



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 8 January 2024

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)

em

Title

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1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023

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3. Declarations of Interests from Members

4. Declarations of Party Whip

5. Director's Report on Progress in Children's Services

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Hillary Brooks, Director of Children Services has been invited to attend

6. Quarter 2 Performance Report 2023/24

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Hillary Brooks, Director of Children Services and Shirley Goodhew, Consultant in Public Health have been invited to attend

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of this Committee held on
16 October 2023

(Present) **Councillor T Long (Chair)**
Councillors CD Banks, Greaves, Maguire, Osundeko, Sims, Sweeney
and van der Burg

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

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

12 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

13 **MINUTES**

* **Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2023, be approved and signed.**

14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest from Members were made.

15 **DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP**

No Declarations of party whip were made.

16 **DIRECTORS REPORT ON PROGRESS IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

A report was presented by the Assistant Director Children's Social Care, which provided an overview and update of progress in Children's Services, including the outcome and recommendations of the ILAC inspection July 2023 and plans to take the service to Outstanding. The report also highlighted progress and developments towards the SEND inspection.

Members acknowledged that it had been a busy period, with the ILAC inspection in July 2023 grading Children's Services as Good overall, with Outstanding in Care Leavers, preparation for the SEND inspection and future planning for children services to sustain continues improvements.

Ofsted ILAC findings and report stated, 'Since judgement of inadequate for overall effectiveness of the last inspection in 2019, St Helens children's services had 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 had been a determination to improve at pace, and a renewed focus and impetus which had led to significant improvements in all areas. Children and young people

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in St Helens now benefitted from much better help, support, and care. Concerns were identified and addressed more swiftly, and children's situations improve'.

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'.

Children's needs were identified and responded to swiftly at the lowest possible level.

Most problems were prevented from escalating. When concerns did escalate, immediate action was taken to safeguard children. Children who were looked after by St Helens made good progress and young people who were leaving care received outstanding support.

However, some children in St Helens had experienced neglect for too long, and service improvements were not leading to better experiences for all children. Leaders had credible and realistic plans to further improve service effectiveness.

The key recommendations from ILAC were:

- 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; and
- safeguarding of disabled children.

The Director's update also included a summary of developments in respect of:

- future planning;
- Children's Update;
- workforce;
- sufficiency programme;
- school attendance; and
- SEND;

In conclusion, it was reported that Children's 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 internal residential homes, and it was now entering the tendering stage, inviting external organisations to run its children's homes on its behalf.

The decline in numbers around Child Protection plans and pre proceedings was welcome in respect of statutory reporting and highlighted the work undertaken to prevent children entering care.

This quarter had also seen a focus on Early Help, ensuring those in greatest need were able to readily access services. This work would be ongoing over the next few months as the Children's Services looked at how the service would interlink with the Family Hubs and support families more, thus preventing children entering statutory services.

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The Assistant Director, Children's Social Care was thanked for the thorough and comprehensive report.

Comments and questions were raised as follows:

- in response to a question about the plans/strategies in place to improve the experiences and progress of vulnerable children/children in care who needed support and protection, it was confirmed that an Early Help Strategy and Early Help Board had been established, with joint working practice involving the Early Help Service and family hub. Thresholds continued to be looked at and it was explained how they would be monitored to ensure the correct interventions took place at the right times;
- it was explained that ongoing work was in place to strengthen the 'Edge of Care' offer together with other strategies to protect vulnerable groups, with re-assurance being provided upon the monitoring arrangements for all of the improvement work via monthly performance meetings and quality assurance performance frameworks and a number of specific forums, which all linked to a Children and Social Care plan which was subject to scrutiny and challenge by the newly established 'Getting to Outstanding' Board;
- in response to a question raised about how lessons were learned from children who had been through the care system and how to ensure those children did not return to that system, it was explained that the multi-agency Children's Safeguarding Partnership made Neglect the overarching priority for the current financial year and lessons had been learned from case reviews that the Partnership had undertaken, with staff training opportunities being made available arising from those reviews, via the use of nationally recognised tools;
- it was also confirmed that targeted work also needed to be undertaken to link in with the overarching Neglect strategy;
- clarification would be provided to the Committee about whether DFE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' had become statutory legislation;
- an update was provided upon the Sufficiency Programme, outlining the impact of establishing local placements via the local growth of children's homes, the anticipated timescales involved, along with how solo placements would be delivered;
- re-assurance was provided that potential properties to be procured as part of the sufficiency strategy were fully checked for suitability from a children's social care and safety perspective in terms of the locations;
- the timeline for the completion of family hubs was confirmed;
- in response to a question raised about the ILAC inspection judgements around home schooling and impact on attendance, it was confirmed that Ofsted judgements in this area were not shared. However, within the Council there was a reporting process to monitor home schooling, the impact on attendance and to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people that were home educated; and
- it was confirmed that improving school attendance was one of the three key 'obsessions' as part of the new Children's and Young People's Plan. Members requested that the Assistant Director of Education & Learning be tasked with providing an update/briefing note on Pupil Attendance following the recent spotlight review recommendations, to include information on how severe pupil absence was being addressed.

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* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the progress achieved to date be noted; and**
- (2) an update be provided on pupil attendance following the recent spotlight review recommendations, to include information on how severe pupil absence was being addressed.**

Councillor CD Banks left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

17 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24

A report was submitted which provided an analysis of progress and performance over the period from 1 April to 30 June 2023-24 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 26 April 2023. This framework provided the basis for quarterly performance reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny over the course of 2023-24.

The Quarter 1 Performance Report 2023-24 was appended and reflected 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 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 effective decision making.

There were 84 performance indicators, where Quarter 1 performance against target was available to be reported. Of these:

- 81% of target indicators had either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compared to 73% of indicators at Quarter 1 2022-23;
- 19% of indicator targets were not met. This compared to 27% of indicators at Quarter 1 2022-23;
- the trend measure indicated over the course of the last 12 months 51% of indicators showed improvement, 13% of indicators maintained the same performance and 37% showed a downward trajectory (percentages rounded to the 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; and
- 21% of all indicators where a comparison was possible were in the top quartile, compared to 35% at Quarter 1 2021/22, whilst 24% were in the bottom quartile, compared to 32% at Quarter 1 2022/23. 21% and 33% of indicators were in the second and third quartiles respectively, compared to 14% and 19% in Quarter 1 2022-23.

In summary, at Quarter 1 2023-24 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 target or an outlier in terms of St Helens performance relative to the England average of its statistical neighbours.

Areas of challenge included:

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Priority 1

- the children's social care outcome: This included 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 was statistically significantly higher than last published England averages and that of St Helens nearest neighbours. The percentage of Children Looked After ceased due to Special Guardianship Order (SGO) was also below target at Quarter 1 and third quartile compared to St Helens' statistical neighbours;
- the children's aspiration and attainment outcome: This included the timeliness of EHCP completions and the percentage of young people Not In Education, Employment of Training (NEET); and
- the children's health and resilience outcome: This included the number of teenage conceptions for which St Helens had the seventh highest rate in England. Under- 18 hospital admissions for alcohol, breastfeeding rates and MMR vaccination take up for five-year-olds remained statistically worse than last published England averages and the performance of St Helens' nearest statistical neighbours.

Comments and main points were raised in relation to Priority 1 performance indicators as follows:

- information was provided upon how the cost-of-living crisis was impacting on families in terms of Public Health and Children's Social Care services, mitigations, winter planning measures and demand on services/support being offered;
- in relation to performance indicator PH-008 'percentage of children ages 5 with MMR vaccination (two doses), it was clarified that although performance had dipped in Quarter 4 compared to local targets, St Helens still performed slightly higher when compared to regional and national data;
- an update was provided upon the current developments within the Teenage Action Zone (TAZ) outreach service;
- the step-down process from Child Protection stage was clarified; and
- the activity and ongoing work to prevent increased numbers of children on child protection plans was outlined.

* **Resolved that the performance position at Quarter 1 2023-24 be noted.**

18 UPDATE ON THE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP) PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT IN ST HELENS

A presentation was delivered to provide Members with contextual/performance information and the current trajectory of the processes for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's).

The presentation covered:

- regional benchmarking (St Helens performance outcomes compared with the

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- North West Regional average and England average);
- 2022/23 capacity;
- recovery; and
- monitoring

It was reported that regional benchmarking tabulated information (2019-2022), as detailed in the presentation, held the most recently available EHCP data for the North-West region.

Of the 23 Local Authority Areas shown in the data:

- 14 Local Authorities, (60%) had a performance figure lower than the regional average;
- 10 Local Authorities, (43%) had a performance figure lower than the national average; and
- St Helens was also the highest performing Local Authority in both 2020 and 2021.

Members were advised of background contextual information around 2022/23 capacity issues affecting EHCP timeliness of assessments, and noted the information provided showing the impact throughout 2023/23 using graphical data to indicate the rate of EHCP's, excluding exceptions, issued within 20 weeks.

In terms of performance recovery, it was reported that due to a successful programme of recruitment and the resultant capacity increase, the number of final EHCP's issued by the team was increasing steadily, as was the proportion of plans meeting the 20-week deadline. The SEND team had issued more EHCP's between January to September 2023 than in the whole of 2022, another indicator that performance generally was recovering.

Graphical data was provided to illustrate the improvement in EHCP timeliness on a month-by-month basis for 2023, it being reported that in July 2023 just over 15% of all plans issued were completed within 20 weeks compared to just over 6% in January 2023. It was added that if the recent improvements could be maintained, a return to the national average was achievable by the end of 2023.

Regarding the monitoring of performance, it was advised that a SEND data dashboard had now been built which provided real time 'at a glance' data across a range of key SEND metrics, which would 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 could be overlaid with other Education and Learning Service Dashboards to support wider strategic planning and resource deployment.

Members thanked the officer for the report and welcomed the opportunity to understand the contextual information provided around EHCP delays.

Comments were raised on the following:

- concerns were raised about ineffective communication issues with families in the past around EHCP progress, with an explanation of how improvements to the assessment process would be made with better communications, increased staffing capacities, staff accessibilities and the introduction of a general SEND helpline;
- in response to a question around the avoidance of losing high quality staff, it was reported that a number of recruitment and retention strategies had been

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implemented, including staff development opportunities and improved ways of working;

- in response to a question which asked about whether ongoing work included an understanding of lived experiences, it was explained that peer and wider review activity had been undertaken with external partners along with multi-agency audits to capture key themes and areas for learning; and
- a statement on the current position in St Helens around the number of educational psychologists was provided, along with ongoing recruitment work to bolster staffing numbers within the team.

* **Resolved that the presentation be noted.**

19 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

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.

Members noted the items for consideration at the next meeting, and the Scrutiny Support Officer was tasked with ensuring that Aspirations and Employment Opportunities for Children and Young People be added to the item entitled 'Listening to the Voices of Children and Young People in St Helens'.


The Scrutiny Support Officer was also tasked to provide a calendar invitation for the Child Neglect Spotlight Review to take place on Monday, 12 February 2024.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the outcomes of the work programme process undertaken by members and officers for the 2023/23 municipal year based on the prioritisation process and topic selection criteria, as set out in the report, be endorsed;**
- (2) **the Scrutiny Support Officer to ensure that Aspirations and Employment Opportunities for Children and Young People be added to the item entitled 'Listening to the Voices of Children and Young People in St Helens' to be considered at the next meeting; and**
- (3) **the Scrutiny Support Officer to provide a calendar invite to members for the Child Neglect Spotlight Review to take place on 12 February 2024.**

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	<h2>Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee</h2> <h3>8 January 2024</h3>
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Report Title	Directors Report on Progress in Children's 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

5

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of progress in children's services, since my last report 16th October 2023.

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 and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee.

4. Background

- 4.1. Work continues this period with improvements across the service following Ofsted ILAC inspection July 2023, with a focus around the key main areas, sufficiency, demand strategy, family support and in Education, attendance, TESSA and SEND.
- 4.2. Placements and sufficiency have been a key issue, with the cost of external placements continuing to increase, placing further pressure and overspend on the budget. The landscape of residential care for children and young people has changed over recent years with the majority of homes being run by private companies. The market faces significant challenges relating to poor quality, high costs, and poor outcomes. In addition, the high reliance on the private sector for provision is driving up the costs of care significantly without commensurate rises in the quality of care.
- 4.3. This is reflected in local authorities across the LCR region, and indeed across the country, whereby expenditure on children's social care has grown by 41% compared to a decade earlier, even though the children's population has grown by less than 10% over the same period.
- 4.4. The average weekly cost is £5,000 and some complex placements in St Helens reaching nearly £14,000 a week; the media recently focused on a placement within LCR that exceeded £40,000 a week due to the complex needs of the young person and in Cambridge a placement of £85,000 a week.

5. Children's Data Update

- 5.1. We are continuing to see high levels of demand, with the rate of CIN on the 31st October 2023 being 477 children per 10,000 under 18-year-olds, which continues to be higher than the Northwest average (387), but comparative to our statistical neighbours (439). Currently there are 485 looked after children in St Helens, a rate of 132 per 10,000 children, this figure has shown an increase since March 2023.
- 5.2. Child protection plans have decreased from 280 children in March 23 to 219 in October 2023, however, the number of children in care has increased from 469 children in care in March 2023 to 485 children in care in October 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 October 2023. The number of children subject to pre proceedings has increased from 35 in March 2023 to 47 at the end of October 2023. However, we have issued on several which has led to an increase in the overall number of proceedings.
- 5.3. The number of children in a residential placement has marginally increased since March 2023 with 60 children in a residential placement at the end of October 2023, these figures continue to be monitored weekly.

- 5.4. The number of Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) cared for by St Helens has increased from 12 children on 31st March 2023 to 25 children on the 31st October 2023.

6. Fostering

- 6.1. Work is underway in the Fostering service with recruitment of carers now standing at 13 assessments under way, in addition we have 2 specialist carers and by the end of the year it is hoped we will have managed to approve 15 mainstream carers, and 2 specialist carers a huge increase on last year, when only one carer was approved.
- 6.2. St Helens Council has agreed to be part of Foster 4, a collaborative service set up by Warrington, Cheshire West, Cheshire East and Halton. This collaboration has been successful in the implementation of the Mockingbird model, which has been used to model a successful DfE bid for Fostering Recruitment and Retention across the Cheshire and Merseyside region. This will expand the Mockingbird model across another four LAs in the LCR to establish and deliver a successful fostering recruitment partnership to improve foster carer training, recruitment and ultimately retention improving placements and outcome for children and young people.
- 6.3. The region has recently collaborated on, and submitted, a DfE Regional Care Co-operatives Pathfinder bid – where the regional bid is through to stage 2 of the process. The vision for this proposal is to significantly increase options for care locally.

7. Workforce

- 7.1. Recruitment continues to be a challenge. A number of social work vacancies were planned to be covered by International Social Workers (ISW). However, the significant delay with Social Work England, the regulatory professional body, was not anticipated. On a positive note, the 7th ISW commenced on 13th November. Unfortunately, delay continues for a further 6 despite this being raised with Social Work England, the regulatory body.
- 7.2. The current permanent vacancy rate is 11%. Whilst this figure has not reduced in accordance with our expectations it does reflect that some of our social workers have secured promotional roles which has created additional vacancies.
- 7.3. Our current social worker agency rate is 23% that figure includes cover for vacant posts, maternity leave and posts under offer covered by these staff. We will release a further 9 posts once the new social workers are in post. This figure (23%) compares favourably within the NW region, where there has been a 62% increase in the agency worker rate since 2013, and a national increase of 29%. Agency usage impacts upon the financial resources available to support families, children and young people, by creating significant budget overspends in each of the councils across the Liverpool City Region. In St Helens, the projected budget pressure in respect of children's social care staffing costs is currently £2.2m.

8. Quality of Practice

- 8.1. During Quarter 2 we have continued with our quality assurance programme. Overall, we continue to improve with notable improvement with plans addressing needs and risks and evidence of reflection in supervision.
- 8.2. Additional auditing work has taken place on the quality of PLO, GP contribution to Child Protection Conferences, CIN plans and repeat CIN episodes. The areas to further strengthen include in plans; being more specific and timeframes communication with parents should be timely and in a manner that enables their understanding and assessments could be more analytical and impactful.

9. Ofsted and Outstanding Board and Plan

- 9.1. Following our inspection and Good rating we have developed an Outstanding board. This will be chaired by the Chief Executive. The board will meet quarterly and cover both Children Social Care and Education.

10. Sufficiency project

- 10.1. The Council has secured £1.4 million over 2023/24 and 2024/25 from the Staying Close fund, in part to support staffing and running costs over those two years. The bid was largely centred around the existing Council commitment to develop the Millersdale scheme. Quarterly performance reports to demonstrate progress will be submitted to the Department for Education (the funding body).
- 10.2. Torus has estimated the refurbishment cost at £430,000 (May 2023) this cost has already been agreed by SAGE, and an annual rental, payable by the Council of £27,500. The rental cost will be funded from the Staying Close grant for the grant funding period and from Year 3 onwards, the annual cost of the lease will be met from efficiencies within the cost of leaving care provision and the avoidance of commissioning out of borough places for up to six care leavers.
- 10.3. The average cost of a leaving care placement is currently £77k, avoiding six out of Borough placements could realise a saving of £462,000 per year.
- 10.4. The council has now signed and agreed to proceed with Millersdale. Plans are now progressing at pace to secure staff and wider support staff as per the Staying Close requirements.
- 10.5. The Grove, our internal children's home has recently been subject to the procurement process to explore whether any external providers wished to run the home. There was little suitable interest due to the original cost analysis being low, so the home has been placed on the chest again at a higher price. We will monitor interest and if this is not looking viable our contingency plan is to take necessary actions at pace to run the homes ourselves.
- 10.6. Fisher German has been commissioned to look at purchasing additional properties, this is in line with the Cabinet paper on the funding of our own homes. Further updates will follow in due course to advise on progress.

11. Attendance

- 11.1. In keeping with the DFE guidance: Working together to improve school attendance, teams across the Education and Learning services have continued to work collaboratively with schools to ensure attendance remains a priority area.
- 11.2. Extensive training has been delivered to teams across children's services to highlight that attendance is everyone's responsibility and to ensure that a collective effort is made to improve overall attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism.
- 11.3. A spotlight review has been conducted which afforded the opportunity to share good practice and identify solutions for areas of concern. Where appropriate, some schools have received intensive support to address attendance issues, e.g., frequent meetings to discuss strategies and analyse data trends.
- 11.4. Achievement and Improvement meetings have focused on school attendance and the analysis of data relating to vulnerable groups such as pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils with identified SEND and children with a social worker. Locality cluster meetings are operational as are various interventions and projects aimed at improving overall attendance such as the attendance quality mark for all secondary schools.

- 11.5. Innovative practice, involving the use of social prescribing and use of outreach workers, is beginning to show impact and plans to build on this are already in motion, e.g. use of external support through Maximum Edge. Feedback from headteachers illustrates the need for a current arrangement to be reviewed: reducing the period of absence before fixed penalty notice from 10 to 5 - this is now under review.

12. Schools

- 12.1. Since the start of the new academic year, schools have been invited to take part in a wide range of training events / briefing sessions led by local authority officers, consultants and external partners.
- 12.2. All headteachers were invited to join an information sharing session early in September to receive updates linked to attendance, TESSA, inspections, SEND and general service updates across education and learning.
- 12.3. On 26th September, all headteachers and chairs of governors were invited to a briefing session delivered by Rachel Goodwin and Pippa Maitland-Jackson (Senior HMIs for Schools / SEND). School leaders were provided with information about updates to Ofsted's inspection handbook, were given a detailed account of how SEND Local Area Inspections are conducted and were invited to take part in a generic Q&A session at the end of the morning.
- 12.4. Members of the Learning Partnership met for a collaborative event on 10th October to explore five key development areas: VIBE report - young people's feedback, TESSA, Early Help, Transition and Alternative Provision. The work / findings from these groups were shared with school governors during the termly governor forum which took place on 26th October.
- 12.5. In addition to these large-scale events, schools have continued to receive support appropriate to their need, e.g., Band B reviews and Achievement and Improvement meetings have been conducted across all secondary schools and selected primary schools. Support has also been given to the SACRE group, ECTs (Early Career Teachers) and plans are underway for this year's moderation and monitoring duties. Officers from Education and Learning met with Ofsted NW's regional leader at the start of November to discuss schools' performance, attendance, recent inspections and the LA's offer of support / challenge to schools.

13. SEND

- 13.1. The SEND Partnership Board is in the process of reviewing the current SEND Strategy 2021-24 A Life of Equal Chances in preparation for the production of the new Strategy for next year. Preparation for this includes an evaluation of our current position, a shared understanding of children's experiences and impact and consideration of key priorities for the coming year.
- 13.2. 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.
- 13.3. The team has now moved to 'Module 2' of the programme, which will engage with the wider SEND partnership through a series of case studies, deep dives and listening forums which will be used to inform the final grant application, which is due for submission mid-December.
- 13.4. The new joint St Helens/Halton Free School, The Raise Academy, is now finally under construction with an anticipated opening date of September 2024. The new school will cater for pupils 11-16 with social, emotional and/or mental health (SEMH) needs and will complement existing provision in Willow Bank and the new primary SEMH resourced provision at Ashurst Primary School.

- 13.5. The volume of EHCPs produced by the SEND team has continued to increase as the additional capacity has taken effect, with a complement of 10 caseworkers and 1651 EHCPs maintained by the Local Authority.
- 13.6. The number of new EHCPs issued this year is now the highest that has been achieved since the implementation of the reforms in 2014. While the 20-week indicator has improved, the poor start to the year coupled with a slight plateau in performance due to the impact of the cyber incident and the gaps in Educational Psychology staffing, means that this remains a significant challenge for the Local Authority.
- 13.7. It is likely that St Helens will be one of the lowest performing local authorities nationally for 2023. Levels of parental satisfaction also appear to be returning; 84% of parents who returned their EHCP survey in 2023 agreed that they were fully involved in the assessment process, and 86% agreed the local authority listened to their views.
- 13.8. SEND partners across the local area continue to prepare for the new local area SEND inspection, which is expected imminently. SEND partners across the local area continue to prepare for the new local area SEND inspection, which is anticipated early in 2024.

14. Consideration of alternatives

- 14.1. N/A

15. Conclusion

- 15.1. This has been a challenging time for children services, high demand and high costs placements along with challenges recruiting social work staff has caused additional pressures of Children social care.
- 15.2. Education continues with issues around managing attendance. However, our recent Ofsted conversation has stated that we are in advance of other areas in our work to address this.
- 15.3. The SEND inspection is imminent, so work is also underway to jointly work across children service and health to improve the lives of children with SEND.
- 15.4. Following our Ofsted inspection outcome and the fact we are now longer inadequate, I will discuss with the chair as to whether this report is still needed going forward.

16. Legal Implications

- 16.1. N/A

17. Equality Impact Assessment

- 17.1. N/A

18. Social Value

- 18.1 N/A

19. Net Zero and Environment

- 19.1. N/A

20. Health and Wellbeing

- 20.1. N/A

21. Customer and Resident

21.1. 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.

22. Asset and Property

22.1. N/A

24. Staffing and Human Resources

24.1. 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.

25. Risks

25.1 N/A

26. Finance

26.1 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.

27. Policy Framework Implications

27.1. N/A

28. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

28.1. N/A


29. Background Documents

29.1. N/A

30. Appendices

30.1. N/A

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	<h2>Childrens and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee</h2> <h3>08 January 2024</h3>
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Report Title	Quarter 2 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	Cath Fogarty Executive Director Corporate Services cath.fogarty@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 2 Performance Report 2023-24 (Annex A) provides an analysis of progress and performance over the period from the 1st of July to the 30th of September 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:

- 1) **Note the performance position at Quarter 2 2022-23.**
- 2) **Note the actions planned by the Children and Young People Directorate and services to address specific areas for performance improvement in relation to Priority 1**
- 3) **Consider whether there are any potential items for further scrutiny as a part of the Committee's work program based on performance information received.**

Purpose of this report

- 2.1 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 priority 1 - *Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life* and outcomes of the Borough Strategy 2021-2030 through an overview of performance in relation to key indicators.
- 2.2 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 2 2023-24.
 - Part 2 of the report is a commentary on performance against delivery of priority 1 of the 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.

3. Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 3.1 The Quarter 2 Performance Report 2023-24 reflects performance over the period July to September 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.

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 There are 87 performance indicators, where Quarter 2 performance against target is available to be reported. Of these:
- **74%** of indicator targets have been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compares to 75% of indicators at Quarter 2 2022-23. (NB percentages rounded to nearest whole number).
 - **26%** of indicator targets were not met, compared to 25% in Quarter 2 2022-23.
 - The trend measure indicates over the course of the last 12 months **47%** of indicators showed improvement, **15%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **38%** of indicators showed a downward. The position in Quarter 2 2022-23 was that **56%** of indicators showed improvement, **5%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **39%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory.
 - **18%** of all indicators where comparison is possible are in the top quartile, compared to 39% at Quarter 2 2021-22, whilst **29%** are in the bottom quartile, compared to 33% at Quarter 2 2022-23. 23% and 29% of indicators are in the 2nd and 3rd quartile respectively, compared to 10% and 18% in Quarter 2 2022-23 (NB percentages rounded to nearest whole number).
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 In summary, at Quarter 2 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 and Children Looked After, where current performance is statistically significantly higher than last published England averages and that of our nearest neighbours. 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 is also some way from target at Quarter 2.
 - *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 are statistically significantly worse than last published England averages and the performance of our nearest neighbours. The MMR vaccination take up for 5-year-olds is also below target.

4. Consideration of Alternatives

4.1 None

5. Conclusions

5.1 The Quarter 2 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.

6. Legal Implications

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

7. Financial Implications

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

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. Customer and Resident

12.1 The indicators include measures relating to customers.

13. Asset and Property

13.1 None

14. Staffing and People Management

14.1 None

15. Risks

15.1 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.

16. Policy Framework Implications

16.1 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.

17. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

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

18. Background Documents

18.1 N/A.

19. Appendices

19.1 **Annex A** – Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee Quarter 2 Performance Report 2023-23.

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 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 2 2023-24 providing the performance position reported over the course of the period. The reporting format splits the report into 2 distinct parts:

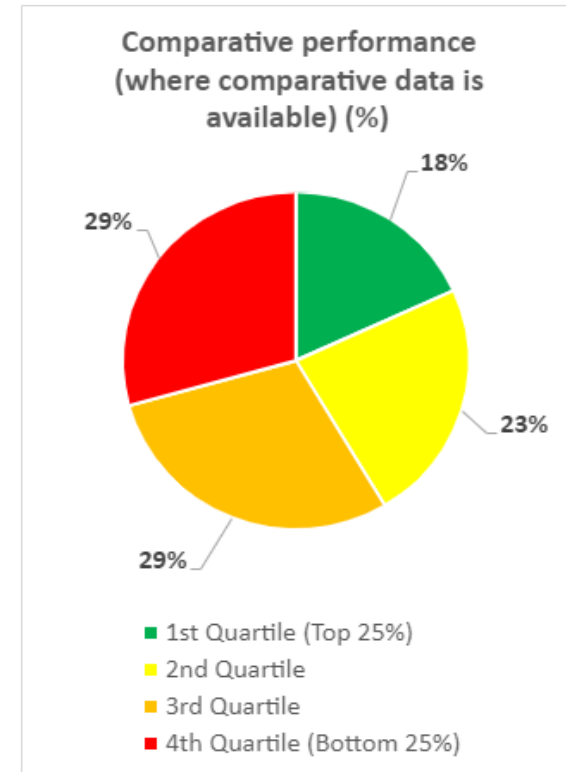
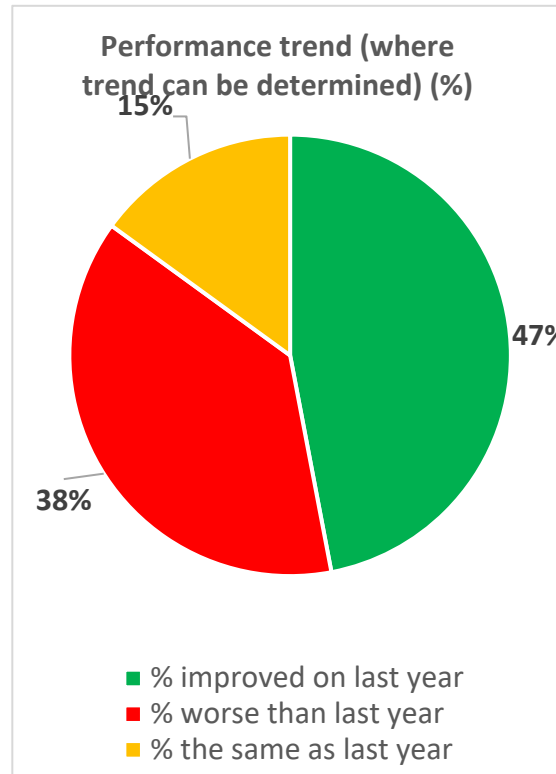
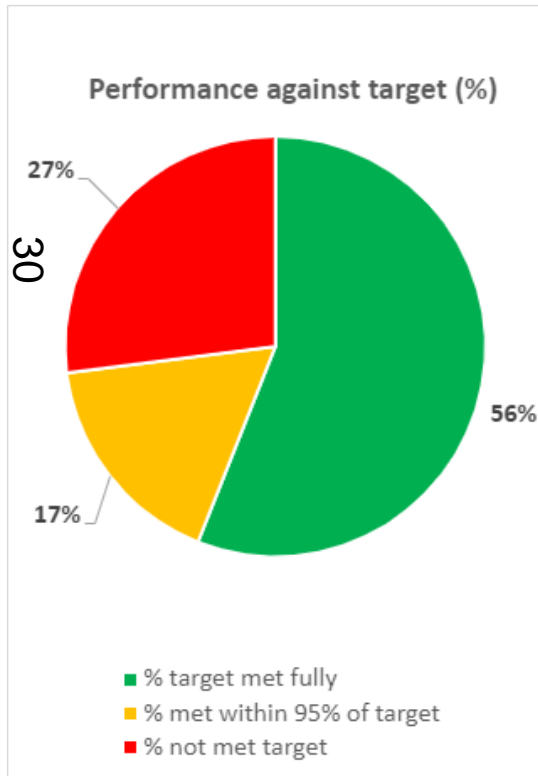
Part 1 of the report is a statistical analysis of the performance position at Quarter 2 2023-24.

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 2 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 Quarter2 2023-24, the Council is reporting against a total of 87 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 2 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	22	41% (9)	32% (7)	27% (6)
2. Health, independence, and care	20	65% (13)	10% (2)	25% (5)
3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods	14	64% (9)	0% (0)	36% (5)
4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy	8	63%* (5)	13%* (1)	25% (2)
5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture	10	50% (5)	20% (2)	30% (3)
6. Responsible Council	13	62% (8)	23% (3)	15% (2)
Total	87**	56%* (49)	17%* (15)	26%* (23)

* Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

** 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 Quarter 2 2023-24 with performance at Quarter 2 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 2, 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	21	62% (13)	29% (6)	9% (2)
2. Health, independence, and care	20	50% (10)	35% (7)	15% (3)
3. Safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods	11	36% (4)	64% (7)	0% (0)
4. Strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy	6	33% (2)	50%* (3)	17%* (1)
5. Green and vibrant places reflecting our heritage and culture	10	30% (3)	50% (5)	20% (2)
6. Responsible Council	13	46% (6)	23% (3)	31% (4)
Total	81	47% (38)	38% (31)	15% (12)

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	24	17% (4)	25% (6)	17% (4)	42% (10)
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)	50% (1)	0% (0)	50% (1)
6. Responsible Council	2	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	50% (1)
Total	44	18%* (8)	23% (10)	29%* (13)	29%* (13)

NB – Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

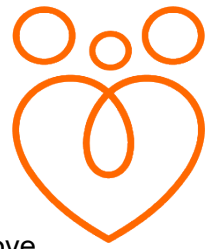
The latest available picture of inter authority performance largely relates to the 2021-22 financial year. Therefore, St Helens position vis-a-vis its quartile position is based on St Helens performance in that particular year relative to its statistical neighbours. Future reports will be updated to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

4.4 Summary and conclusion of statistical analysis

- **74%** of indicator targets have been either exceeded, met fully, or met within 95% of target. This compares to 75% of indicators at Quarter 2 2022-23. (NB percentages rounded to nearest whole number)
- **26%** of indicator targets were not met, compared to 25% in Quarter 2 2022-23.
- The trend measure indicates over the course of the last 12 months **47%** of indicators showed improvement, **15%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **38%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory. The position in Quarter 2 2022-23 was that **56%** of indicators showed improvement, **5%** of indicators maintained the same performance and **39%** of indicators showed a downward trajectory.
- **18%** of all indicators where comparison is possible are in the top quartile, compared to 39% at Quarter 2 2021-22, whilst **29%** are in the bottom quartile, compared to 33% at Quarter 2 2022-23. 23% and 29% of indicators are in the 2nd and 3rd quartile respectively, compared to 10% and 18% in Quarter 2 2022-23 (NB percentages rounded to nearest whole number).
- 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 2 2023-24 for the indicators reported

Performance Against Target

Number of Indicators with data	% target fully met	% target met within 95%	% target not met
22	41% (9)	32% (7)	27% (6)

The Performance Trend

Number of Indicators with data	% improved on last year	% worse than last year	% the same as last year
21	62% (13)	29% (6)	9% (2)

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
24	17% (4)	25% (6)	17% (4)	42% (10)

NB - figures rounded to nearest whole number

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	Q2 Sept	% Variance from Target (SEP)	Trend	Comparative Performance
36 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	741	-1.2%	↑	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	73	73.4	-15.63%	↓	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	474	-7.73%	↓	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	58.8	17.18%	↑	2nd Quartile Eng Av. 42 LA Av. 60.6 (2021/22)
	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	21	12.5%	↑	4th Quartile Eng Av. 23.3 LA Av. 23.5 (2021/22)

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

37 Children and young people are safe from harm and the lives of children in care improve	CYP-006	Number of looked after children per 10,000 children within the Borough	Quarterly	Lower	129.3	127	127	134	-5.51%	↓	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	11	10%	↑	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	21	-4.55%	↔	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	94	-2.08%	↓	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	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	59	-3.28%	↑	2nd Quartile Eng Av. 55 LA Av. 53.5 (2021/22)
Children and young people's aspirations, attainment and	CYP-012	Percentage of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans completed within a 20 week period	Quarterly	Higher	19.5%	30%	6.25	13.4	-55.33%	↓	4th Quartile Eng Av. 49.1 LA Av. 74.9 (2022)

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

38	opportunities are raised		E&S-001	The percentage of children attaining at least a 'Good' level of development in the Early Learning Goals.	Annual	Higher	60.9%	65%		64	-1.54%	↑	4th Quartile Eng Av. 49.1 LA Av. 63.9 (2021/22)
	E&S-002	The percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieving the national expected standard or higher in Reading, Writing and Mathematics	Annual	Higher	57%	60%	-	61	1.67%	↑	4th Quartile Eng Av. 59 LA Av. 59.4 (2021/22)		
	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	33.5	-97.1%	↓	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	Quarterly	Higher	89%	90%	90	90	0%	↔	2nd Quartile Eng Av. 88 LA Av. 84 (Dec 2022)		
Children and young people are healthy, resilient, confident, involved and achieve their potential	PH-004	Under-18 conception rate per 1,000 females, 15-17 years (single year rate)	Quarterly	Lower	25.9%	28%	25.9	To be reported in Q3	N/A	↑	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	29	-8.23%	↑	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	85.7	-4.78%	N/A	4th Quartile Eng Av. 85.7 LA Av. 90.1 (2021/22)		

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

	CYP-013	Number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system who receive their first substantive outcome or court disposal per 100,000 population aged 10-17	Quarterly	Lower	186	159	6	To be reported in Q3	N/A	N/A	1st Quartile Eng Av. 169.2 LA Av. 157.5 (2021)
	CYP-014	The percentage of children re-offending	Quarterly	Lower	31.9%	36%	28.6	To be reported in Q3	N/A	N/A	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	Q2 Sept	% Variance from Target (SEP)	Trend	Comparative Performance
39 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	7.3	18.89%	▲	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%	15.3	-	-%	▼	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	58.9	13.38%	▲	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	88	4.76%	↑	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	85.9	1.06%	↑	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 2 with some improvements shown but also some ongoing challenges in the area of Children’s Social Care.
- **CYP-001** – Over the first 2 Quarters 2023-24 a total of 741 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 (29% of episodes started), Domestic Abuse (14%), SEND (12%) and Emotional Wellbeing support (8%). The majority of episodes initiated in the period were led by the Council’s dedicated Early Help Team (55%) with education providers and schools being the next largest (30%) contributor of episodes initiated in the period. The number of episodes started in the period (741) is broadly the same as that reported in the April-Sept period of the previous year (732).
- **CYP-002** - 74% of all Early Help Episodes that ended in Q2 last year did not subsequently go on and have a Social Care referral in the subsequent 12 months. This is a 1% improvement on Quarter 1 and means that the total for the year is 73.4% currently behind the ambitious target of 87%.
- **CYP-003** -, Over the first 2 quarters 2023-24 a total of 1,751 children and young people were open to St Helens Children's Social Services, a rate of 474 per 10,000 under 18-year-olds. The number of children open to St Helens Children's Social Cars has increased from 1,638 on the 31st of March 2023 to 1,751 on the 30th of June 2023, an increase of 6.8% over the period. In the same period last year there was a total of 1,702 open to St Helens Children's Social Care. 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** - On the 30th of September 2023, a total of 217 children and young people were the subject of a Child Protection (CP) Plan and supported by St Helens Children's Social Services, equating to a rate of 58.8 children per 10,000 under 18 year olds. The number of children the subject of a CP Plan has decreased from 280 children reported at 31st March 2023 to 217 on the 30th of September 2023, a decrease in the CP population of 23%

over the period. At the end of September 2022 St Helens' CP rate stood at 66.2 children per 10,000 under 18 year olds. However, the rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan continues to be higher than the most recent published (2021-22) comparable regional (49) and national (42) rates. The majority of children supported with a CP Plan on the 30th of September 2023 are supported due to concerns related to Neglect (55%), Emotional abuse (24%) or Physical abuse (16%).

- **CYP-005** – Over the course of the first 2 quarters 2023-24, a total of 107 children became the subject of a Child Protection (CP) Plan, with 24 of the children (or 21%) 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, is now better than the local target (24%) and the position reported at the end of the previous financial year (23%). The latest position is also an improvement on the 24.6% of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time over the course of the first 2 quarters in 2022-23, and in line with the last published national average of 23.3%.
- **CYP-006** - At the end of Quarter 2 2023-24, a total of 495 children and young people were cared for by St Helens Council, equating to a rate of 134 children per 10,000 under 18-year-olds. The number of Children Looked After (CLA) reported for St Helens on the 30th of September 2023 is higher than both the 469 reported at the end of March 2023, and the 472 at the end of Quarter 2 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 the first 2 quarters 2023-24, a total of 66 children and young people have been discharged from care with 7 of the children discharged due to adoption, equating to 11% of total care discharges in the period. The percentage is broadly similar to the position reported over the course of the first 2 quarters in 2022-23 (9%) and in line with comparable regional (10%) and national (10%) positions.
- **CYP-008B** - Over the course of the first 2 quarters 2023-24, a total of 66 children and young people have been discharged from care with 14 of the children discharged due to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), equating to 21% of total CLA discharges in the period. The percentage of CLA discharges via SGO in the period (21%) is the same as that reported over the course of the first 2 quarters in 2022-23, and above the last published comparable regional (16%) and national (13%) positions.
- **CYP-009-010-011** - Performance against the 3 key outcome indicators for care leavers, that being care leavers in suitable accommodation, care leavers the local authority is still in touch with, and care leavers in employment education and training remains comparatively strong, being above last published England and statistical neighbour averages. All 3 indicators are marginally below target at the end of Quarter 2 2023-24. The indicator for care leavers in employment education and training has marginally increased over the course of Quarter 2 2023-24, whilst the indicators for care leavers in suitable accommodation, and care leavers the local authority is still in touch have dipped slightly.
- **CYP-007** - In the 12-month period up to and including September 2023, a total of 36 children and young people experienced three or more placement moves in the previous 12-month period, equating to 7.3% of the total CLA population supported by St Helens' Children's Social Care. Current performance is better than the target of 9%, as well as the full 2022-23 performance reported for St Helens (8.3%) and the most recently published national (10%) and regional average for 2021-22 (9%)

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Action for Improvement

- **CYP-001 / CYP-002** - Quarter 2 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.

With regard to the number of open Early Help episodes starting, Having engaged with partner agencies to establish the reasons for the decrease in early help activity the main reasons cited relate to difficulties with the Early Help Assessment Document (EHAT). Partner agencies report that the document is not user friendly and that it's too long and overly technical which they find a barrier to completion which in turn has contributed to a reduction in early help activity. In response to this, the council have taken the lead as part of a multiagency group to review the existing assessment document and to design an alternative. A revised assessment document will be presented to the strategic early help board for approval on the 15 January 2024. In addition, there is now a greater emphasis applied to understanding agency specific data to assist in identifying specific levels of partnership engagement in early help activity. Once this is understood in more detail it will enable the council through its partnership coordinators to target specific partners whose activity is low in order to provide dedicated support and challenge to improve activity.

With regard to 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, to understand the reasons as to why this indicator is below target it is necessary to obtain a deeper analysis of data relating to wider partnership activity outside of that of the council's early help team. Doing this it will assist us in understanding the source of the referrals back into social care over the 12 month period following an episode of early help. Once this and any trends and themes can be identified it will enable the targeting of partner agencies to receive dedicated support form partnership coordinators who will review the quality of assessment and planning to help improve the quality of practice as well as future performance.

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- **CYP-003** - We have seen an increase in the numbers of children defined as Children in Need (CIN) compared to the last quarter and same time last year. This reflects the high prevalence of neglect and relates to the need to continue to strengthen early help provision and prevent concerns escalating. 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. It is notable that CP plans have significantly reduced. Neglect remains the primary focus of the CSP. It is agreed that a key priority is to reduce the demand for statutory service this is being included in the updated SEF and plans are in progress to secure an LGA peer review and apply for the Families First Pathfinder programme that would secure additional funding to help redesign our services to strengthen family help.
- **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 5% of our CLA population and is impacting on the number of Care Leavers. This is recognised as an area of risk as we have limited ability to refuse this cohort when there are age disputes. 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 are impacting 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 2 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

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- 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 started to improve in Q2. 82 EHCPs were completed, 11 of which were within 20 weeks. Performance now stands at 13.4% which is still well below target. St Helens comparative performance from 2022 is now bottom quartile. This is due to the current backlog of overdue cases carried forward from the previous year.
 - **E&S-001** - At the end of the 2022-23 academic year, 64% of pupils educated in a St Helens schools achieved a 'Good Level of Development (GLD)' at the end of the early years foundation stage (Reception year). The percentage of reception year pupils in St Helens achieving a good level of development in 2023 (64%) is above that achieved in the previous year (61%), an increase of three percentage points. The 2023 regional and national averages are not yet available but are scheduled to be published in late October 2023.
 - **E&S-002** - At the end of the 2022-23 academic year, 61% of pupils educated in a St Helens schools achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing & Mathematics (RWM), an increase of 4% on the performance achieved in the previous year (57%). Positively, the latest performance reported for St Helens (61%) is above the local target for the year (60%) and above the comparable national average (59%).
 - **E&S-005** - As with previous years, September represents the most challenging month for NEET data analysis, as young people are tracked as they engage with a post 16 offer, and we attempt to analyse the data from a large number of post 16 institutions or training providers. The 16-17-year-old combined NEET and Not Known performance at the end of September (Quarter 2) was 33.48%. This is almost double the reported figure for September 2022 (17.4%). NEET for 16-17-year-olds is 3.7%, representing 153 young people, which is an increase of 0.4% from last year of 3.3%.

However, there has been a significant increase in the number of 16-17-year-olds whose destinations are Not Known which is currently 29.8% representing 1234 young people. This is made up of 529 (16-year-olds) and 705 (17-year-olds) compared to 20 and 114 respectively in 2022, which highlights an increase in the 16-year-old cohort.

There is a similar picture in the numbers of young people aged 16/18 in education, employment or learning with those NEET at 5.2% (against 4.2% for the same period last year). The drop in performance in respect of not known is due to late reporting of enrolments this September by a number of

post-16 education providers. As a result, an accurate picture has not been available in the current quarter, but a more accurate picture will be available by the end of October. It is anticipated that the increasing trajectory for those NEET will continue this academic year.

- **E&S-006** - At the end of September 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.

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. The service has undergone a period of recruitment to fill vacancies, and further recruitment is planned. Performance was however impacted by the cyber incident which resulted in the Capita system being down for over 4 weeks, which meant that EHCPs could not be drafted or issued, professional advice could not be uploaded to the system etc. There is therefore a backlog of loading cases onto the system. 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 not known is as a result of late reporting by a number of post 16 providers this year. This has now been addressed and all information has been received. As a consequence, this has significantly reduced this number. This will be reported in Q3. The increase in NEET continues to present a challenge to a number of LAs across LCR. Discussions between LAs leads and the CA have been productive, and solutions are being sought to the lack of engagement programmes for young people at risk and the CA have now engaged with the ESFA. In the absence of local online learning provision, arrangements for some young people have been made with a national provider and St Helens College has worked to develop a pre-engagement programme and 10 young people are now involved with this. September Guarantee performance remains strong with 98% of 16-year-olds and 92.6% of 17-year-olds with a guaranteed placement.
- **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

- 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. The Office for National Statistics have stated that data will be updated in early November. Therefore, the latest figure still 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 2 2023-24 shows that 29% of infants being breastfed at 6-8 weeks in St. Helens, which is below the target of 32%. This is a reduction on the previous quarter's figure of 37, but similar to the 29% recorded in Quarter 2 2022-23. St Helens breastfeeding rate is significantly lower than the England and North West figures of 49.5% and 43% respectively.
- **PH-006** – St Helens has continued to have a comparatively high percentage of expectant mothers smoking at the time of delivery. Quarter 2 data is not yet available. 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, this is lower than the previous two quarters. 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 1 2023-24. The rate was 58.9 admissions per 100,000 under 18s. The most recent rate is a reduction from the previous quarter's data of 62.5 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-008** - The most recently published data for the percentage of children aged 5 have had 2 doses of the MMR vaccination relates to Quarter 1 2023-24 which showed that 85.7% of children in St Helens had 2 doses of the vaccine. This is in line with the previous quarter's data. MMR Vaccine uptake rates in St Helens have remained below the critical threshold of 90% for a number of years (including pre-pandemic). However, St Helen's MMR2 vaccine uptake rate at 5 years is currently slightly higher than the national average.
- **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 2 2023-24 was 88%. Performance has improved on the Quarter 2 2022-23 figure of 64.7%. St Helens' performance is better than target and compares favourably to the England and North West averages of 75.3% and 78.6% respectively.

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- **PH-010** - The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2 - 2.5 years in St. Helens during Quarter 2 2023-24 was 85.9%, which is better than target and higher than the England and North West averages of 80% and 79.4% respectively.
- **CYP-013** – Quarter 2 data for first time entrants to the Youth Justice System is time lagged and will be reported in Quarter 3. 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** – Quarter 2 data for levels of youth offending is time lagged and will be reported in Quarter 3. 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.

Action for Improvement

- **PH-004** – Plans are in place to re-establish the local teenage pregnancy steering group during autumn, and links have been made to the newly established C&M Teenage Pregnancy Forum to provide vital system leadership and support. The Teenage Action Zone (TAZ) small team continues to provide drop in clinics (Millennium centre) and targeted education support to young people, schools and frontline services regarding campaigns, training, advice and guidance, and plans are progressing to increase access to a range of contraceptive offers via primary care and the integrated sexual health service based at the hospital.
- 46 • **PH-005** - The proportion breastfeeding reduced this quarter due to reduced capacity, thought due to staffing vacancies in the Specialist Infant Feeding Service. Whilst there has been an increase in referrals for more specialist support, there was reduced capacity for outreach engagement work. Recruitment is now underway, and plans are in progress to develop the antenatal pathway, with co-production work currently being led through the Integrated Care Partnership to increase breastfeeding as a system. Improvement plans include increasing breastfeeding planning and education for pregnant mum before baby arrives; extend support on the maternity wards to 7 days per week (currently 3-4 days); review of out of area hospital discharge referrals processes to the local Infant Feeding Team, and further analysis of data recording and performance reporting processes in partnership with the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme service.
- **PH-006** - The latest data on smoking in pregnancy shows an encouraging reduction compared to the previous two quarters, but rates remain above target, and above regional and national averages for smoking at the time of delivery. The hospital continues to develop the Tobacco Dependency Programme, and bespoke training is being provided for midwives to ensure supportive conversations about smoking and its harms and implementing the opt out pathway. Work is underway to further develop electronic referral pathways to ensure links with the local community stop smoking service offer. In addition, there has been a national announcement in October about potential additional funding to enhance the local stop smoking services as part of the 'stop the start' ambition, and this may enable us to review and enhance our local offer.
- **PH-007** - Young people's alcohol admissions continue on a general downward trend, although still high compared with the latest known figures for England and North West. The councils Young Peoples Drug and Alcohol team (YPDAAT) have reviewed the data in detail with Public Health to understand which young people are most at risk so that they can better provide support. At risk groups generally include those who have already attended hospital, Children Looked After or a child in need, those in contact with the criminal justice system, those suspended or excluded from school,

and young people affected by domestic abuse, mental ill health, or the use of alcohol/drugs by a close family member. Local intelligence suggests those who attend hospital for alcohol specific reasons are largely young people experiencing emotional distress and there is a strong link with self-harm. Pathways from A&E in to the YPDAAT 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. A multi-agency task group was set up in August to look at strengthening the wider multi agency approach to support 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 making efforts to improve uptake given the national increase in measles cases. Local communications are also being developed to raise awareness. This includes leaflets, posters and 'pop-ups' for Childrens Centres, nurseries, and GP surgeries. 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.
- **PH-009** - The 0-19 Healthy Child Programme service has continued to perform above target, for two consecutive quarters. This child development review indicator is important as it can help inform parents about school readiness and identify young children with SEND to ensure early identification and additional support can be put in place at the earliest opportunity. As such, this indicator continues to be closely monitored and quality audits are undertaken to understand any exceptions.
- **PH-010** - Data for this quarter is an improvement since the last report, and performance is above the local target. The 0-19 Healthy Child Programme service are working closely with Children's Services Early Years to develop the integrated (Health and Education) two-year review and a pilot is underway to implement the more in-depth ELIM (Early Language Identification Measure) assessment tool, as a key early intervention review to identify and provide additional support for any speech, language, and communication issues.

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

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Bright Spots Survey

Paula Swindlehurst

Helen Sharratt

What is Bright Spots...

- The programme is a research project by Coram Voice
- Aim is to understand what is important to children in care and care leavers & share learning & actions from this
- It measures subjective well-being through their voice
- Survey was on children in care this time and took place Nov 22 to March 2023
- 119 children aged 4-17 took part 32% of cohort. 35% aged 4-7 (26) , 34% aged 8-11 (19), 31% aged 11-17(74)

Bright Spots Survey - Strengths

- The vast majority reported trusting their carers. 92% stated they always felt safe where they were living.
- 97% of young people stated they had an adult in their life that they trusted.
- Our children between the ages of 8-17 spent lots of time outdoors in nature, this is higher than in the general population.
- Our children liked school 96% aged 4-7, 94% aged 8-11 and 74% of 11-17 they like school or college 'a lot' or 'a bit'.
- 90% of our children had a moderate to high positivity about their future which is higher than the general population.
- All the children knew who their social worker was, and all the younger children 4-7 years trusted their Social Worker.
- St Helens performed higher than the national average with how happy they were seeing their mum.



Bright Spots Action Plan & next steps

- A Bright Spots action plan has been developed
- The work of the five workstream groups from Corporate Parenting Forum (CPF) will be informed by the Bright Spots findings
- Given the importance of relationships the focus on social work recruitment is core to this delivery
- The following slides will highlight the areas for action as reported by our children, through the Coram Voice report.
- The progress of actions in the plan will be monitored via CPF

Areas identified for development	What have we done?
<p>1. Although only two children (4-11yrs) recorded feeling unhappy the day before the survey, the proportion who felt quite or very happy was lower compared to children in other Local Authorities in both ages.</p> <p>53</p>	<p>1. Mandatory training delivered for all SWs on voice of the child/lived experience. Focus on feelings and subsequent actions linked to this evident in their plan.</p> <p>Intense focus on recruitment of SWs to maintain consistent relationships. Updated procedure to improve effectiveness of handover, sickness absence and where change of social worker needing to take place. Audits will monitor progress.</p> <p>Plans to collate and share resources with carers to support children’s emotional health and wellbeing. Details of local support provision already shared with foster carers and providers.</p>
<p>2. 8 (11%) Young people with low wellbeing – children with low wellbeing can be more likely to report not being able to practice life skills and feeling unhappy with how often they saw their family.</p>	<p>2. Care leavers and Futures team developed life skills resource tool for supporting children and young people in skill understanding and development.</p> <p>Toolbox on voice of the child/lived experience, element included on understanding/addressing emotions. Also review of practice to take place on how family time is explained to children.</p>
<p>3. Not all children we look after reported that they understood why they are in care.</p>	<p>3. Action in progress to establish a dedicated area on ICS to record why a child is in care and evidence direct work undertaken to explain and re-visit topic with child linked to child’s age and understanding.</p> <p>Review taking place of how Life Story Work supports children’s understanding.</p>

Areas identified for development	What have we done?
<p>4. 9% of 4–17-year-olds reported not having a good friend.</p>	<p>4. Undertaken research with children through VIBE/Reach. Workshops planned to be delivered as a result including this theme.</p>
<p>5. There was a drop in the percentage of children (8-11yrs) knowing that they can <u>ask</u> to speak to their social worker alone (90% in previous survey down to 83% in 2023.)</p>	<p>5. All SW Teams notified of the need to have and use a pen portrait to introduce themselves to children. Guidance produced including that all SWs <u>must</u> state that children can ask to speak to their SW alone.</p> <p>Audit will monitor compliance of this.</p>
<p>6. There was an increase from 2 to 8 % of 11-17 yr. olds felt embarrassed by adults for being in care.</p>	<p>6. Shared findings of survey with all key partners, foster carers and residential care staff to ensure this message is heard.</p> <p>Training to be delivered to all partners on language to be used and expectations of practice.</p>

Additional actions taken to address what heard from our children in Bright Spots

- Relentless focus on recruitment of Social Workers
- Voice of the Child Champions/Be Heard Outcome Group presented findings of survey to identify actions for each team/service level.
- Practitioners Forum presented findings of survey to ensure the voice of our children influences the Getting to Outstanding Plan.
- Agreement made not to take on additional CSC project teams.
- Supported children and young people to interview for key roles in CSC. Questions asked of candidates in line with themes raised in survey. Issue of change of social workers enabled us to hear what was important in the role of SW.
- Analysis of Childrens' responses on IRO My views, identifying specific strengths and areas for development.
- Developing Padlets for children and young people that they can access electronically.
- CCR – Auditors encouraged to seek feedback from children, parents, and carers and to observe practice.
- Views of our service users and audit observations inform the planning of the Improvement Team and audit schedule.
- We have six Social Work Degree Apprentices currently, and two are due to graduate in January 2024, and will transition into ASYE Social Workers. Recently secured funding from the DfE with support from the Teaching Partnership to recruit more Social Work Degree Apprentices and we are the lead host with the Teaching Partnership for the Degree Apprenticeship programme.




Aspirations - VIBE/Reach consultation

32 consultation sessions held through Reach, 1058 pupils engaged, children shared their goals, aspirations identifying what stops them from achieving their goals and aspirations.


- Sessions were completed with children and young people on overcoming barriers to achievements.
- Workshop on skills pool with YP to look at gaining experience, courses, and learning, learning from peers, study and reading, extracurricular activities and volunteering.
- Workshop on learning styles, informed by children's views who state that they would like to see more flexible ways of learning that suit every individual need.
- Workshop on education, what children wish was included such as help with finance, Voting and insurance etc.
- Workshop on peer pressure and how to overcome peer pressure, finances, self-handicapping to build self-esteem, health including mental health and physical health.
- Working with carers and social workers to increase their ambition and support for the educational outcomes of all our children and care leavers.

Lived Experience of our Children We Look After – What could be improved?

Themes from the Bright Spots CWLA Wellbeing Survey - The following themes have been raised as findings of *'what could be improved'* by Coram Voice. As such, they require consideration by children and Corporate Parents to agree actions to improve experience and practice.

	Survey Finding	Comments/ideas from children, young people and CPF members
1	 <p>Feeling happy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although only two children (4-11yrs) recorded feeling <u>unhappy</u> the day before the survey, the proportion who felt quite or very happy* was lower compared to children in other LAs in both age groups. 	<p>“Stop changing my social workers please.” “They should feel happy all the time even if you are sad, just be calm.” “Ensure adults explain to you why you are in care.” “Help to feeling safe/settled at home.” “Family time?” “All pastoral teams in school should be good.” “It’s ok to have a range of emotions.” “Stop changes of social worker.” “Not close down all the shops.” “Speaking to people and family in school.”</p> <p>“Understanding our emotions – when does it become a worry?” “More things to do would help us feel happier, swimming pools, water parks.” “Scrutiny into CAMHS waiting times.” “Deep dive needed into this area for development. Do we ask what would make you happy?” “When do we ask children? Should we ask at different times?”</p>
2	<p>Young people with low overall well-being were statistically more likely to report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not liking school; Feeling unhappy with how they looked; and Not having the chance to practise life skills. <p>Other factors associated with low well-being included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling unhappy with how often they saw family Feeling afraid to go to school because of bullying, not having a chance to be trusted, not being able to do similar things to their friends, and worrying about their feelings or behaviour. <p>8 (11%) young people had low well-being</p> 	<p>“Lessons at school should be more fun.” “Do you ask at PEP meetings if children like going to school?” “Encourage life skills from pre-school.” “Help with bullying at school.” “Plan should include milestones – self-care, cooking etc.” “Being with positive people.” “Focus on strengths.” “School sucks!” “You should never say that you look ugly. You need to know you are perfect the way you look...!” “More art!” “Have more life skills in school – like food, make the bed, taking care of a pet etc.” “More support and personal social education around feeling happy with how they look.” “Money skills.” “Social media impacting on self-esteem.” “Scrutiny review into % school staff and council staff have ACE’s and Trauma informed practice training.”</p>
3	 <p>Understanding why you are in care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over half (54%) of the youngest children, over a quarter (28%) of the older children and one fifth of young people (20%) did not fully understand the reasons why they were in care. 	<p>“They should explain it in a kind way so you can understand them.” “All professionals around the child should be able to talk to them about why they came into care – might need training.” “Put a summary on top of the case notes on ICS.” “Carers and Social Workers to explain.” “Scrutiny at Corporate Parents Forum.” “Ensure SWs ask at each visit and record responses – which are then audited by IRO as part of review process.” “Re-tell the reasons regularly. Sharing at different ages to meet understanding.” “Work to be done with carers and SWs to explain. Make sure carers know why.” “Simplify it so I can understand.” “Scared to talk about it.” “Believe in yourself.” “Check where this is being asked and how often – is this a performance indicator?”</p>

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4	 <p>Friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion (9%) of children and young people (4-17yrs) that did not have a good friend* was three times higher compared with children (3%) in the general population. 	<p>“Ask children about friends before moving placements so you know who they want to stay in touch with.” “After school club provision? More action by school needed.” “Encourage opportunities and review them.” “Stay local.” “Least number of moves – home and school.” “Encourage children to join clubs/activities, meet others based on interest.” “Recognise children go at their own pace.” “You could speak to people in the ‘All about you’.” “Mentors for Care Leavers.” “Have buddies in school.” “Councillors Corporate Parents as mentors/supporters – concern that this may not be suitable in terms of skills/DBS.”</p>
5	<p>Knowing you can ask to speak to your social worker alone (8-11yrs: 90% down to 83%)</p>	<p>“Children should know why a social worker is changing or leaving.” “We do know it but had lots of changes of social worker.” “The ideal social worker is one who stays.” “Check how the child wants to be contacted.” “Told IRO about changes of social worker – only 1 IRO.” “Talk to carer.” “Speak outside of meetings.” “SW send young person/child contact details.” “Shouldn’t have agency social workers.” “Can talk to IRO instead.” “Get things done.” “Contact direct to young person on their phone.” “Review and re-launch the Children’s Charter, to ensure they know their rights in an appropriate way for age/ability.” “Monitor via the CWLA review and monitored/reported to Scrutiny and CP Forum.”</p>
6	<p>Feeling embarrassed by adults for being in care (11-17yrs: 2% up to 8%)</p>	<p>“School should be mindful of what they say – ask what they want to be called.” “PIP money taken out of class for review.” “Which adults? What reasons?” “Sometimes people who care about us sometimes embarrass us – is it always a bad thing?” “Let children decide who gets to know they’re in care.” “Don’t take children out of lessons for meetings.” “Be mindful of how we address people. Not single out anyone for being in care.” “Being taken out of school, people ask questions.” “Sleepovers – who do we ask?” “Calling foster carers by their first names, maybe call them ‘aunt’ or ‘uncle’.” “You should be embarrassed by them because they help you.”</p>


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Actions to be taken in response to hearing our children and young people who we look after.

Action	Theme	By Whom	By When	Progress/Complete
* Overarching action - Views to be considered by each of the five CPF Outcome Groups for focussed actions above those stated here.	1-6	All Outcome Group Leads (SK, AS, HA, FW, HS)	18 Sept 2023	Views shared at September CPF including Outcome leads. Actions incorporated into CPF outcome groups.
Incorporate Bright Spot views into rolling programme of mandatory SW Training and Induction. Paying particular focus on voice of the child, lived experience, feelings, their plans.	1-6	Wendy Harrison	30 Oct 2023	Training delivered to all teams, incorporating ASYE’s, International social workers and Degree Apprentice students.
Continue to drive the recruitment of CSC staff to support consistency of relationships.	1-6	Paula Swindlehurst Wendy Harrison	Quarterly review of progress.	Programme of recruitment opportunities established – links to universities, Teaching Partnership, School careers events, local and

Action	Theme	By Whom	By When	Progress/Complete
				regional job fairs, rolling recruitment advert on Council job page etc.
Update procedure for change of SW, managing absence, to include joint visits.	1,2,5,6	Wendy Harrison	30 Sept 2023	Procedure updates, approved by SLT and rolled out across CS Department.
Undertake a dip sample audit of children's cases, where change of social worker has been necessary to assess if correct procedure is being followed.	1,2,5,6	Wendy Harrison	31 Jan 2024	Start date 1 January 2023.
Develop life skills resource tool for supporting children and young people in skills, understanding and development.	1,2,4	Care Leavers & Adam Smeltzer	29 Dec 2023	Draft guidance produced and shared with CPF. Tool in design/production phase.
Establish a dedicated area on ICS to record why a child is in care/evidence direct work to explain and re-visit topic with child linked to child's age and understanding.	1,2,3,5,6	Carla Middleton	31 Jan 2024	Proposal to be tabled with SLT for agreement December 2023.
Review current commission for Life Story Work supports children's understanding.	1,2,3,4,5,6	Kathryn Radclyffe	31 Oct 2023	ARC model of Life story work considered.
Undertaken research with children through VIBE/Reach on aspirations. Develop workshops based on findings.	1, 2,4	Ruth DuPlessis	Sep 2023	Research complete and workshops planned based on findings.
Produce guidance on creating Pen Portraits. All pen portraits to include statement that children can ask to speak to their social worker alone.	1,2,5,6	Helen Sharratt	Sept 2023	Guidance created and shared. CSW teams alerted to need to have and utilise pen portraits with their children and young people.
Undertake a dip sample audit of Pen Portrait use to assure use and quality.	1,2,5,6	Helen Sharratt	31 Jan 2024	Audit process to be agreed by SLT December 2023.
Feedback Bright Spot views to VOCC/Be Heard Outcome Group – each Champion to cascade views to their team to consider actions needed.	1,2,3,4,5,6	All Champions/Team Managers	Sept 2023	Bright Spots views shared with VOCC/Be heard group.
Feedback Bright Spot views to Practitioners Forum to ensure the voice of our children influences the Getting to Outstanding Plan.	1,2,3,4,5,6	Practitioners Forum Getting to Outstanding Board	Sept 2023 for feedback Dec 2023 for plan	Feedback of Bright Spots views given. Action will be completed when Practitioners Forum have sight of the Getting to Outstanding Plan and can consider how views can influence the plan.
Feedback Bright Spot views to Virtual School Staff and Designated Teachers.	1,2,3,4,5,6	Heather Addison	Date TBA	Views shared with Virtual School Staff. Date to be scheduled to present to Designated school staff.

Action	Theme	By Whom	By When	Progress/Complete
Undertake project to listen to families attending statutory CWLA reviews to understand their views on the process/experience. Develop plan to work with families to provide supportive information for those following them through the CWLA Review Process, based on the views heard.	1,2,3,4,5,6	Carla Middleton	31 Mar 2024	Method for listening to families trialled with families involved in Child Protection Conference. Start date January 2024.
Share with Foster Carers and residential providers the support offered locally through CAMHS.	1,2,4,6	Fiona Woods	Aug 2023	Updated information of CAMHS services shared through Foster Carers Newsletter and Placement Team to residential providers.
Collate and share resources to support children's emotional health and mental wellbeing.	1,2,4,6	Helen Sharratt Champions	Sept 2023 31 Jan 2024	Resources shared with VOCC. Development of this action now to pool resources across agencies through SCP padlet.
Develop process to check with children/ICS that 'why in care' understood and recorded.	1,2,3,4,5,6	Carla Middleton	29 Feb 2024	Process to be detailed and agreed by SLT prior to commencement Jan 2024.
Review and re-launch the Childrens Charter, the 'CWLA Promise' with our children and young people we look after. Incorporate children's rights.	1,2,3,4,5,6	Helen Sharratt Champions	31 Mar 2024	Start date 1 January 2024.
Listen to children in greater depth on their views of how Family Time is explained and organised. Then co-produce with children guidance for social workers on how Family Time should be explained, understood and organised.	2	Carla Middleton Wendy Harrison	31 Mar 2024	Start date 1 January 2024.

 <p>ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	<h2>Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee</h2> <h3>8 January 2024</h3>
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Report Title	Cabinet Response to the Spotlight Review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children
Cabinet Portfolio	Children and Young People Wellbeing, Communities and Culture
Cabinet Member	Councillor Nova Charlton Councillor Anthony Burns
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 Ruth du Plessis Director of Public Health Ruthduplessis@sthelens.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Michelle Loughlin Consultant in Public Health michelleloughlin@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	X
	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 Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee (CYPS) held a spotlight review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children, on 28 April 2023. The purpose of the spotlight review was to enable Members, relevant services and key partners to:

- Understand the impact of alcohol and drugs use in pregnancy on the child;
- Share the relevant work that is already underway to prevent and reduce harm;
- Work together to identify gaps and opportunities to improve our collective response;
- Commit to the delivery of agreed actions for improvement.

1.2 Drinking alcohol or taking drugs during pregnancy, even in small quantities can be harmful for the baby and have long term effects on the child and into adulthood.

1.3 The report of the spotlight review and its recommendations for action were formally agreed by CYPS Scrutiny Committee on 6 of September 2023 and was submitted to Cabinet for responses at their meeting held on 25 October 2023 as per the Council's constitution.

2. Recommendation for Decision

Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- 1) **Note the Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 that sets out the recommendations approved by Cabinet.**

3. Purpose of this report

3.1 This report provides Members with the Action Plan response to the recommendations of the Task Group, which had been agreed by Cabinet at their meeting held on 25 October 2023.

4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

4.1 The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Workshop carried out a spotlight review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children on 28 April 2023.

4.2 The focus of the spotlight review was shaped by concerns regarding high levels of teenage pregnancy and alcohol related harm in the borough, including significantly high rates of alcohol hospital admissions due to alcohol.

5. Consideration of Alternatives

5.1 N/A

6. Conclusions

6.1 The Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 sets out the Cabinet response to the recommendations from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Task Group.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

8. Financial Implications

8.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

9. Equality Impact Assessment

9.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

10. Social Value

10.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

11. Net Zero and Environment

11.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

12. Health and Wellbeing

12.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

13. Customer and Resident

13.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

14. Asset and Property

14.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

15. Staffing and People Management

15.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

16. Risks

16.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

17. Policy Framework Implications

17.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

18. Impact and Opportunities on Localities


18.1 As detailed in Appendix 1

19. Background Documents

19.1 None

20. Appendices

20.1 Appendix 1 – Cabinet Response and Action Plan

 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	Appendix 1 Cabinet 25 October 2023
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Report Title	Cabinet Response to the Spotlight Review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children
Cabinet Portfolio	Children and Young People Wellbeing, Communities and Culture
Cabinet Member	Councillor Nova Charlton Councillor Anthony Burns
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 Ruth du Plessis Director of Public Health Ruthduplessis@sthelens.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Michelle Loughlin Consultant in Public Health Michelleloughlin@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	X
	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 Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee held a spotlight review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children, on April 28, 2023. The purpose of the spotlight review was to enable elected members, relevant services and key partners to:

- Understand the impact of alcohol and drugs use in pregnancy on the child.
- Share the relevant work that is already underway to prevent and reduce harm.
- Work together to identify gaps and opportunities to improve our collective response.
- Commit to the delivery of agreed actions for improvement.

1.2 Drinking alcohol or taking drugs during pregnancy, even in small quantities can be harmful for the baby and have long term effects on the child and into adulthood.

1.3 The report of the spotlight review and its recommendations for action were formally agreed by CYPS Scrutiny on the 6th of September 2023 and is submitted to Cabinet for responses as per the Council's constitution.

2. Recommendation for Decision

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) Approve the Report and Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 that sets out the recommendations from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Spotlight Review.
- ii) Provide a response to the recommendations for the next meeting of the CYPS Scrutiny Committee.

3. Purpose of this report

3.1 This report provides Cabinet with the report, recommendations and action plan of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee spotlight review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children.

4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 The Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee Workshop carried out a spotlight review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children on the 28th of April 2023.
- 4.2 Drinking alcohol or taking drugs during pregnancy, even in small quantities can be harmful for the baby and have long term effects on the child. Impacts can include miscarriage, premature birth and low birthweight. Longer term impacts of drinking in pregnancy can result in the life-long condition of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), which can cause problems with learning, behaviour, communication and physical development of bones, joints and muscles. These can create difficulties in childhood that persist throughout life, with increased likelihood of problems at school resulting in poorer life chances into adulthood. Current NHS guidance recommends complete abstinence from alcohol and drugs during pregnancy where possible.
- 4.3 The focus of the spotlight review was shaped by concerns regarding high levels of teenage pregnancy and alcohol related harm in the borough, including significantly high rates of alcohol hospital admissions due to alcohol. The spotlight study sought to bring elected members and relevant agencies together to:
- Understand the impact of alcohol and drugs use in pregnancy on the child.
 - Share the relevant work that is already underway to prevent and reduce harm relating to alcohol and drugs use in pregnancy.
 - Work together to identify gaps and opportunities to improve our collective response.
 - Commit to the delivery of agreed actions for improvement.

5. Consideration of Alternatives

- 5.1 N/A

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Report in Appendix 1 sets out the recommendations and proposed actions resulting from the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee Spotlight Review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children. It is proposed that this work is incorporated into the programme of the local Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership. Key themes for improvement focus on supporting a healthy pregnancy, improved data sharing to support better diagnosis of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and improved support for young people leaving care.
- 6.2 If agreed, the response of Cabinet to the recommendations will be presented to the next meeting of the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.1 No Equality Impact Assessment is required for the purposes of this report.

9. Social Value

9.1 As this report is not able commissioning a new service or significantly changing provision, there are limited social value impacts. However, the recommendations of this report support social value by skilling up and enabling staff across the partnership to better support local residents as appropriate to prevent and reduce the impacts of substance misuse during pregnancy.

10. Net Zero and Environment

10.1 There are no net zero and environment implications in this report.

11. Health and Wellbeing

11.1 Actions to reduce alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy are intended to have a positive impact on the physical, emotional, and mental health of children and young people in St Helens.

12. Equality and Human Rights

12.1 There are no direct human rights implications contained within this report, though a key focus of the recommendation is on providing support to pregnant women and their families to reduce the impact of substance misuse on the unborn child.

13. Customer and Resident

13.1 Actions to reduce alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy are intended to have a positive impact on the physical, emotional, and mental health of children and young people in St Helens. This will make a significant contribution to safeguarding, aspirations, attainment, social and mental wellbeing and therefore life chances of the children and young people.

14. Asset and Property

14.1 There are no asset or property implications in this report.

15. Staffing and Human Resources

15.1 The agreed actions in this report will be carried out by existing staff from the council and its provider and partner organisations.

16. Risks

16.1 There are no risks identified in this report.

17. Finance

17.1 There are no direct financial implications in this report as any changes are being delivered within current capacity.

18. Policy Framework Implications

18.1 There are no policy framework implications in this report.

19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

- 19.1 Although this is a borough wide issue, we will monitor at a locality level and ensure service provision is targeted where the need is greatest.

20. Background Documents

- 20.1 Report of CYPS on 6 September 2023.

21. Appendices

- 21.1 None


Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children

Spotlight Review Recommendations and Agreed Actions

Rec No	Recommendations	Responsible Officer	Agreed Action and Date of Implementation
1	The Chair of the St Helens Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership Delivery Group to be requested to include this work as one of the priorities within the Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership's delivery plan.	Public Health Michelle Loughlin	Actions to be incorporated into the CDP programme by November 2023
2	Deliver an awareness raising campaign within existing resources, to include age-appropriate messages on a healthy pregnancy and the risks and harm to children of alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy. To be delivered in schools, colleges, through other partner agencies, and in public spaces. Best practice would be to ensure messaging is informed by the views and opinions of children and young people, including children looked after to improve engagement.	YPDAAT Helen Jones & Lisa Jenkinson	Campaign to commence by March 2023
3	Ensure that the Council's audit of schools' and colleges' safeguarding information highlights gaps and shares good practice in relation to education about the risks and harms to children arising from drugs and alcohol use in pregnancy; and ensure this topic is flagged with Head Teachers' and Governors' Meetings.	Education Joanne Davies	Information to be incorporated into school's audit by September 2024 Topic to be flagged with Head Teachers and Governors by January 2024
4	Explore the use of shared information systems which include flags for the recording of information relating to alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy. This will help further interventions to identify, diagnose and put in place timely support and treatment for children experiencing FASD. Data sharing between drugs and alcohol services, midwifery, 0-19 Service, and Social Care systems also would be also beneficial.	IT – Mark Roberts Maternity-0-19- Toni Shepard Social Care Paula Swindlehurst Drugs and Alcohol Services Rachel Fance/ James Mawhinney	Exploratory discussions to commence by March 2024

5	Work with Care Leavers to improve their understanding of the potential harms of drugs and alcohol especially in pregnancy. This should be via appropriate advice, guidance and support, provided in a manner which ensures high levels of engagement, and promotes self-esteem, aspiration and connectedness.	Children’s Social Care Paula Swindlehurst	Progress report of action taken to improve work with care leavers around this topic by January 2024
6	Explore the opportunities to carry out research with young people on attitudes to and use of vaping.	Public Health Michelle Loughlin	Progress report on what we know about young people’s attitudes to and use of vaping March 2024
7	Ensure delivery of consistent advice, messages, and support for pregnant women regarding a healthy pregnancy, including use of alcohol, drugs, vaping, smoking, diet, breastfeeding intentions etc.	Midwifery Sue Orchard Family Hubs Ruth Du Plessis	Progress report of work undertaken January 2024

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 ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL	<h2>Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee</h2> <h3>8 January 2024</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	Cath Fogarty Director of Legal & Governance cathfogarty@sthelens.gov.uk
Contact Officer	James Morley Scrutiny Support Officer jamesmorley@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	

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 the committee's work programme conclusions is attached for confirmation.

2. Recommendation for Decision

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (i) **Review the items listed in the work programme document and agree priorities and timescales.**

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, the 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.

Reviewing the Work Programme

- 4.6 The 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 able 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. **Customer and Resident**

12.1 N/A

13. **Asset and Property**

13.1 N/A

14. **Staffing and People Management**

14.1 N/A

15. **Risks**

15.1 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.

16. **Finance**

16.1 N/A

17. **Policy Framework Implications**

17.1 N/A

18. **Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

18.1 N/A

19. **Background Documents**

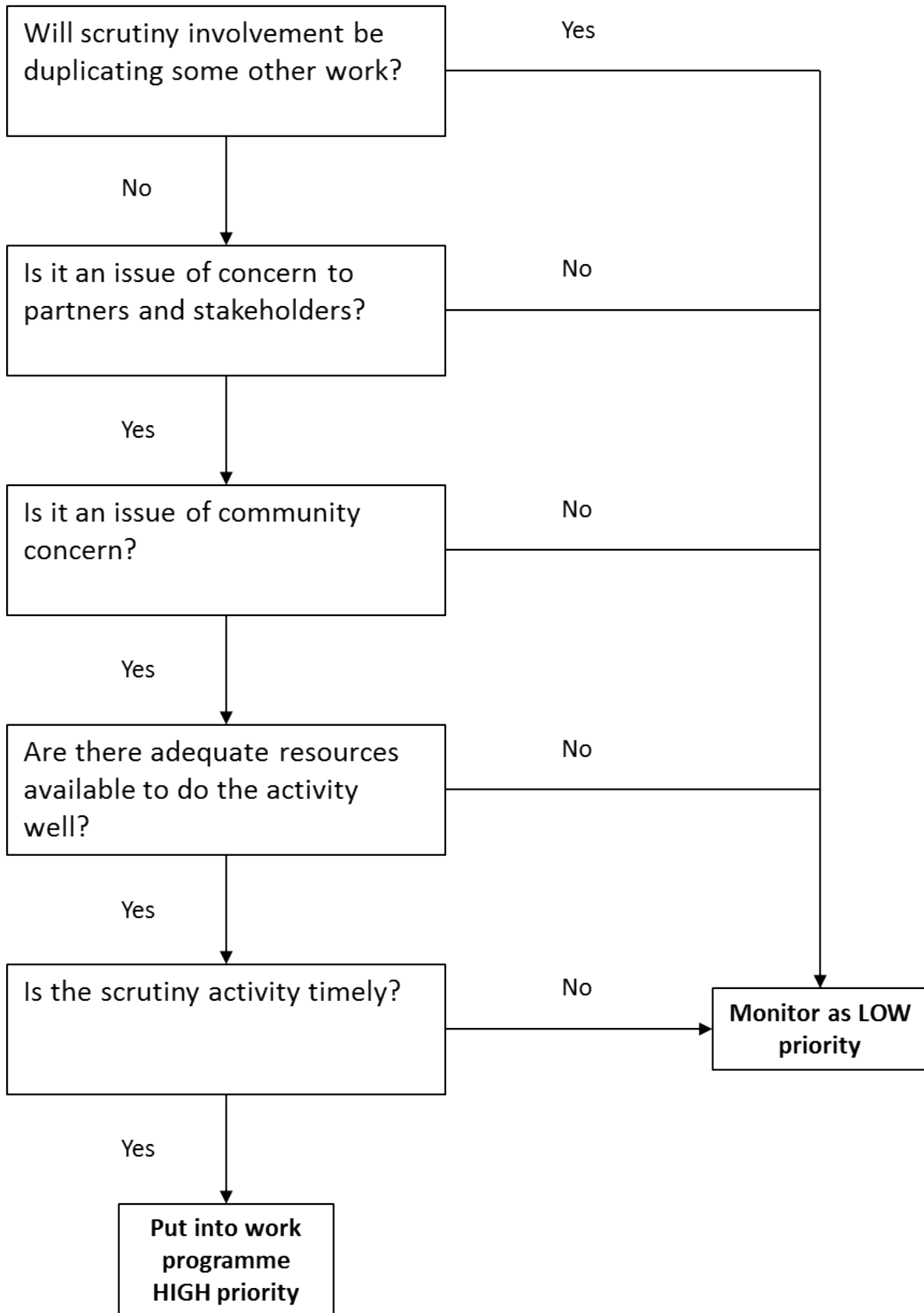
19.1 None.

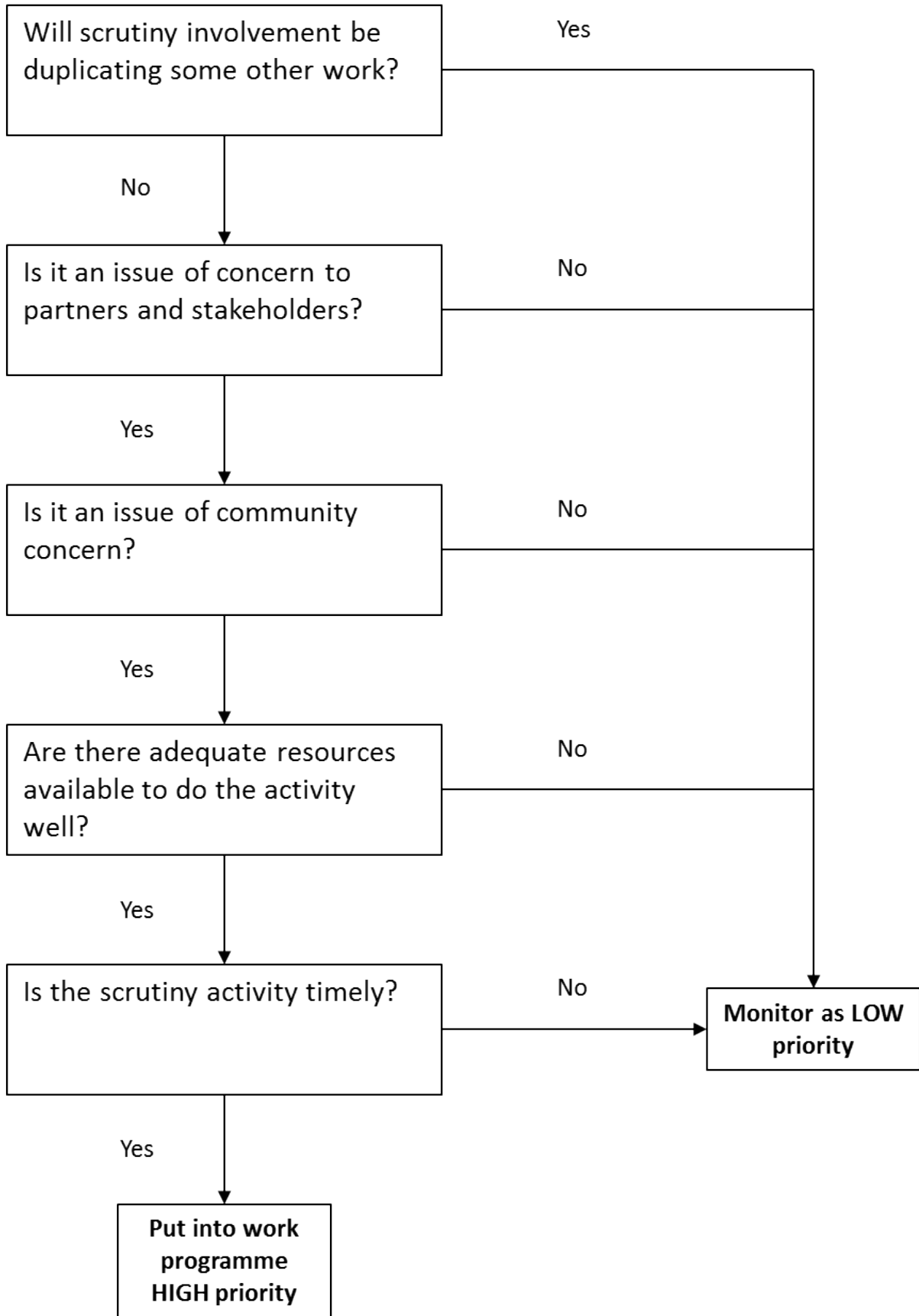
20. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Work Programme Prioritisation Aid

Appendix 2 – Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

Appendix 1 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Prioritisation Aid





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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: 08 January 2024 Time: 10:00am Venue: Room 10, Town Hall	Date: 25 March 2024 Time: 10:00am Venue: Room 10, Town Hall

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
Director’s Report/ Children’s Services Improvement Plan	Ofsted ILAC Inspection took place 23rd Sept - 4th 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 (Completed) 8 January 2024
Quarterly Performance Reports	Scrutiny Committees are responsible for reviewing the	To monitor the performance of services within	Children and Young People Cllr Charlton	Director Children’s Services	Ensure children and young people	Report to committee	6 Sept 2023 (Completed)

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	performance reports for priorities relevant to their remit.	portfolios and to hold Cabinet Members to account.	<p>Economy, Business and Skills Cllr Groucutt</p> <p>Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Anthony Burns</p>	<p>Hilary Brooks Director Public Health Ruth du Plessis</p> <p>Public Health Consultant Shirley Goodhew</p>	have a positive start in life	Standing Committee Agenda Item	<p>16 October 2023 (Completed)</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 people have the best possible chance to succeed in	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 framework; and are updated on	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
	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.	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 – Cabinet Response	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 rates, which for the 21/22 Autumn and Spring Terms were	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
	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 manner; with input from all partners including the child or	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 (Completed)

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	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
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	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	Children and Young People / Economy, Business and Skills / Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Charlton	Assistant Director Children Social Care Paula Swindlehurst CYPS Consultations and Review Officer	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
	<p>engagement and trust, enabling positive change, keeping them safe and providing the best possible services for them.</p> <p>The Report to include – Aspiration and employment opportunities for Children and Young People in St Helens</p>	<p>Helens, carried out in 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 people’s lives and to keep them safe.</p>	<p>Cllr Groucutt Cllr Burns</p>	<p>Helen Sharratt</p>			
<p>Spotlight Review to scrutinise the TESSA process and contribution to its evaluation</p>	<p>TESSA was introduced to provide schools with a streamlined system to use to request support for children and young people with SEND.</p>	<p>To consider the impact of the TESSA process, contribute to its evaluation and make appropriate recommendations.</p>	<p>Children and Young People Cllr Nova Charlton</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Education and Learning Joanne Davies</p>	<p>Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life</p>	<p>Spotlight Review</p>	<p>5 February 2024</p>
<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</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</p>	<p>Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Anthony Burns</p>	<p>Director Public Health Ruth Du Plessis Public Health Consultant</p>	<p>Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life</p>	<p>Presentation to Committee</p>	<p>25 March 2023</p>

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
	<p>will impact negatively on the health, well-being and life chances of too many of our children and young people.</p> <p>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 behaviour in later life such as drink driving and other forms of criminal behaviour.</p>	<p>people; the collective action, together with its effectiveness, to address the issue; and to make appropriate recommendations.</p>		Michelle Loughlin			

Title	Description	Purpose	Portfolio	Lead Officer	Corporate Priority	Method	Date
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 health. Half of all lifetime mental health illnesses start in teenage years	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 understand the support available, its strengths and the challenges	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>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>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 (<i>To include- Severe Pupil absenteeism rate monitoring and actions update</i>) • 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
<p>Reviewing progress of action plans arising from the previous municipal year's Spotlight Review recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing risk of harm to children arising from alcohol and substance use in pregnancy. 	<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 Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage Cllr Charlton Cllr Burns</p>	<p>Michelle Loughlin Public Health Consultant</p>	<p>Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life</p>	<p>Update to committee</p>	<p>October 2024</p>