6 per 100,000 10–17-year-olds and shows a significant drop on the same period in the previous year. In Quarter 1 2022-23 St Helens had 5 young people become a first-time entrant which equated to a rate of 30 per 100,000 16–17-year-olds.
- **CYP-014** – Levels of youth reoffending have historically been St Helens' Youth Justice Service's biggest challenge. The latest recorded reoffending figure for St Helens, published by the Youth Justice Board for a 12-month rolling cohort from June 2020 - July 2021 was 28.6%. This is a significant reduction on the previous year's data which showed reoffending levels of 44%. Published data is from Police PNC/ Ministry of Justice and is time-lagged by 2 years.
- **PH-006** – St Helens has continued to have a comparatively high percentage of expectant mothers smoking at the time of delivery. The most recently published quarterly data on smoking status at the time of delivery relates to Quarter 1 2023-24 where 12.2% of mothers in St. Helens were known to be smoking. Also published are the verified annual figures for 2022-23 which showed that 13.7% of mothers were smoking at the time of delivery in St Helens over the year. This figure is much higher than the 2022-23 annual figures for England and the North West which were 8.8% and 10.3% respectively.
- **PH-007** – Alcohol related hospital admissions among under-18s in St Helens have shown some improvement, however rates remain very high. The most recently published rolling three-year rate of alcohol specific hospital admissions among under 18s relates to Quarter 4 2022-23. The rate was 62.5 admissions per 100,000 under 18 and related to a total of 68 admissions over the three-year period. The most recent rate is a reduction from the previous quarter's data of 66.1 per 100,000 (pertaining to 74 admissions over the three-year period). Comparator data is only available for the 2019-21 where St. Helens' rate of 81.4 was significantly higher than the England and North West rates of 29.3 and 40.1 per 100,000 respectively.
- **PH-009** - The percentage of children in St. Helens who received their 2 - 2.5-year review by the time they were 2.5 during Quarter 1 2023-24 was 90.5%. St Helens' performance is better than target and compares favourably to the England and North West averages of 75.3% and 78.6% respectively.
- **PH-010** - The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2 - 2.5 years in St. Helens during Quarter 1 2023-24 was 85.1%, which is better than target and higher than the England and North West averages of 80% and 79.4% respectively.

Action for Improvement

- **PH-004** - The latest data shows an improvement from the previous quarter in relation to teenage conceptions; however, St Helens remains an outlier compared to regional and national averages. Children's Scrutiny Committee recommendations made for the Teenage Pregnancy spotlight Review have now been accepted by boards, and plans are in place to reconvene the local Teenage Pregnancy strategy group during autumn. Training will be offered to primary care staff to increase the number of staff able to provide long-acting contraception and new partner agencies continue to be trained up to offer support to young people, as part of the condom distribution scheme. Cheshire & Merseyside's Women's Health and Maternity (WHAM) leads have established a sub-regional Teenage Pregnancy forum to share support and expertise across the network whereby we presented our approach to date as an example of good practise.
- **PH-005**- Recruitment is in progress to increase capacity in the Specialist Infant Feeding Team with Family Hubs funding and improve breastfeeding rates. There's a focus on staff training and capacity building of partner agencies, as the team put plans in place to start their improvement journey

working towards achieving UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative standards. A campaign to recruit businesses to become Baby Friendly during World Breastfeeding Week (1st - 7th August) has been delivered, and there is focussed work underway to improve the breastfeeding education and support delivered for pregnant women during the antenatal period.

- **PH-006** - Maternity services have received NHS England funding to improve Smoking In Pregnancy, as part of the Tobacco Dependency programme in hospitals, which will be performance managed by the NHS. Public Health and the CYP Integrated Commissioning Team are having ongoing discussions with maternity services to explore what further antenatal support is needed to improve this outcome.
- **PH-007** - Local intelligence suggests that those young people who attend hospital for alcohol specific reasons are largely young people experiencing emotional distress and there are some links with self-harm. Pathways from A&E into the Young People's Drug and Alcohol Team have been strengthened in partnership with the acute hospital trust and referrals are now increasing, meaning more young people are getting the support they need. Thus, although the data indicates the improvements, we are making are having an impact, there is still more to be done. A multi-agency task group has been set up in August to look at developing a wider multi-agency response to those young people.
- **PH-008** - As part of the UK routine schedule children should have received two doses of MMR vaccine by the age of 5 years. We are trying to improve uptake given the national increase in measles cases. Engagement work is planned with local GP practices with the lowest reported MMR uptake rates to understand challenges and issues and funding has been assigned to support practices with possible interventions to make improvements to the MMR uptake. Children staying in initial accommodation in St Helens are also being offered MMR vaccination as per UK routine vaccination schedule as part of an NHS England commissioned pilot. Local communications are also being developed to raise awareness among parents of the need to ensure that their child is protected with MMR vaccination.
- **PH-009** - The aim as regards 2 - 2.5-year-old Health Child programme review coverage is to maintain current performance as the 0-19 service have overachieved on the local target, and are now performing better than other their counterparts, and above last published regional and national averages.
- **PH-010** The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2 - 2.5 years has shown a slight reduction on the previous quarter, however this was anticipated as the proportion of children assessed has increased during this quarter, this includes a better reach to families who are sometimes don't engage well with services. However, although the data indicates attainment is better than national and regional averages, caution is advisable as there is ongoing joint work with early years staff and 0-19 service (Family Hubs priority) to review and possibly replace the assessment tool with a more sensitive and effective (ELIM) tool to ensure children are identified at the earliest opportunity for development support required, such as speech, communication, and language.

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

Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee

Update on the Education, Health and Care Plan Process and its impact in St Helens

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October 2023

Tom Howard



SEND Performance - Regional Benchmarking:

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Blackburn with Darwen	91.6	93.9	95.8	94.83
Blackpool	65.2	88.1	73.6	83.78
Bolton	36.9	54.5	62.6	44.14
Bury	78.9	27.4	34.7	51.05
Cheshire East	51	42.7	66.6	40.11
Cheshire West and Chester	88.7	54.3	27.6	31.18
Cumbria	85.2	84.7	78.1	72.12
Halton	34.2	50.3	77	53.62
Knowsley	64.5	73.4	80.1	63.55
Lancashire	74.8	74.8	66	98.65
Liverpool	7.5	9.2	59.7	92.03
Manchester	66.7	51	72.6	57.49
Oldham	86.6	94.8	89.1	96.52
Rochdale	55	97.2	95.9	91.82
Salford	92.9	66.4	62.6	48.31
Sefton	23	66.9	61.1	27.43
St. Helens	50.5	100	96.2	28.9
Stockport	45.6	42	94.4	49.9
Tameside	49.3	82.4	36.6	39.21
Trafford	61.8	81.8	75.9	36.34
Warrington	18.6	86.4	57.2	48.18
Wigan	98.6	80.4	83.5	83.92
Wirral	32.5	52.4	18.7	36.18
North West Regional Average	60.1	62.5	66.5	62.74
England Average	60.4	58	59.9	49.1

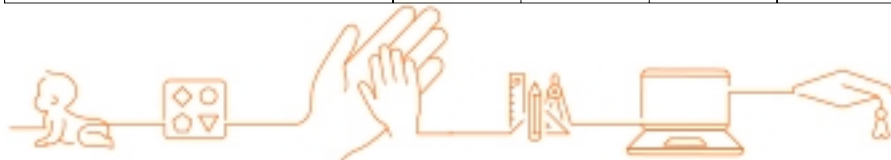
The table to the left holds the most recently available EHCP performance data for the North West region. (St Helens is highlighted in Yellow).

Of these 23 Local Authority Areas:

14 LAs, (60%) have a performance figure lower than the Regional average.

10 LAs, (43%) have a performance figure lower than the National Average.

St Helens was also the highest performing LA in both 2020 and 2021.



SEND Performance - 2022/23 Capacity:

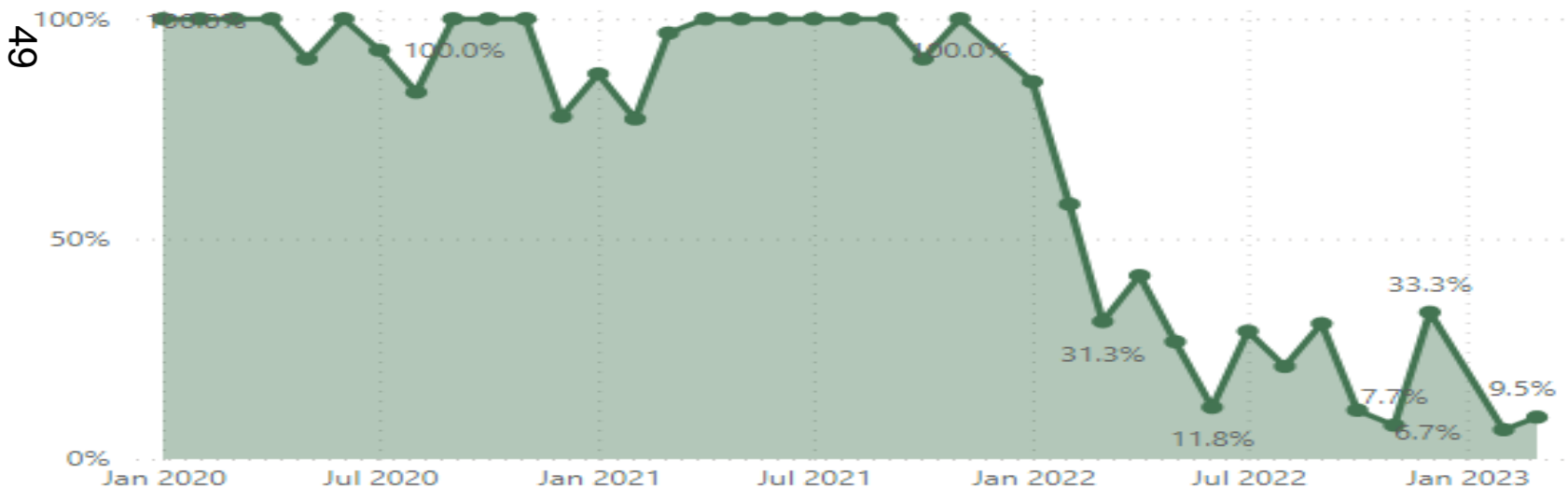
Timeliness of assessment reduced from 96% in 2021 to 28.9% in 2022.

While the national average also dropped by almost 10% over the same period, (from 59.9% to 50.7%) the St Helens average deteriorated by almost 60% and continued to decline into 2023.

This deterioration in performance was caused by a significant reduction in the capacity of the SEND Team due to a high number of resignations in 2022, which reduced the team from 9 FTE members of staff to 3.5. This also compounded a further capacity issue in the Educational Psychology Service.

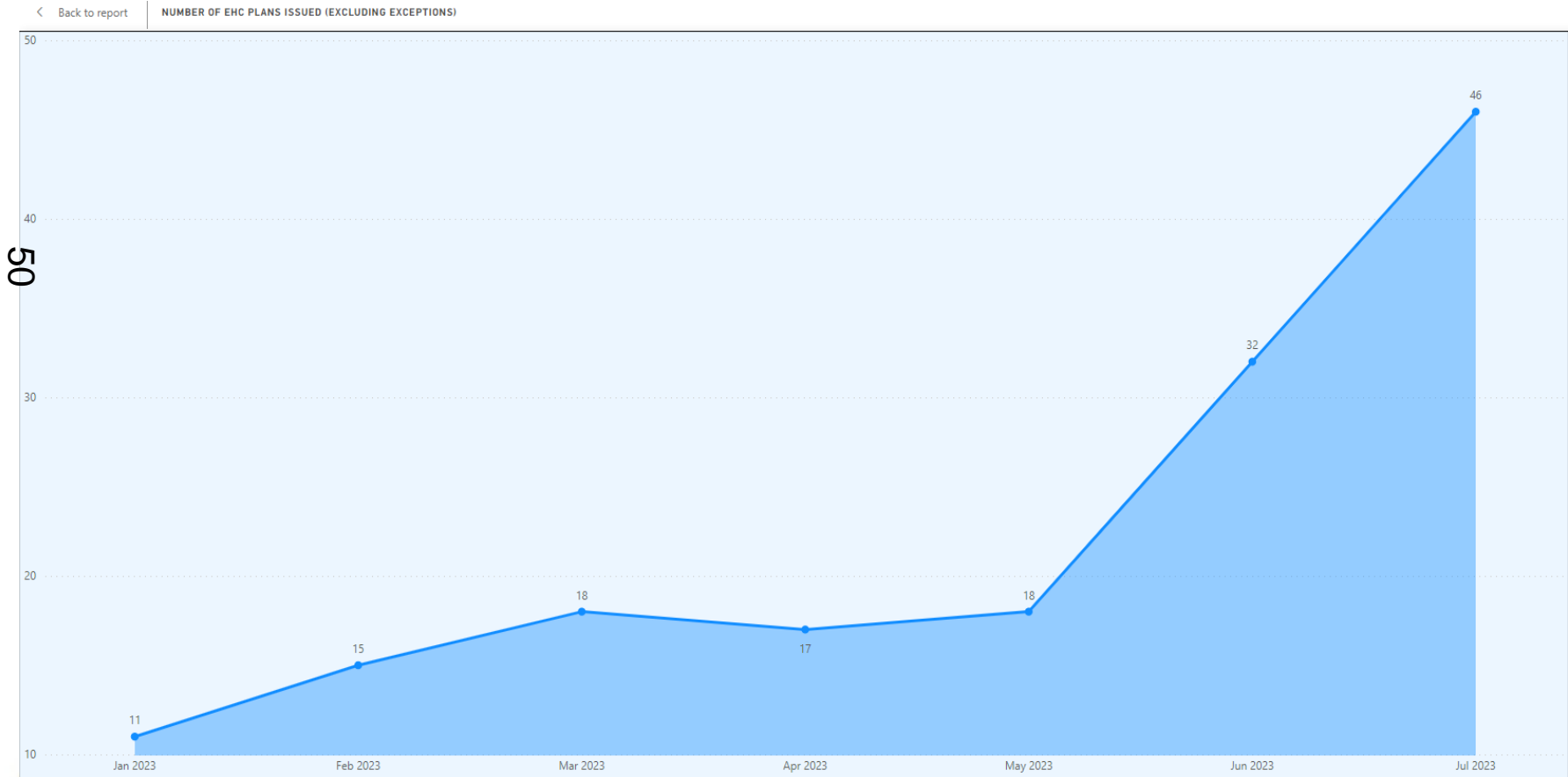
The impact of this throughout 2022/23 can be seen below:

Rate of EHC plans excluding exceptions issued within 20 weeks



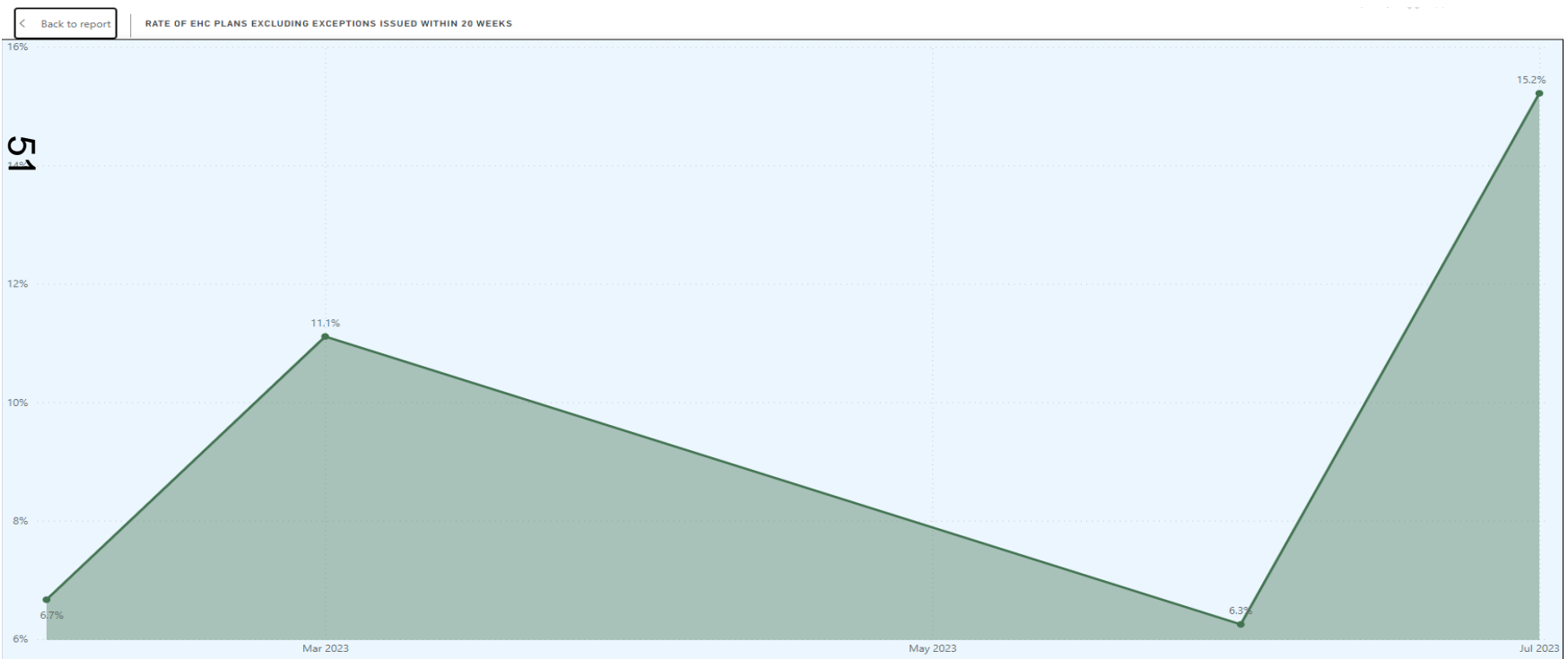
SEND Performance - Recovery:

Due to a successful programme of recruitment and the resultant capacity increase, the number of final EHCPs issued by the team is increasing steadily, as is the proportion of plans meeting the 20 week deadline. The SEND team have issued more EHCPs between Jan to Sept 2023 than in the whole of 2022, another indicator that performance generally is recovering.



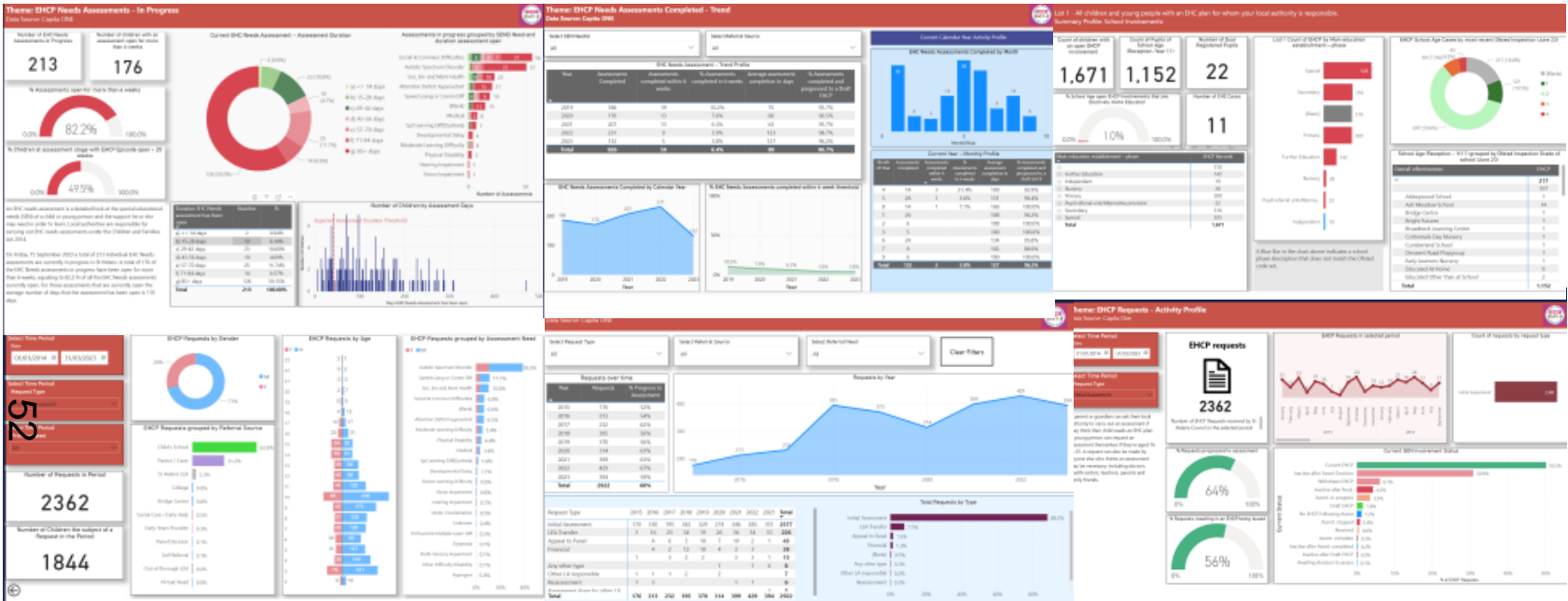
SEND Performance - Recovery:

The graph below illustrates the improvement in timeliness on a month-by-month basis for 2023. In July, just over 15% of all plans issued were completed within 20 weeks compared to just over 6% in January. If the recent improvements can be maintained, a return to the national average is achievable by the end of 2023. Please note that as this graph represents the proportion of plans meeting the 20 week deadline, it should be viewed alongside the previous graph which illustrates increases in volume, as the 'dips' illustrate where overdue plans are being cleared from the backlog. The impact of the recent cyber incident on recovery is currently being assessed.



SEND Performance - Monitoring:

SEND Data Dashboard example "Screengrabs" for illustrative purposes:




A SEND data dashboard has now been built which provides real time 'at a glance' data across a range of key SEND metrics.

This is will allow EHCP performance to be monitored, as well as providing key trend information and analysis to support any SEND local area inspection Key Lines of Enquiry.

The SEND data can be overlaid with the other Education and Learning Service Dashboards to support wider strategic planning and resource deployment.



 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	<h2>Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee</h2> <h3>16 October 2023</h3>
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Report Title	Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24
Cabinet Portfolio	Corporate Services
Cabinet Member	Councillor Martin Bond
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
Report of	Jan Bakewell Director of Legal & Governance janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Karl Allender Scrutiny Support Officer karlallender@sthelens.gov.uk

Borough Priorities	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	X

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the process followed by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and its thematic committees in determining their work programmes for municipal year 2023/24. Given resource constraints, new approaches have been introduced to further strengthen the process. The outcome of each committee's work programme conclusions are attached for confirmation.

2. Recommendation for Decision

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (i) **Endorse the outcomes of the work programming process undertaken by members and officers for the 2023/24 municipal year based on the prioritisation process and topic selection criteria set out in this report.**

3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the process followed in drawing up work programmes for 2023/24.

4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 Overview and scrutiny activities play a key role in a successful democratic process, holding decision makers to account for future (overview) and past (scrutiny) decisions and in turn, contributing to the delivery of positive outcomes for residents and the Council's workforce and resources.
- 4.2 A comprehensive work programme is fundamental to the effectiveness of the Commission and its thematic scrutiny committees. 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.
- 4.3 Each committee agreed an allocation of up to two scrutiny reviews for the year.

Delivering an enhanced scrutiny programme for 2023/24

- 4.4 The Children and Young People scrutiny committee met on 9 June 2023 to agree a framework for conducting overview and scrutiny in the coming year. The committees and Link Officers then met to agree their approaches. On 13 June, Commission then drew together the outcomes and confirmed the overall approach which has been compiled into the work programmes attached to the report.
- 4.5 Three new approaches to working were agreed as follows:
- 1) a 'golden thread' for the year was agreed. In short, this is described as the 'Cost of Living Crisis'. This summarises the complex interplay of economic and social impacts on residents and the Council of the sudden rise in inflation and interest rates, food and input shortages, and changing demands. As part of their usual scrutinising work, members will be able to explore:

- How is the 'Cost of Living Crisis affecting residents and our services?
 - How have the Council and its partners adjusted?
 - What needs to change to cope with the Shock?
- 2) the Commission and thematic committees agreed to two linked reviews whereby all committees would examine a topic from their own perspectives and the product would be a multi-faceted report drawn together to provide a more holistic scrutiny. The two topics agreed are SEND and Alcohol.
- 3) improve the timeliness of Performance Indicator consideration. Quarterly Performance Report briefings with members could be taken in the same cycle, following the Cabinet's consideration.

The work programmes

- 4.6 Commission and Scrutiny Committees are required to review and agree their work programme at every 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.
- 4.7 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)?
- 4.8 The Work Programme Prioritisation Aid attached to this report 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 Having agreed the initial work programme, the Committee is in position to discuss its next steps on how to deliver it.

7. **Legal Implications**

7.1 N/A

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 N/A

9. **Social Value**

9.1 N/A

10. **Net Zero 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

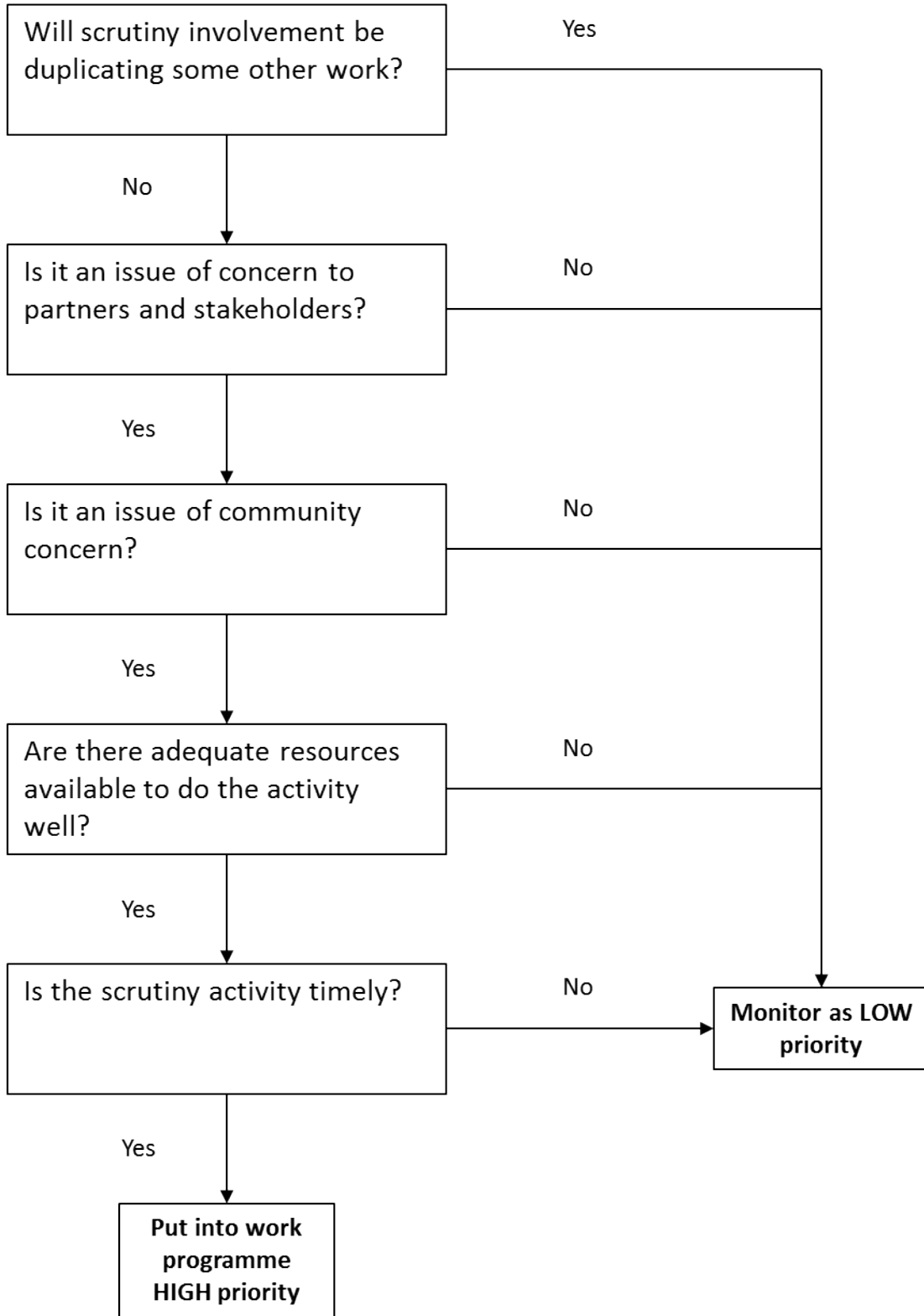
20. **Background Documents**

20.1 None

21. **Appendices**

1. Children and Young People Services Work Programme 2023/24

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Prioritisation Aid



Appendix 1

Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme July 2023 -March 2024

Corporate Priority	Next Meetings		
Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Date: 16 October 2023 Time: 10:00am Venue: Room 10, Town Hall	Date: 08 January 2024 Time: 10:00am Venue: Room 10, Town Hall	Date: 25 March 2024 Time: 10:00am Venue: Room 10, Town Hall

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Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
Director’s Report/ Children’s Services Improvement Plan	Ofsted ILAC Inspection took place 23 rd Sept - 4 th 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 Ofsted monitoring visits.	To monitor the Council’s progress in improving Children’s Services including Ofsted monitoring visit feedback.	Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton	Director Children’s Services Hilary Brooks	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to committee Standing Committee Agenda Item	6 Sept 2023 (Completed) 16 October 2023 8 January 2024 25 March 2024

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
Quarterly Performance Reports	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 Members to account.	<p>Children and Young People Cllr Charlton</p> <p>Economy, Business and Skills Cllr Groucutt</p> <p>Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Anthony Burns</p>	<p>Director Children's Services Hilary Brooks</p> <p>Director Public Health Ruth du Plessis</p> <p>Public Health Consultant Shirley Goodhew</p>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	<p>Report to committee</p> <p>Standing Committee Agenda Item</p>	<p>6 Sept 2023 (Completed)</p> <p>16 October 2023</p> <p>8 January 2024</p> <p>25 March 2024</p>
Update on Progress towards the SEND inspection	Provision of effective services for children and young people with SEND is critical in ensuring that those children and young people are included, can thrive, have high aspirations and can progress. This means that need is identified accurately and early and the right interventions are put in place early so that children and young	The purpose of the report is to ensure that Scrutiny members are clear about the strengths, the areas for development and associated actions, and impact of services for children and young people with SEND in St Helens; they understand the new inspection	Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton	<p>Assistant Director, Education and Learning, Jo Davies</p> <p>Head of SEND and Inclusion Tom Howard</p>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to Committee	6 Sept 2023 (Completed)

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	people have they have the best possible chance to succeed in their learning; their well-being is supported; they have the best possible chances in life; and that their families are confident in the support provided.	framework; and are updated on preparation for inspection.					
Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children Spotlight Review	This Spotlight Review was held on 28/4/23, attended by members of the committee, officers and partners, to scrutinise work to reduce risk and harm to children arising from alcohol and substance use in pregnancy.	To present the draft report and findings to the CYPS Scrutiny Committee to seek approval to submit to Cabinet.	Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Anthony Burns	Director Public Health Ruth Du Plessis Public Health Consultant Michelle Loughlin	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to Committee	6 September 2023 (Completed)
Improving School Attendance Rates in St Helens Spotlight Review –	This Spotlight Review was held on 3/11/23, attended by members, officers and staff from local schools, to scrutinise action to improve the borough's school attendance	To present Cabinet's response to the report and recommendations.	Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton	Assistant Director, Education and Learning, Jo Davies	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to Committee.	6 September 2023 (Completed)

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
Cabinet Response	rates, which for the 21/22 Autumn and Spring Terms were lower than national and regional averages.						
Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Rates in St Helens' Spotlight Review	This Spotlight Review was held on 5/12/22 and 1/26/23, attended by members of the committee, officers and partners, to scrutinise work to reduce teenage pregnancy rates in St Helens.	To present Cabinet's response to the report and recommendations.	Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Anthony Burns	Director Public Health Ruth Du Plessis Public Health Consultant Shirley Goodhew	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to Committee.	6 September 2023 (Completed)
Update on the Education, Health and Care Plan Process and Its Impact in St Helens.	Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are legally binding documents intended to ensure that the needs of children, young people and adults up to 25, who require support beyond that which an educational setting can provide at SEN level, are clearly identified in a timely	To understand and scrutinise the EHCP process, its strengths, the areas for development, the actions to address these areas, and impact on children and young people in St Helens.	Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton	Assistant Director, Education and Learning Joanne Davies Head of SEND and Inclusion Tom Howard	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Presentation to Committee	16 October 2023

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	manner; with input from all partners including the child or young person and their family; that plans are in place to ensure needs are met; and reviews take place to ensure all appropriate action is taken.						
Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children Spotlight Review – Cabinet Response	This Spotlight Review was held to scrutinise work to reduce risk and harm to children from alcohol and substance use in pregnancy.	To present the Cabinet’s response to this Spotlight Review report and recommendations	Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Anthony Burns	Director Public Health Ruth Du Plessis Public Health Consultant Michelle Loughlin	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to Committee.	8 January 2024
Spotlight Review to scrutinise the TESSA process and contribution to its evaluation	TESSA was introduced to provide schools with a streamlined system to use to request support for children and young people with SEND.	To consider the impact of the TESSA process, contribute to its evaluation and make appropriate recommendations	Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton	Assistant Director, Education and Learning Joanne Davies	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Spotlight Review	February TBC

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
<p>Reducing Harm Caused By Under-age Alcohol Consumption in St Helens</p>	<p>The rate of under 18 hospital admissions for alcohol specific reasons in St Helens is significantly higher than regional and national averages and will impact negatively on the health, well-being and life chances of too many of our children and young people. Underage drinking prevents children from having the best start in life because it can impact on the development of the body's organs and functions and is associated with wider health risks.</p> <p>Beginning to drink in early teenage years is associated with violent behaviour, mental health issues, suicidal thoughts and attempts, employment problems and risky</p>	<p>The purpose of this report is to give an understanding of the extent of underage drinking in St Helens; its impact on young people; the collective action, together with its effectiveness, to address the issue; and to make appropriate recommendations.</p>	<p>Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage</p> <p>Cllr Anthony Burns</p>	<p>Director Public Health Ruth Du Plessis</p> <p>Public Health Consultant Michelle Loughlin</p>	<p>Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life</p>	<p>Presentation to Committee</p>	<p>8 January 2023</p>

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	behaviour in later life such as drink driving and other forms of criminal behaviour.						
Listening to the Voices of Children and Young People in St Helens	Listening to children and young people and ensuring their views are valued and acted upon in terms of shaping services for them, and the decisions and actions that affect their lives, is central to creating meaningful engagement and trust, enabling positive change, keeping them safe and providing the best possible services for them.	The purpose of this report is to understand and enable scrutiny of the feedback from and actions arising from the Bright Spots Survey of children we look after and care leavers in St Helens, carried out between December 2022 and February 2023. This will allow Members to assess the degree to which services listen to children and young people and whether they use those views effectively to shape services, in decisions and actions about children and young	Children and Young People / Economy, Business and Skills / Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Charlton Cllr Groucutt Cllr Burns	Director of Children's Services Hilary Brooks	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to committee	8 January 2024

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
		people's lives and to keep them safe.					
A review of the strategy and collective action to address child neglect in St Helens.	Child neglect is a form of abuse which can impact on a child's physical and mental health and can lead to long term adverse consequences. It arises from many complex issues including parental mental health, drug and alcohol abuse and poverty.	The purpose of this Spotlight Review will be to scrutinise the strategy and collective action to reduce child neglect in St Helens.	Children and Young People Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Nova Charlton Cllr Anthony Burns	Director of Children's Services Hilary Brooks SCP Business Manager Andrew Patty	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Spotlight Review	February TBC
Review of the provision of mental health services for young people in St Helens.	Research, such as the DfE State of the Nation Report (published 2023) and recent anecdotal reports to Council from local Head Teachers, indicate that significant numbers of children and young people continue to experience challenges with their mental	In the light of continuing mental health challenges experienced by children and young people, it is essential that the accessibility and effectiveness of mental health services for them, including those with SEND, are scrutinised to	Children and Young People and Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Charlton Cllr Groucutt Cllr Burns	Head of Children's Health and Maternity Commissioning Matt Davies Public Health Consultant Shirley Goodhew	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	Report to committee	25 March 2024

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	<p>health. Half of all life-time mental health illnesses start in teenage years although treatment is often received only many years later. Mental health is also an equalities issue with the poorest fifth of the population being twice as likely to develop mental health problems in adulthood.</p>	<p>understand the support available, its strengths and the challenges within the provision.</p>					
<p>Reviewing progress of action plans arising from the previous municipal year's Spotlight Review recommendations.</p>	<p>To date, Cabinet has accepted the recommendations of two of the following three spotlight reviews carried out in the municipal year 2022 to 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Attendance Rates in St Helens • Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Rates in St Helens 	<p>The purpose of the review is to enable scrutiny to understand how services have improved following critical friend recommendations arising from the spotlight reviews carried out in 2022 – 2023.</p>	<p>Children and Young People / Economy, Business and Skills / Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Charlton Cllr Groucutt Cllr Burns</p>	<p>Jo Davies Shirley Goodhew</p>	<p>Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life</p>	<p>Report to committee</p>	<p>25 March 2024</p>

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing risk of harm to children arising from alcohol and substance use in pregnancy. 						