

Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Advisory Board

Monday 28 February 2022

10.00 am Virtual Meeting via Microsoft
Teams



To: The Members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families
Committee (Advisory Board meetings only from 19 January 2022 onwards)

Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr R Williams (Vice-Chair), Cllr M Dimery, Cllr James Hunt, Cllr B Revans,
Cllr W Wallace and Cllr J Williams
The Revd T Osmond, R Hobbs and E Tipper – co-opted members

All Somerset County Council Members are invited to attend meetings of the Cabinet and
Scrutiny Committees.

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer, Strategic Manager - Governance and
Democratic Services - 18 February 2022

For further information about the meeting, please contact Neil Milne on 01823 357628 or
NDmilne@somerset.gov.uk or Fiona Abbott on 01823 357628 or fabbott@somerset.gov.uk

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This Advisory Board will be open to the public and press. The agenda and the attached reports
and background papers are available on the Council's website on
www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers

**Are you considering how your conversation today and the actions you
propose to take contribute towards making Somerset Carbon Neutral by
2030?**



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AGENDA

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee (Advisory Board meetings only from 19 January 2022 onwards) - 10.00 am Monday 28 February 2022

**** Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe ****

1 **Apologies for Absence**

to receive Members' apologies

2 **Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils can be viewed on the Council Website at [County Councillors membership of Town, City, Parish or District Councils](#) and this will be displayed in the meeting room (Where relevant).

The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via request to the Democratic Service Team.

3 **Notes of the Advisory Board meeting held on Tuesday 25 January 2022** (Pages 9 - 18)

The Advisory Board is asked to accept the notes of the meeting.

4 **Public Question Time**

The Chair will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. **These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chair's discretion.**

5 **Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee Work Programme** (Pages 19 - 30)

To receive an update from the Governance Manager, Scrutiny and discuss any items for the forthcoming work programme. To assist the discussion, attached are:

- a) The Committee's work programme
- b) The Committee's Outcome Tracker

Please use the following link to view the latest Cabinet Forward Plan of planned key decisions that have been published on the Council's website [Cabinet Forward Plan of Key Decisions](#)

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee (Advisory Board meetings only from 19 January 2022 onwards) - 10.00 am Monday 28 February 2022

6 **Inclusion Inquiry** (Pages 31 - 47)

To welcome Dr Rob Hart, Assistant Director, Inclusion and Mr Brian Walton, Head Teacher, Brookside Academy to the meeting for this agenda item.

Note – The Chair will be allowing 1 hour 20 – 1 hour 30 mins for agenda items 6 and 7 to allow for discussion.

7 **Inclusion and engagement in education** (Pages 48 – 77)

To consider presentation from Dr Rob Hart, Assistant Director, Inclusion, Mr Phil Curd, Strategic Manager and Ms Emily Walters, Head of Virtual School.

An overview presentation will be given at the meeting to draw out the main points.

8 **Homes for Children** (Pages 79 - 86)

To consider presentation from Ms Helen Price, Assistant Director Commissioning & Performance and Ms Julie Breeze, Strategic Manager.

Note – The Chair will be allowing 50 minutes for this agenda item to allow for discussion.

9 **Items for information**

(a) Trauma Informed Somerset

If Committee members have any questions or comments on the information, please contact fabbott@somerset.gov.uk in the first instance and before the date of the meeting.

10 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chair may raise any items of urgent business.

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General Guidance notes for Somerset County Council advisory virtual meetings

1. Advisory Virtual Council Public Meetings

Please be advised that this is an Advisory Board meeting and as a consultative meeting without any decisions to be made. It is not a meeting as defined under the Local Government Act 1972 or Local Government Act 2000 and therefore can take place virtually.

2. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 01823 357628. They can also be accessed via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers.

3. Members' Code of Conduct requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed on the council website at [Code of Conduct](#).

4. Minutes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Advisory Board will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

5. Public Question Time

If you wish to speak, please contact Democratic Services by 5pm 3 clear working days before the meeting. Email democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 01823 357628.

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

At the Chair's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Board's agenda – providing you have given the required notice. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Board's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 20 minutes in total.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chair may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted to three minutes only.

In line with the council's procedural rules, if any member of the public interrupts a meeting the Chair will warn them accordingly.

If that person continues to interrupt or disrupt proceedings the Chair can ask the Democratic Services Officer to remove them as a participant from the meeting.

6. **Meeting Etiquette**

- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Switch off video if you are not speaking.
- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- Speak clearly (if you are not using video then please state your name)
- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.
- Switch off your video and microphone after you have spoken.
- There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called turn on live captions which provides subtitles on the screen.

7. **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to the Meeting Administrator so that the relevant Chair can inform those present at the start of the meeting.

We would ask that, as far as possible, members of the public aren't filmed unless they are playing an active role such as speaking within a meeting and there may be occasions when speaking members of the public request not to be filmed.

Advisory Board meetings are not recorded by the Council as they are not formal meetings.

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SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ADVISORY BOARD

Notes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Advisory Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 25 January 2022 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr L Redman (Chair), Cllr James Hunt, Cllr J Lock (substitute), Cllr B Revans and Cllr W Wallace

The Revd T Osmond, R Hobbs, E Tipper - co-opted members

Other Members present: Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr C Paul, Cllr H Davies, Cllr A Kendall, Cllr D Johnson, Cllr D Loveridge and Cllr T Munt

Apologies for absence: Cllr R Williams and Cllr M Dimery (substituted by Cllr J Lock)

1 **Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 2

There were no new declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2 **Minutes from the previous meeting held on Wednesday 1 December 2021**
- Agenda Item 3

The minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 1 December 2021 were noted and no amendments suggested.

3 **Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

4 **Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee Work Programme** -
Agenda Item 5

The work programme and outcome tracker and the Council's Forward Plan of proposed key decisions in the forthcoming months, including Cabinet meetings, was considered. During the discussion the following matters were discussed and highlighted: -

- The agenda items scheduled for the February meeting
- Cllr Revans – highlighted the important issue of education attendance – Dr Hart, the Council's Assistant Director, Inclusion, said that the engagement of vulnerable learners in education will be included and covered in the items scheduled for the next meeting (Inclusion Inquiry and School Exclusions)

- Cllr Jane Lock – asked that consideration be given to including the following items on the work plan – (a) Family Hubs & plans for Somerset; (b) issue of unborn babies and how dovetail into other services; (c) update on Early Years SEND non key decision paper
- Noted that as coming to end of municipal year, these matters will need to be picked up by the new Committee, following the elections
- The meeting on Monday 4 April will be cancelled and there will be an informal joint workshop with the Adults & Health advisory board on Wednesday 6 April @ 10 am.

5 **Partnership Children & Young People's Plan 2022 - 2025** - Agenda Item 6

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting for this agenda item – the Council's Deputy Director Children Services, Ms Claire Winter, the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Business Manager, Ms Caroline Dowson, and the Participation Officer, Ms Fi Phur.

Ahead of the PowerPoint presentation and consideration of the report, Ms Winter briefly provided the context to the item – that it links to the later agenda item in relation to the budget; it was felt it would be helpful for members to understand how the financial resources that are available to Children Services are used in relation to both Children Services planning and also how that links into the Somerset Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2022 – 2025.

Ms Dowson and Ms Phur covered the following in the presentation of the draft Somerset partnership CYPP 2022 - 2025: -

- the 3 agreed priorities – keeping children and young people safe (priority 1); supporting physical and emotional health and resilience (priority 2); enabling young people to learn and thrive (priority 3)
- safeguarding aspects are covered in priority 1 through existing strategies and governance structures
- the plan will coordinate universal and targeted activity from existing strategies and plans, with specified accountability
- there will be progress reporting from Quarter 1 onwards in 2022/23
- provided information on the vision of the plan and principles underpinning the vision
- have consulted widely with children and young people on the draft plan and referred to the issues highlighted through the 'make your mark' survey responses (2,500), and that education and health are given as being the most important issues to young people
- the plan is still in draft but it is unlikely the priorities will change and are still welcoming feedback
- noted that some actions are still being collated (so not formally signed off)

- provided details of the bodies 'holding the actions' that will meet the priorities.

The advisory board asked detailed question and made a number of comments, which were responded to at the meeting, as follows: -

- accountability and monitoring – there will be reporting on quarterly basis; will also consider where, and how best to, provide information on website; advised that are intending to run further online safeguarding weeks where would be able to link closely to the plan and that this also includes young people
- voice of children and young people and their families – the partnership will be asked to consider how the voice of the children and young people is included in the quarterly reporting – also have Youth Forum for example, which provides influence and challenge to the CYPP
- query on transitions – there are multiple transition points on the children and young people's journey – noted and priority 2 will look at principles going forward too
- link between education and health and support for struggling families and asked for this to be a separate thread in the plan – this is a cross cutting area and see in universal plans as well. There is a specific education subgroup under the governance structure of the SSCP which has developed a dashboard looking at attendance and young people who go missing from education. This will be tracked on a quarterly basis too
- early years does not seem to be mentioned – in response it was clarified that there are good reporting mechanisms for early years into the CYPP and is cross cutting issue as well
- the impact of poverty on families & impact on services and ability to implement the plan – aware and are linking with colleagues in housing for example so do get whole picture
- query where mental health services (CAMHS) features in the plan – clarified that this is part of the multi agency commissioning board, which is run by the Clinical Commissioning Group. The Board has started to populate the CYPP as there is a strong voice from young people about their concerns for emotional health and poor mental health
- query about how the voice of parents of young people features, as can be good resource on how services can be improved – said this was a valid point and mentioned that do seek their voice / lived experience on their child's intervention
- moving toward unitary status and question about how the districts are involved in the formation of plan and going forward; need to ensure other new bodies (such as the Integrated Care System) are included – this point was acknowledged – reiterated that this is a partnership plan and the districts' are fully included

- governance and next steps for the plan – the plan will be taken through the SSCP governance and will go to Cabinet / Full Council post-election and the Health & Wellbeing Board (because of the wider health determinants that relate to the plan)
- both climate and transport were identified as the key issues raised by young people and a question was asked about how these concerns are reflected in the CYPP and that both should be reflected in the cross-cutting themes in the plan – Ms Phur confirmed that their voices are being heard and reference was made to the fact that young people are sitting on the boards for the Bus User and stakeholder group which feeds into the Transport Strategy and they are also working with the climate emergency team.

On behalf of the advisory board, the Chair thanked Ms Dowson and Ms Phur for the detailed presentation and for the excellent graphics and the policy on a page information, which provides links to all activity going on across partnership; that it is important to recognise the voice of child through this and thanked them for the work on engagement with children and young people; asked officers to consider the points and comments made around transitions, education, early years, the parents voice and districts involvement in the future unitary work.

The advisory board noted the presentation and report and the consultation undertaken with children, young people and stakeholders on the new plan and the new priorities for the plan: -

- Keeping children and young people safe
- Supporting physical, emotional health and resilience
- Enabling children and young people to learn and thrive.

6 **Children's Services Business Plan and resourcing through the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2022 - 2023** - Agenda Item 7

The Chair welcomed the Council's Deputy Director Children Services, Ms Claire Winter and Ms Sian Kenny, Strategic Manager, Finance Business Partnership to the meeting for this agenda item. The advisory board had received a report from the Director of Finance which summarised the key areas of specific interest within the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for Children and Families Services for 2022/23 together with the report considered at the Cabinet meeting on 19 January 2022 and associated appendices. The advisory board was invited to (a) consider the proposed budget for 2022/23 for Children's and Family Services budgets; and (b) review / comment on specific proposals for changes from previous years, to offer assurance to Cabinet and/or identify any matters for consideration that would like to highlight to the Cabinet.

The advisory board additionally received a PowerPoint presentation which provided the context and the links and inter relationship with the Children's Services Business Plan and the Children's Services MTFP 2022/23.

In the presentation, Ms Winter highlighted the following: -

- outlined how Children's Services supports the SCC Business Plan
- how the Somerset Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) links to the priorities and the Children's Transformation Programme (including, for example SEND Improvement) and the affiliated programme / joint commissioning (for example CAMHS Transformation Plan)
- the different time periods for the areas of work under the transformation plan and that the discussion on the MTFP relates to the 2022/23 budget
- there is the business-as-usual work / statutory functions they undertake, so this isn't the totality of the budget.

The Chair thanked Ms Winter for the time and effort in putting the information together and asked that the information be shared with all Councillors.

The Chair then invited Ms Kenny to present the Children's Services MTFP for 2022/23 and the following main points were raised: -

- total investment in Children's Services is £12.3m, an increase of £13.3% and referred to the information in Table 1 of the Report, which provided detail on the Children's budget
- Director confidence in the MTFP / budget is 'medium' – this is a robust process but there are unknowns / risks, such as the impact on staff capacity across health and social care and education (and unforeseen pressures) and there are mitigating actions
- provided information on the additional funding of £9.8m, as detailed in Table 2 of the Report
- provided information on anticipated cost reduction from transformation, savings and income proposals as detailed in Table 3 of the Report
- referred to the earmarked use of reserves, relating to 2 programmes – Family Safeguarding (£1.3m) and school reorganisation (Crewkerne and Ilminster) (£0.43m) and the capital programme new bids, around building local capacity and sufficiency, including the purchase of residential properties for care placements and investment in homes for children with disabilities (£9.9m across the next 3 years of the MTFP)
- highlighted next steps in budget process ahead of the Full Council meeting on 23 February 2022, which sets the revenue and capital budgets for 2022/23 and Council Tax levels.

The advisory board asked detailed questions and made a number of comments on the Business Plan and the MTFP proposals, which were responded to at the meeting, as follows: -

- request for clarity on the information relating to Children's Services, re SEND, as set out in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet Report (Transformation, savings and income generation proposals). The Council's Assistant Director Inclusion, Dr Hart confirmed that there is no plan to take money out of SENDIAS and what has been agreed is to put additional funding into the SENDIAS budget. Dr Hart said that he is happy to circulate an explanation in writing and share with the Committee. Ms Kenny further explained the principle that a negative figure equates to reinvestment in budget and a positive figure is a reduction in budget. For Children's Services specifically, the figures in the pie chart in the PowerPoint presentation add to £2.1m (anticipated cost reduction from transformation) and is the savings required for Children's Services in 2022/23. It was agreed that a note be circulated to the Committee providing clarification on these points.
- question around the additional statutory capacity for educational psychology and confidence that its sufficient to meet demand – Dr Hart said that work has been done based on assumptions on the number of assessments, reviews and future need. Also aware of the pressures SENCO's are under, especially in smaller schools and are looking at ways to offer practical support to them, to try to reduce some of the burden.
- comment made as to why the 'transport for Yr7 and Yr8 pupils from Ilminster to Crewkerne' is detailed separately to 'home to school transport' in the Report – the Council's Assistant Director, Education, Partnership and Skills, Ms Walker said that this is because of the difference between the MTFP and the budget and are at point of transition, so next time we would not expect to see that separated out in any way.
- question about what work is happening around the home to school transport budget – Dr Hart confirmed that work is ongoing focusing on this issue and are also engaging regionally and at a Council wide level.
- clarification requested on the Early Years funding situation, detailed in the Report. In response Ms Kenny referred to the appendix to the Cabinet Report and to the report to the Schools Forum on 12 January 2022 re the Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement (DSG) 2022/23. The Schools Forum is looking at the Early Years Block of the DSG allocation and the increase in entitlement rates. It was agreed that further information will be shared with the Committee, to help members understand the impact on the whole system (to be added to Scrutiny Committee's work programme).
- question asked about the confidence levels expressed in the Report and the robustness of assumptions around demographics and demand – Ms

Winter said that the assessment has been made that the risk is 'medium' based on a number of factors - the demographic information which comes out nationally inputs into the likely demand; the impact of the pandemic on demand for Children's services is not fully known but the key factor locally is complexity and older children coming into care system, which in turn is more expensive.

- question as to whether there is sufficient resource / capital for the Homes2Inspire building local capacity programme. The Chair highlighted that Homes for Somerset will be an agenda item on the next meeting of the advisory board and will cover these issues. Ms Winter outlined the benefits of Somerset having its own capacity and resource and the Cabinet member, Cllr Chilcott highlighted there had been extra funding received from the DfE which enables more to be done than initially planned and that she welcomed the increase in budget.
- the Chair said that it was important for the advisory board to express the concern that there seems to be a degree of uncertainty around elements of the budget and that risks are ever more complex.
- question as to why the timeline information had been presented in a 'Gantt chart' and also on use of acronyms – Dr Hart said that, for example, the solid arrow on the chart for the Written Statement of Action SEND & Improvement Plan, reflects the period of time for the piece of work but there will be continued workstreams beyond then. Ms Winter confirmed that 'FDAC' stood for the Family and Drug Alcohol Court. This is a national initiative which the Council received funding for / match funding from the Ministry of Justice.

On behalf of the advisory board, the Chair thanked officers for the presentation and that Members still have the opportunity to feed into the budget and MTFP process. The advisory board noted the MTFP for Children and Families Services 2022 – 2023 and the Children's Services Plan and requested additional information / clarification on the following: -

- With reference to the additional funding information set out in Table 2 on page 41 of the Report, information on reasons for increases
- Clarification on how the Ilminster & Crewkerne transport position is shown in the Budget Report
- Clarification on Early Years funding / hourly rates, detailed on page 47 of the Report
- Clarity on SENDIAS funding and clarity on how investments and savings were displayed in Appendix 2 Cabinet Report
- Acceptance of the uncertainty in the budget due to unknowns around the long-term effects and impact of Covid.

7 **Task & Finish Group - update** - Agenda Item 8

The Chair provided a brief verbal update on the Task and Finish Group – Continuity of Children’s Services through Local Government Reorganisation, which the advisory board noted. It was also agreed that the full statement will be shared with members and is set out below: -

The Task and Finish Group (Continuity of Children’s Services through Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset) met on Tuesday 11 January to consider the current progress made and to think about the next steps. The Task and Finish Group members reflected on the significant amount of work this review would involve and the impending Council elections. The elections and the proximity of the pre-election notice period (beginning on 21 March) meant there were now only 2 scheduled meetings of the Committee before the pre-election notice period begins.

The group also acknowledged the officer led work already underway in the LGR process.

After careful consideration the Task and Finish Group members agreed that it would be very difficult for them to complete and conclude the evidence gathering aspect of the review, then interpret that information in a timely manner and make appropriate recommendations, as such they strongly believed the review would benefit from a robust process and specific input from children’s services. The Task and Finish Group felt that, in their opinion as members of this group and Children and Families Scrutiny Committee, that it would be more advantageous to the young people and families for the newly formed joint scrutiny committee, to take up and include this Task and Finish review into the transition work for children’s services, in their forward programme of business.

The members of the group thanked officers and members that went out of their way to help the review.

8 **Items for information** - Agenda Item 9

The advisory board noted the information item which had been circulated since the last meeting: -

(a) Family Safeguarding in Somerset - interim evaluation

It was noted that the decision had been taken that did not need to proceed with taking the scrutiny review update to the Scrutiny Committee, as will now incorporate much of that work into a best practice plan on how scrutiny will ideally work in the new authority.

9 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 10

There were no other items of business.

(The meeting ended at 12.17 pm)

CHAIR

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Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2022

Committee meeting dates / proposed agenda items	Lead Officer/Item Lead
Monday 28 February 2022 @ 10 am	
School Exclusions - update on Task & Finish group	Dr Rob Hart
Inclusion Inquiry	Dr Rob Hart
To include engagement of vulnerable learners in education	
Homes for Children	Helen Price
Items for information:	
(a) Trauma Informed Somerset	Vikki Hearn
6 April @ 10 am – Informal joint workshop with Adults & Health Scrutiny Cttee	
Feedback from transition arrangements – preparing for adulthood	
Mental health support in the community / response times	

Suggested agenda items / for joint workshop with Adults & Health Scrutiny Committee

- Immunisations
- Adoption Medicals
- The impact on Children and Families of the next stage of migration/roll out of Universal Credit.

Meeting dates for 2022

10 am start – to be held in The Luttrell Room, County Hall, Taunton

- **Tuesday 25 January**
- **Monday 28 February**
- **Monday 4 April – meeting cancelled**
- **Monday 20 June – 2 pm**
- **Monday 5 September**
- **Monday 3 October**
- **Monday 7 November**
- **Monday 12 December**

(What impact does that have on Children in Somerset?)

Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2022

Note: Members of the Scrutiny Committee and all other Members of Somerset County Council are invited to contribute items for inclusion in the work programme. Please contact Democratic Services (01823) 359500 & democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk who will assist you in submitting your item.

Version as at 31 January 2022

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

Agenda items	owner	Agreed Outcome	RAG Status
24 January 2020			
Family Safeguarding	Louise Palmer	<p>It was suggested and agreed that an update would be provided in 6 months.</p> <p>Update November 2020 - Due to the impact of Covid, the roll out of Family Safeguarding was postponed until October 2020. The impact of this model on social work practice and evidencing the improvements in children's lives will start to be seen in the first 9 to 12 months from implementation</p> <p>Update April 2021 - Update provided to the Cabinet meeting on 21 April 2021 circulated to the Scrutiny Cttee.</p> <p>December 2021 – item deferred to next meeting.</p> <p>Update January 2022 – item for information circulated.</p>	Completed – January 2022
9 July 2020			
Unitary update	Julian Wooster	<p>DCS and team to prepare an issues paper around preparing for transition – Children's Services.</p> <p>Update December 2020 – terms of reference being developed, to be taken forward via Task and Finish group.</p> <p>Update January 2021 – proposed terms of reference discussed</p> <p>Update 3 March 2021 – membership confirmed at meeting</p> <p>Update 7 July 2021 – update report received at meeting. Update to be on agenda for September meeting</p> <p>Update 9 September 2021 – update on restart of the Task & Finish Group</p> <p>Update 25 January 2022 – verbal update on work and statement circulated. Review work to be taken up by joint scrutiny committee in its forward programme of business.</p>	Completed – January 2022
7th October 2020 – joint workshop with Adults and health Scrutiny Committee			
Transition arrangements – preparing for adulthood	Mel Lock / Julian Wooster	<p>Joint Adults & Health / Children & Families scrutiny workshop welcomed and from each of the workshops any actions arising would be articulated and tracked and feedback to the relevant Scrutiny Committee and added to future workplans.</p> <p>January 2022 – item on informal joint workshop with Adults Cttee on 6 April 2022</p>	Joint informal workshop on 6 April 2022

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

12th November 2020			
Scrutiny review	Jamie Jackson	<p>Detailed update provided about the background to the review, recommendations agreed, and actions taken. Focused on Recommendations 5, 7, 10 and that target is to ensure that all recommendations have been fully embedded by March 2021.</p> <p>December 2021 - add as an item for information to next meeting. January 2022 – decision had been taken that did not need to proceed with taking the scrutiny review update to the Scrutiny Committee, as will now incorporate much of that work into a best practice plan on how scrutiny will ideally work in the new authority.</p>	Completed - January 2022
2nd December 2020			
Written Statement of Action	Julian Wooster	The Director provided a detailed report which provided a further update about the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) which priorities the areas' work on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the forthcoming 18 – 24 months. A copy of the signed-off WSoA had also been provided to the Committee. The Committee discussed the best way to add value and what it should focus its efforts on	This is a key ongoing programme of work
		<p>Agreed: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note that following the focused work on School Exclusions, a report on the timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) will be considered at the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 27 January 2021. 2. That, in view of the significant challenges in Somerset, the SEND Improvement Board be encouraged to closely monitor the work joint working improvements needed between partners to support children with Autism and other associated neuro-development conditions. 	<i>EHCP deep dive</i> October 2021 mtg

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

		<p>3. That the following areas within the WSoA will be explored in more detail by the Scrutiny Committee: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leadership (Improvement Priority 2) ➤ ASD (Improvement Priority 5) (see recommendation 2 above) ➤ Inclusive Schools (Improvement Priority 6) ➤ Performance Monitoring <p>4. The Chair and Vice Chair will meet to discuss the scheduling of the areas of work and expectations in terms of reports for example.</p>	<p><i>Update on WSoA – Dec 2021 mtg Report Inclusion Inquiry – Feb 2022 mtg</i></p> <p>Educational performance issues – see October 2021 and December 2021 mtgs</p>
27 January 2021			
Children’s Services data overview		<p>AGREED: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the presentation be noted and welcomed in helping to inform the future work of the Committee. 2. That further work is needed to consider what the data implies and to frame and articulate this future work. 3. That the Chair and Vice Chair will meet to discuss this further. 	On-going
3 March 2021			
Overview of prevention work	Louise Palmer	<p>Ms Palmer was asked to share details of the Early Help Board meetings, so those members who are interested can dip into them, as observers. The Cttee noted that early help is delivered by many partners and it can happen at any time</p> <p>Ms Palmer to provide a briefing note on early help, to be shared with all members, to include an explanation about how early help relates to prevention particularly in the sense of being reactive rather than proactive (context).</p> <p>Formed part of the Family Safeguarding update to January 2022.</p>	Completed – January 2022

(Our focus is - What impact does that have on the Children in Somerset?)

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

9 June 2021 – informal			
Homes for children in Somerset	Helen Price	Feedback report in 6 months	Item for January mtg - changed to February 2022 meeting
7 July 2021			
Work programme		Scrutiny Manager to clarify responsibilities between the Adults and Health Committee and the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee. For further review: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on the extent of the impact of COVID on children & young people's education in Somerset – raised at meeting on 7 July 2021 	Pending Pending
6 months on - learning from the voice of children & young people in the later stages of the pandemic	Fi Phur	Received presentation and update on development of the CYPP 2022 – 2025 and to hear what young people have said directly about their experiences. This followed item on agenda of 12 November 2020 meeting. The Chair summed up the discussion as follows: – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> heard about the development of the next CYPP and how it is being shaped and ensure lessons learnt and that young people are instrumental in this. good to hear about the health and wellbeing intern and about the work they are doing and asked if they could come to a future Scrutiny Committee meeting to update members about this work. noted the safeguarding animation and training to help the LA Designated Officer (LADO) and GP's. asked for some case studies to be provided which could be shared widely (<i>you said, we did</i> etc.). asked that further information on the 'Big Tent' and <i>Kooth</i> be circulated to the Committee. asked that a briefing note about summer activities and eligibility, be circulated to all members. 	Completed New CYPP considered at Cttee mtg in January 2022

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

School Exclusions	Dr Rob Hart	The Committee asked for more information on the local first panel model and for an update in 6 months on progress actions taken on the recommendations from the Committee's Task and Finish Group and the future work outlined in the presentation	Now Feb 2022 mtg
9 September 2021			
Work programme		To add to work plan: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out of Pantry Project etc and support to children & families 	Pending
4 October 2021			
Work programme	Dr Rob Hart	Add update on Inclusion Inquiry to work plan	Now Feb 2022 mtg
8 November 2021			
Work programme		To consider for work plan: - Issues around delivery of PHSE programme in schools, the benefits & challenges posed	Pending
	Caroline Dowson	Thematic Report – to be added to work plan.	Pending
West Somerset Opportunity Area	Julia Ridge	Asked for the outcomes / summary report from the work to be shared.	Pending
Trauma Informed Approach	Vikki Hearn	Agreed that a progress update be provided in 3 months.	Now Feb 2022 mtg
1 December 2021			
Work programme		It was agreed that: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governance Specialist liaise with the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee regarding the scheduling / prioritisation of the joint workshop items detailed in the work plan. • The Chair asked that the Adoption Medicals item (lessons learnt) be brought to the Committee at the earliest opportunity. 	Pending

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following 'Items for information' now be items on the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee - (a) Scrutiny review update; (b) Progress on Actions from Joint Workshop in October 2020 – Transition arrangements preparing for adulthood 	(a) see above (b) April 2022 - workshop mtg with Adults Cttee
Education Strategy for Somerset	Amelia Walker	Received detailed presentation on the development of an Education Strategy for Somerset. Feedback on the development of the Strategy to be added to the work plan.	Pending – progress update to June 2022 provisionally
Progress update on Written Statement of Action (WSOA)	Dr Rob Hart	Received detailed presentation / progress update on the WSoA. The WSoA be brought back to a future meeting to provide information in more depth on the following – the items identified in 'red' on the progress overview (listening to CYP and their families; consistency of practice); clarity on resourcing point; data and digital inclusion; explanation / clarity on the relationship with the developing Education Strategy. The Chair and the Vice Chair to discuss with officers the best way forward for this.	Pending – progress update to June2022 provisionally
25 January 2022			
Work programme		Education attendance – issue of engagement of vulnerable learners in education will be included in the Inclusion Inquiry / School Exclusions items at next meeting	February 2022 mtg
		Agreed to cancel meeting on 4 April and there will be a joint informal workshop with Adults Scrutiny cttee on feedback from transitions; mental health support in the community	Joint informal workshop – 6 April
		To consider for work plan: - (a) Family Hubs & plans for Somerset; (b) issue of unborn babies and how dovetail into other services; (c) update on Early Years SEND non key decision paper	Pending
		Early Years funding and feedback from Schools Forum on DSG	Pending

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

<p>Partnership Children & Young People's Plan 2022 - 2025</p>	<p>Claire Winter, Caroline Dowson and Fi Phur</p>	<p>Ms Winter outlined how the financial resources that are available to Children Services are used in relation to both Children Services planning and also how that links into the Somerset Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2022 – 2025. Members then received a detailed presentation on the draft Somerset partnership CYPP and the 3 agreed priorities - keeping children and young people safe (priority 1); supporting physical and emotional health and resilience (priority 2); enabling young people to learn and thrive (priority 3)</p> <p>The Chair thanked officers for the detailed presentation and for the excellent graphics and the policy on a page information, which provides links to all activity going on across partnership; that it is important to recognise the voice of child through this and thanked them for the work on engagement with children and young people; asked officers to consider the points and comments made around transitions, education, early years, the parents voice and districts involvement in the future unitary work.</p>	<p>Completed - January 2022</p>
<p>Children's Services Business Plan and resourcing through the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2022 - 2023</p>	<p>Claire Winter, Sian Kenny</p>	<p>The advisory board considered report from the Council's Director of Finance, which summarised the key areas of specific interest within the Medium-Term Financial Plan to the scrutiny committee for Children and Families. The advisory board was invited to (a) consider the proposed budget for 2022/23 for Children's and Family Services budgets; and (b) review / comment on specific proposals for changes from previous years, to offer assurance to Cabinet and/or identify any matters for consideration that would like to highlight to the Cabinet.</p> <p>The advisory board additionally received a PowerPoint presentation which provided the context and the links and inter relationship with the Children's Services Business Plan and the Children's Services MTFP 2022/23.</p>	<p>Completed - January 2022</p>

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

		<p>The Chair thanked officers for the presentation and that Members still have the opportunity to feed into the budget and MTFP process. The advisory board noted the MTFP for Children and Families Services 2022 – 2023 and the Children’s Services Plan and requested additional information / clarification on the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With reference to the additional funding information set out in Table 2 on page 41 of the Report, information on reasons for increases • Clarification on how the Ilminster & Crewkerne transport position is shown in the Budget Report • Clarification on Early Years funding / hourly rates, detailed on page 47 of the Report • Clarity on SENDIAS funding and clarity on how investments and savings were displayed in Appendix 2 Cabinet Report • Acceptance of the uncertainty in the budget due to unknowns around the long-term effects and impact of Covid. 	
Items for information		Family Safeguarding in Somerset - interim evaluation – Louise Palmer	Completed January 2022

The CYPP 2019-2022 had been produced following a multi-agency process, overseen by Somerset Children’s Trust.

The CYPP had 4 priorities: **Supported Families; Healthy Lives; A Great Education; Positive Outcomes.**

2021 - 22 Municipal Year

Version as at 31.01.22

Completed	Action complete and will be removed from tracker for next meeting and retained on Master Tracker document.
Pending	Action on-going or plans in place to address.

(Our focus is - What impact does that have on the Children in Somerset?)

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

Incomplete

No action currently in place with a minimum of 3 months since action agreed.

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Inclusion Inquiry

Why did we do this?

In order to make the difference we will undertake the following set of actions:

Ref	Outcome	Action	Lead	Milestone	Sep - Dec 20	Jan - Apr 21	May - Aug 21	Sep - Dec 21	Y2
6.1	We will have developed an evidence-based understanding of what good inclusive practice looks like that is school- driven, detailed, specific and relevant to the size, type and phase of school	Secure agreement across the school community about what good evidence-based inclusive practice looks like	Head Teacher/PRU Representative	A panel of SEND experts is recruited which will include children, young people & families' voices, drawing on families' lived experiences and local and national expertise, for an inquiry into evidence-based practice, particularly in the context of supporting pupils with Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) and behaviours that challenge					COMPLETED
				Inquiry evidence gathering and site visits which build upon the recent Scrutiny inquiry into the impact of exclusions is completed				COMPLETED	
				Recommendations are drafted and a proposal that includes a framework of indicators for intervention is developed which will be shared with all key stakeholders in order to gain a common understanding of what 'inclusion' means in Somerset				COMPLETED	
				Recommendations are finalised and a commitment is secured from our schools to a Somerset model of inclusion				EMBEDDING	
				Co-produce with School Leaders a framework of indicators that would trigger support and intervention with clearly defined thresholds and escalation stages				IN PROG	

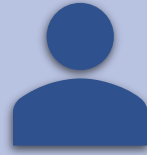
What this is and what this isn't?

This is not an audit or and evaluation

It is an opportunity to ask questions about Inclusion in Somerset and gauge the landscape.

Then come up with some suggestions for improvement

Two sources of information



An open gateway



A focused targeted questioning approach

Who – Current Committee membership

Chair – Brian Walton

From SASH - Jen Jacklin (King Arthur's)

From SAPH – Helen Taylor (St Joseph's)

From SEN.SE – Natalie Hanna (Mendip)

PRU - Kim Lawrence (TD Partnership College)

From Inclusion Somerset - Jenny Pearce Riddy

Parent Carer Forum Rep - Tina Emery

Engagement & Participation Officer – Lauren Oliver

Clinical Commissioning Group - Kate Staveley

Critical friend – Prof. Mel Ainscow (Manchester)

Critical friend – Prof. Brahm Norwich (Exeter)

Open Gateway - Spring 21

The 'Open Gateway' took place Spring 21. This was an open invitation for parents, children and young people and professionals to give their views on inclusion in Somerset.

All data was then analysed and formed part of the evidence in developing the Recommendations

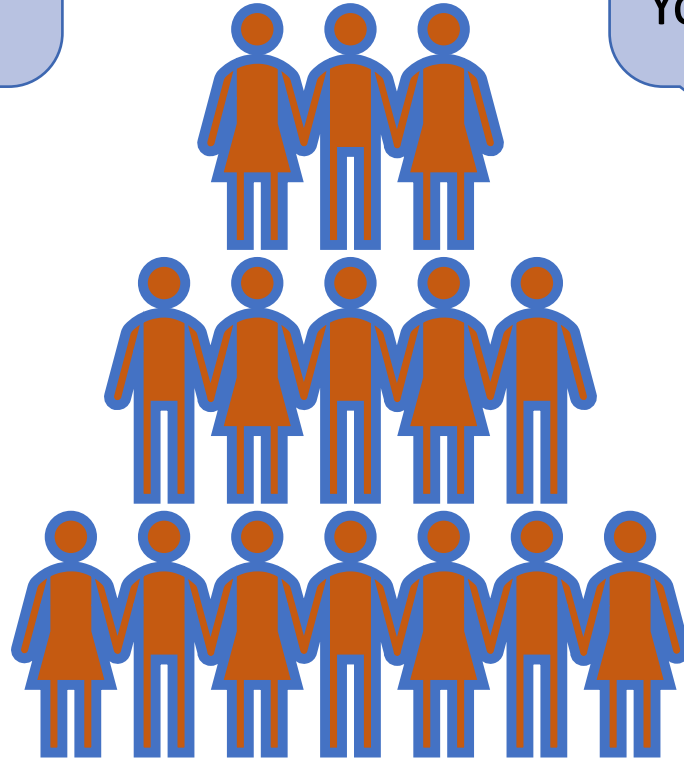
8 school
leaders
(as panel
members)

150+
Children and
Young People

95 people in
the community
(in writing)

40+ parents
and carers
(listening
event)

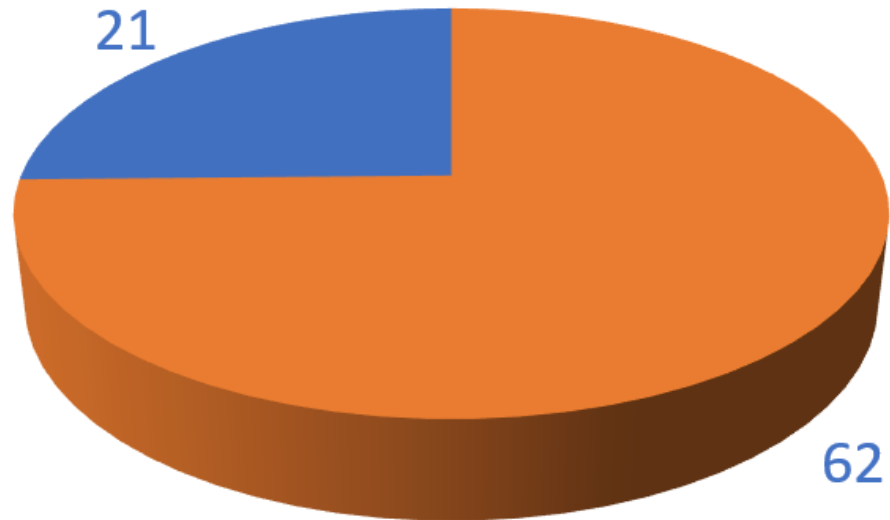
80
professionals
(in writing)



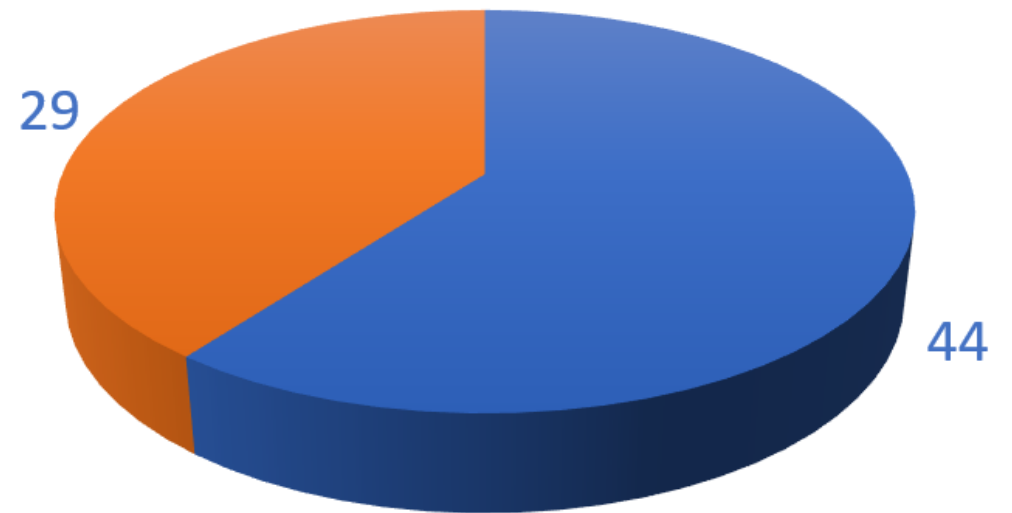
1200+ Social Media
engagements on
Facebook, YouTube
and Twitter

Analysis from Inclusion Inquiry – Open Gateway Survey

21% of respondents felt that their school was not inclusive enough



44% of respondents felt that *Somerset* was not inclusive enough



Focused approach - Summer 21

Completion of semi structured school Interviews by Committee members (21 visits)

Further input from Young People via groupwork

Autumn 21- Development of Recommendations

Recommendations drafted by the committee

Recommendations taken to Somerset Improvement board

Recommendations taken to Heads Groups to start process of gaining commitment

Recommendation – Better Signposting of Support Services

There needs to be clear sign posting to support services across Somerset for all stakeholders to access. A one stop place where support services can be found and where information to get access to this support is clear and transparent.

Page 41

To map and enhance community support for CYP with SEND and their parents/carers, alongside all CYP who would benefit from Inclusive community support-clubs/respice/CYP with specific needs, parental support groups.

To map Inclusion provision gaps, such as rural areas, and develop an action plan to address this.

Streamline, simplify and quality assure on an on-going basis communication pathways and signposting regarding inclusive practices in schools-school websites and the local offer etc.

These actions aim to ensure parents/carers, CYP and professionals can easily identify the support that is available to them in their local area.

Recommendation - Earlier Intervention

There needs to be better local early intervention strategies in place for identification and support for children and young people:

To develop flexible, small scale provision within and between schools to support inclusive practice. This will complement existing provision such as nurseries, specialist bases, PRUs and Special Schools.

To develop area based structures for earlier intervention that are streamlined and simplified.

To strengthen and streamline formal, area based, mechanisms for multi-agency communication. These will include: problem solving with peers; input from SEND Support services and specialist provision will be strengthened and streamlined.

To consider the development of SEND support for the whole family.

To streamline and coordinate therapy provision for CYP between SCC, Somerset CCG and providers. This may lead to some joint commissioning.

Recommendation – Behaviour Planning and Support Structures

There needs to be better Behaviour planning and support structures within Somerset. This needs to be preventative rather than reactive. Organisations and families need to feel that when they have a developing behaviour need, there is a pathway towards planning and support.

Page 43

That behaviour issues are discussed and supported at an earlier stage.

To develop systems to support behaviour from external SEND and behaviour professionals where the function of the behaviour is identified, and actions are measured to ensure impact and positive outcomes and systems to support, these actions are made accountable.

For schools, with support from the LA, to develop a system whereby inclusive practice is shared, challenged and celebrated between peers

Recommendation – Inclusion Data Shared with Schools

Inclusion data should be shared on the new Schools Data Dashboard to ensure that evidence based inclusive practice becomes standard. This should allow all schools to look at their inclusive practice within their context and have conversations about how resources are used to support the challenges faced.

Page 44

Training should be given to governors on how to access this data and further support their schools in developing inclusive practice.

To develop a Somerset Framework of Indicators of Inclusive practice, based on key inclusion evidence developed from the data dashboard and other sources.

To coordinate the annual training offer to schools in relation to Inclusion and Special educational needs-owned jointly by schools and the LA.

To ensure training is given to governors on what the Data Dashboard shows with particular reference to Inclusion Data and the critical questions they should be asking regarding their organisations practice.

To increase and use benchmarking and national and local best practice information with regard to SEND Statutory processes.

Recommendation - Trust Building

The corner stone of our findings found that trust and transparency were central to children, young adults, parents and Somerset staff when seeking advice or support for SEND or inclusion.

Page 45
Children and Young people did not always feel that their voice was heard at school or within the wider Somerset community. They recommended that schools need to educate themselves and their students about the issues facing students with SEND so that everyone has a better understanding of what it takes to navigate education with additional needs.

Parents felt that they had to fight to get the support and services they needed when in crisis.

Schools and school leaders felt that they were isolated when dealing with challenging behaviour or a family in crisis.

The Local Authority face many challenges in terms of delivering and coordinating services in a complex and fragmented education sector and under financial restraints.

To increase collaborative practices with regard to statutory assessment processes between schools, parents, CYP and the local authority in order to build trust and create shared understandings with regard to EHCP processes and inclusive practice a Somerset Model for inclusion needs to be developed that adheres to the following principles:

Continuous Reflection

This is not a one-off exploration of inclusion in Somerset education. It is the beginning of an ongoing approach to systemic reflection and improvement.

Proactive Engagement

Specific groups were not reached by the Inclusion Inquiry. Their input will be proactively sought as a priority, with all future engagement to proactively seek the perspectives of those who are too often excluded.

Listening

Children and young people's needs are front and centre at all times. Families, young people and children feel listened to and included in school and by the Somerset education system so that everyone can feel like their perspective and experience matters.

Transparency

Making sure everyone has the information they need to understand expectations, the choices they can make and the decisions that are made.

Accessibility

Our understanding of accessibility is expansive, recognising that our language, or environment, our curriculum and our teaching style all have an impact on student's sense of safety and inclusion.

Next Steps

What will ensure Recommendations become a reality?

Page 47

Establish governance arrangements- where these recommendations will be held and embed them into the work plan of that groups/board/strategy

Continue with repeated communication of the messages and recommendations, sharing and celebrating good inclusive practice

Link the recommendations in with on-going activities across Somerset to identify those recommendations already being addressed and gaps

Start proactively seeking opportunities to speak to SEND, BAME, PRU and other minority groups of students - listening to all the voices

Inclusion and engagement in education

Update for Children and Families Scrutiny Committee
February 2022





Overview

Purpose: to provide an update on current trends, recent developments and next steps.

- Phil Curd – Strategic Manager, Access & Additional Learning Needs
 - School attendance
 - Exclusions and suspensions
 - Elective home education
- Emily Walters – Head of Virtual School & Learning Support
 - Promoting engagement and achievement of vulnerable learners
 - Supporting consistent, inclusive practice in Somerset
- Rob Hart – Assistant Director, Inclusion
 - Next steps for inclusion

Engagement in education: attendance, exclusion and elective home education

Phil Curd – Strategic Manager, Access & Additional Learning
Needs



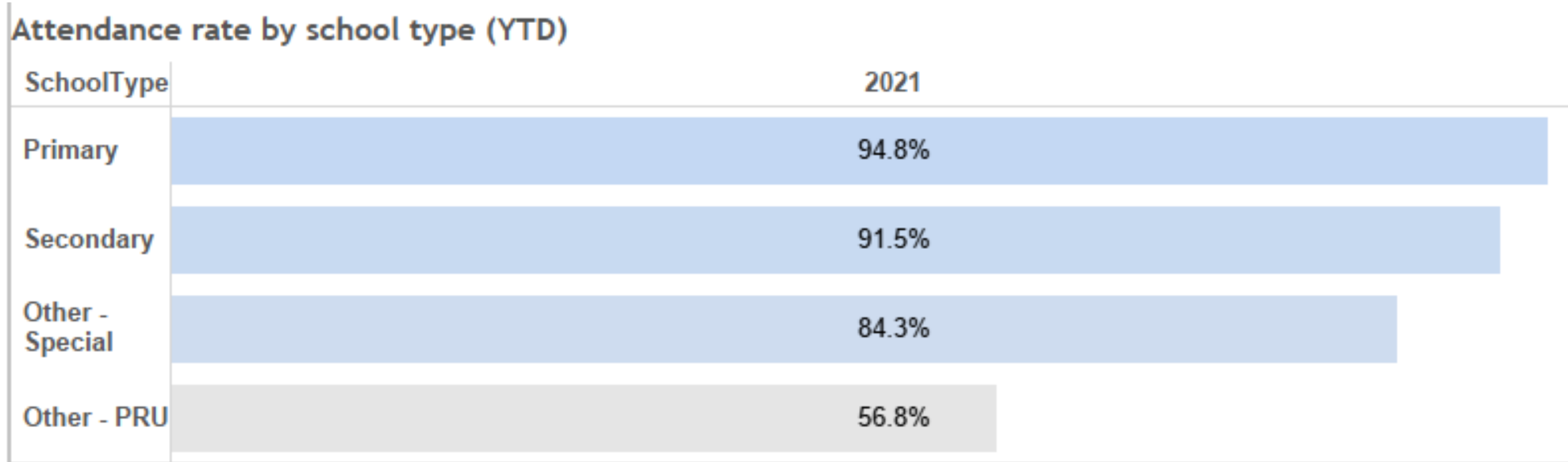
School attendance



ACAD_YE..	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
2019	94.4%	94.5%	
2020	95.0%	92.5%	94.3%
2021	93.0%	93.0%	

- Attendance rates for 2021/22 have been significantly impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic and related factors.
- Most of the reduced rates can be linked to schools that have had 'outbreaks' and been working closely with Public Health to reduce the risk of transmission.
- In parallel, there are a number of children whose attendance is critically low and schools are asked to refer those cases through Early Help processes to ensure the barriers to engagement are identified and support from the most appropriate agency is secured.
- On occasions, as a last resort, cases are escalated through legal processes and have resulted in significant fines being issued in court.

Attendance – phase & school type



Page 52

- The most significant drop has been seen in secondary phase and is around 2.5% points below attendance levels in previous times.
- Pupils Referral Unit numbers are also low, but are partly explained by relatively low numbers of children on roll (following low exclusions in 2020/21) and prescribed timetables for children in medical places.
- To support schools with individual cases, supportive initiatives have been developed, including:
 - Emotion-based school avoidance (EBSA) interventions – led by Educational Psychology Service
 - Coronavirus Attendance Interventions – delivered by Young Somerset and REACH through Inclusion Partnership areas



Exclusions (formerly permanent exclusion)



Data Set	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Permanent Exclusions 2019 - 2020	12	16	15	9	11	11	7	0	0	0	0	0	81
Permanent Exclusions 2020 - 2021	7	1	5	13	1	1	2	7	10	12	8	0	67
Permanent Exclusions 2021 - 2022	9	8	18	14	13	3							65

- The use of exclusion has increased in the 2021/22 academic year and based on current data, numbers are set to exceed 130, and would be Somerset's highest ever annual total.
- Reasons for exclusion mirror previous years with 'Persistent Disruptive Behaviour' being the most prevalent descriptor, followed by 'Verbal Abuse to Adult' and 'Physical Assault Against Pupil'.
- Inclusion Partnerships are being further developed across Somerset with the aim of driving down exclusion and suspension and increasing attendance.
- A key activity of the Partnerships will be to redesign the offer of local intervention, outreach and support based on need and creating a forum to develop and share good practice in relation to Inclusion.
- They will be fully implemented by September 2022.

Suspensions (formerly fixed term exclusion)



Data Set	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Fixed Period Exclusions 2019 - 2020	568	820	797	665	753	663	639	0	0	3	10	0	4918
Fixed Period Exclusions 2020 - 2021	503	676	825	507	71	70	675	400	887	659	483	0	5756
Fixed Period Exclusions 2021 - 2022	548	576	1109	582	764	135							3717

- The use of suspension has also increased in the 2021/22 academic year and based on current data, numbers are set to exceed 7200, and would be Somerset's highest recorded annual total.
- The reasons for suspension mirror those for exclusion with 'Persistent Disruptive Behaviour' being the most prevalent descriptor, followed by 'Verbal Abuse to Adult' and 'Physical Assault Against Pupil'.
- suspensions and exclusions are two of the indicators reviewed under the School Attendance Monitoring Protocol and where thresholds are met, schools are contacted in order to discuss what additional support they might benefit from.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

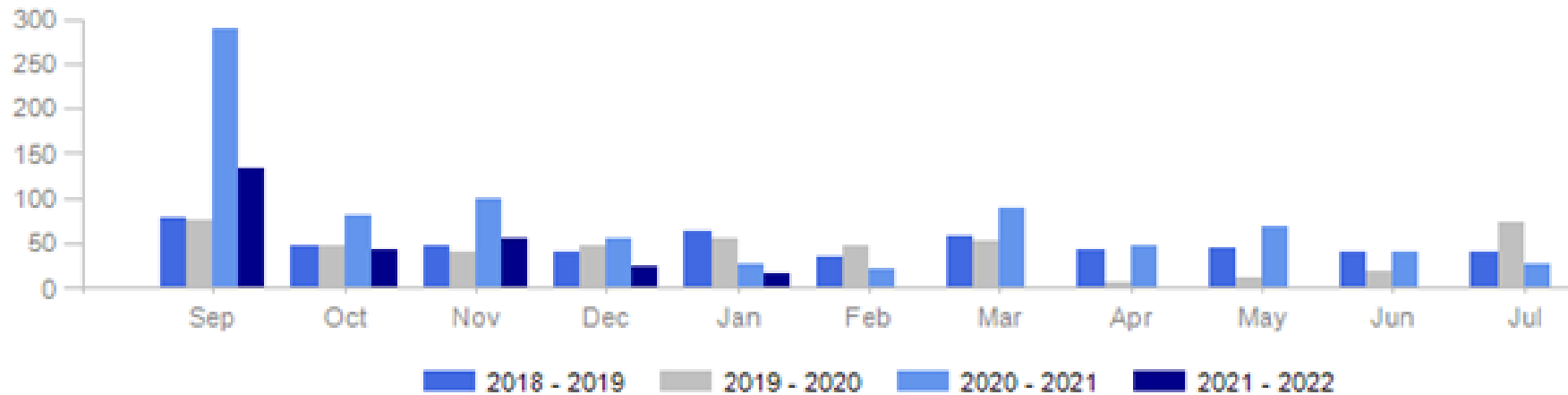
- In September 2020, as happened regionally and nationally, we experienced a significant increase in the number of EHE starts and while we had anticipated an increase, the actual numbers were significantly beyond our expectations. We continued to experience higher than usual numbers throughout the Autumn and Spring terms before settling in the Summer.
- In September 2021, we experienced another burst of EHE starts but since then, numbers of EHE starts have returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- In November 2021 the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) produced the results of its annual EHE [survey](#), which reported a 34% increase in the number of children that were EHE at any point during the 2020/21 academic year when compared to 2019/20.
- In Somerset, over the same period, the numbers increased from 1428 (2019/20) to 1875 (2020/21), a 31% increase.



Elective Home Education

EHE starts had been in decline in Somerset in the 3 years prior to 2020/21, this ran contrary to the national trend. Since then, numbers have increased significantly, as seen regionally and nationally, but have settled over the Autumn term:

2017/18 = 554
2018/19 = 528
2019/20 = 455
2020/21 = 838
2021/22 = 268



- There are currently 1439 EHE children in Somerset but in the academic year to date, 1569 children have been EHE at some point with 117 having returned to school.
- As a point of interest, the number of EHE children at the end of December 2021 was lower than number at the end of December 2020, only the second time we've seen that comparative reduction happen in our data (the other being June 2020 / June 2019).



Elective Home Education

Somerset Council continues to have a robust approach to EHE and has developed its processes to be sure that we remain compliant whilst utilising developing technology and releasing staff time where possible.

A new EHE Protocol is being published and was co-produced with EHE parents and professionals and will go live here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-safeguarding-service/>

The triage of vulnerable children who have become EHE has been significantly improved using the Transform database and enables casework to be allocated in a timely manner.

A new online notification platform for schools went 'live' in January 2022 so information (relating to a range of elements including EHE) can be electronically submitted to the local authority, enable automated data reports for services and streamlining the allocation of work to officers.

The online forms can be found here: [https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-safeguarding-service-forms/#Notify-us-of-a-child-commencing-home-education-\(EHE\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-safeguarding-service-forms/#Notify-us-of-a-child-commencing-home-education-(EHE))



Promoting the engagement and achievement of vulnerable learners

Emily Walters – Head of Virtual School & Learning Support





Role of the Virtual School: supporting engagement and achievement of vulnerable children and young people

- The Virtual School has responsibility for promoting better educational outcomes for children looked after (CLA) and those who were previously looked after.
- This remit has recently been extended to encompass all children with a social worker.
- In Somerset, the Virtual School also works to promote better outcomes for children with SEND, and those open to the Youth Justice Service. We work with colleagues across Children's Services to achieve this goal.



How do we do this for CLA?

- Children looked after have a named advisory teacher, who oversees their personal education plan on a termly basis.
- The Virtual Head holds a budget for each child, and this is allocated to the school if additional funding is required to support better outcomes.
- The impact of funding and any other interventions are measured.
- Children looked after are tracked to ensure they are making sufficient progress towards their goals.
- The Virtual School now has a team of specialist staff, who can offer support to schools and settings across a broad range of needs.

How do we do this for other vulnerable learners?

- Other vulnerable children we work with:
 - Previously looked after children
 - Young people open to Youth Offending Services
 - Children in need, or children with a child protection plan
 - Children who are SEN support or have an EHCP
- Our work with these groups of children takes the form of advice and guidance for schools and partners and some casework in specific circumstances.
- There is also a package of training which is offered to schools and settings, as well as our partners across children's services.





How do we know we are making a difference?

- The Virtual School and Learning Support Team tracks impact through a range of indicators and measures.
- For children looked after:
 - Attainment and progress
 - Engagement, measured through attendance, exclusions, suspensions and part time timetables
- For wider groups:
 - Evaluation of training or input for schools
 - Schools SSID progress towards actions measured
 - Engagement of SENCos and School leaders in networks and training
 - Quantifiable indicators such as EHE starts, suspensions, attendance

Working towards consistent, inclusive practice for Somerset children




Strategic SEND Inclusion Discussion (SSID)



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Summary of recommendations

<p>1</p> <p>Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs</p> 	<p>3</p> <p>Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Work effectively with teaching assistants</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">An inclusive school removes barriers to learning and participation, provides an education that is appropriate to pupils' needs, and promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential for all pupils. Schools should:promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all pupils;ensure all pupils can access the best possible teaching; andadopt a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, as described in the EEF's Improving Behaviour in Schools guidance report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of the 'assess, plan, do, review' approach.Assessment should be regular and purposeful rather than a one-off event, and should seek input from parents and carers as well as the pupil themselves and specialist professionals.Teachers need to feel empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all.Searching for a 'magic bullet' can distract teachers from the powerful strategies they often already possess.The research suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider emphasising for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to the needs of all pupils.<ul style="list-style-type: none">flexible grouping;cognitive and metacognitive strategies;explicit instruction;using technology to support pupils with SEND; andscaffolding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Small-group and one-to-one interventions can be a powerful tool but must be used carefully. Ineffective use of interventions can create a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with SEND.High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support, but it is likely that some pupils will require high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress.The intensity of intervention (from universal to targeted to specialist) should increase with need.Interventions should be carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need.Interventions should be applied using the principles of effective implementation described in the EEF's guidance report Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Effective deployment of teaching assistants (TAs) is critical. School leaders should pay careful attention to the roles of TAs and ensure they have a positive impact on pupils with SEND.TAs should supplement, not replace, teaching from the classroom teacher.The EEF's guidance report Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants provides detailed recommendations.

Report published 20th March 2020

eef.li/send

- The Learning Support Team introduced SSID meetings in Sept 2020 to address some of the issues raised following the Local Area SEND Inspection.
- The SSID meetings are based on the [Education Endowment Fund](#) recommendations for inclusive schools.



<p>1</p> <p>Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An inclusive school removes barriers to learning and participation, provides an education that is appropriate to pupils' needs, and promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential for all pupils. Schools should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all pupils; ensure all pupils can access the best possible teaching; and adopt a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, as described in the EEF's Improving Behaviour in Schools guidance report. 	<p>2</p> <p>Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of the 'assess, plan, do, review' approach. Assessment should be regular and purposeful rather than a one-off event, and should seek input from parents and carers as well as the pupil themselves and specialist professionals. Teachers need to feel empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child. 	<p>3</p> <p>Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all. Searching for a 'magic bullet' can distract teachers from the powerful strategies they often already possess. The research suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider emphasising for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to the needs of all pupils. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> flexible grouping; cognitive and metacognitive strategies; explicit instruction; using technology to support pupils with SEND; and scaffolding. 	<p>4</p> <p>Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small-group and one-to-one interventions can be a powerful tool but must be used carefully. Ineffective use of interventions can create a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with SEND. High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support, but it is likely that some pupils will require high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress. The intensity of intervention (from universal to targeted to specialist) should increase with need. Interventions should be carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need. Interventions should be applied using the principles of effective implementation described in the EEF's guidance report Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation. 	<p>5</p> <p>Work effectively with teaching assistants</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective deployment of teaching assistants (TAs) is critical. School leaders should pay careful attention to the roles of TAs and ensure they have a positive impact on pupils with SEND. TAs should supplement, not replace, teaching from the classroom teacher. The EEF's guidance report Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants provides detailed recommendations.
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The SSID Process

- Schools who sign up to the SSID have a meeting in the Autumn term with their Linked Advisory Teacher – the Headteacher and SEN Governor are strongly encouraged to attend the meeting.
- The SSID meeting focusses on the areas in the poster, particularly areas 1,2, and 3.
- The schools Self-Evaluation, or audit, is discussed, and the school has the opportunity to share their thoughts on strengths and areas for development.
- Three actions are agreed by those in the meeting.
- The school receives a Note of Visit, with the agreed recommendations and actions.
- The School is offered three core staff meeting training sessions, directly linked to the actions identified in the SSID.
- The Link Advisory Teacher completes a termly review with the schools, and assesses their progress towards actions.



Schools' involvement

- The first year of the SSID saw 195 schools sign up to take part in this process with the linked advisory teacher from the Learning Support Team.
- In September 2021, 223 schools signed up to the SSID process – this represents an increase in uptake in all sectors, primary, secondary, and special schools
- One of the key advantages to the SSID, for both schools and our service, is the improved relationships between SENCOs, Head Teachers, and Advisory Teachers. Schools are more willing to ask for support and also more receptive to challenge from their linked Advisory Teacher where this is necessary.



Impact

- The SSID is a year long process, so the impact of the first year can be reported on, while the second year is still ongoing.
- Progress is tracked using a RAG rating, so we are able to identify the number of schools who have moved from Red to Amber, or Amber to Green, during the year.

2020-2021	SSID Review
Made progress in the area 'Graduated response'	43
Made progress in 'Early Identification'	48
Made progress in 'Class Teachers inclusive practice'	25

Graduated Response Tool (formerly Core Standards)

- The Somerset Core Standards have been subject to a detailed review and redesign.
- This is in response to the feedback from SENCOs, while also recognising that the original Core Standards were carefully co-produced, and recognised as a strength in the Local Area inspection.
- Somerset Graduated Response Tool has been developed and designed with a range of partners, and continues to be revisited following consultation and feedback.
- Launch events for the Graduated Response Tool will begin in March 2022, with full rollout expected by September 2022
- You can find more information on the New Graduated Response Tool here: [Somerset Core Standards Review](#)



Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Somerset's Graduated Response Tool

Ordinarily Available Provision for Children and Young People

These webinars will introduce all users to the new co-produced **Somerset's Graduated Response Tool** which replaces **The Core Standards**

The webinar includes:

- Why and how **Somerset's Graduated Response Tool** has been created
- A 'tour' of the document
- How the document will support your role
- The supporting resources available including templates and checklists
- What's next for the document?

1x1 hour 30 minute webinar delivered via MS Teams on the following dates (1 identical session, repeated 3 times).

To book please click your chosen date and time and complete the linked registration form:

[Weds 30th March 9.30-11am](#)

[Tues 5th April 4.00-5.30pm](#)

[Thurs 7th April 2.00-3.30pm](#)

For more information email: virtualschool@somerset.gov.uk with the subject *Somerset's Graduated Response Tool*

The right support
in the right place
at the right time



Additional inclusive practice workstreams

- Whole Education
- Work with SEND Information and Advice Service (SENDIAS)
- Inclusion database
- SEND Network Development
- SENCo Yammer Page
- Ongoing development of SSID to incorporate Graduated Response Tool



Next steps for promoting engagement and inclusion in Somerset

Rob Hart – Assistant Director, Inclusion



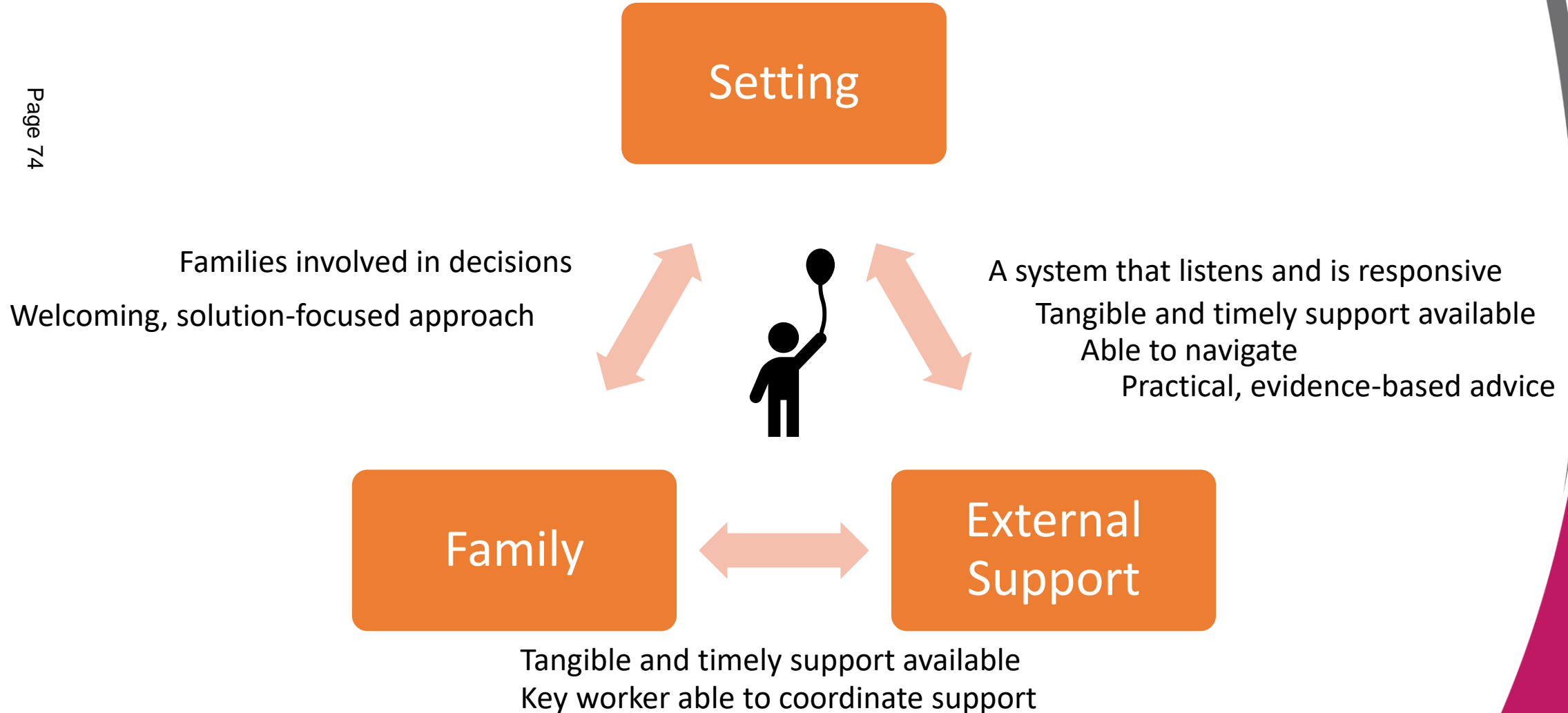


Next steps

- Written Statement of Action (WSoA) has supported working together to address challenges – need to focus on achieving and evidencing impact from these changes
- Inclusion Inquiry recommendations – general alignment with WSoA actions...
- But more is needed – a focus on building confidence and capacity across the system:
 - Between families, schools and inclusion services
 - A system that is easier to navigate and quicker to respond
 - Strengthening partnerships with and between schools

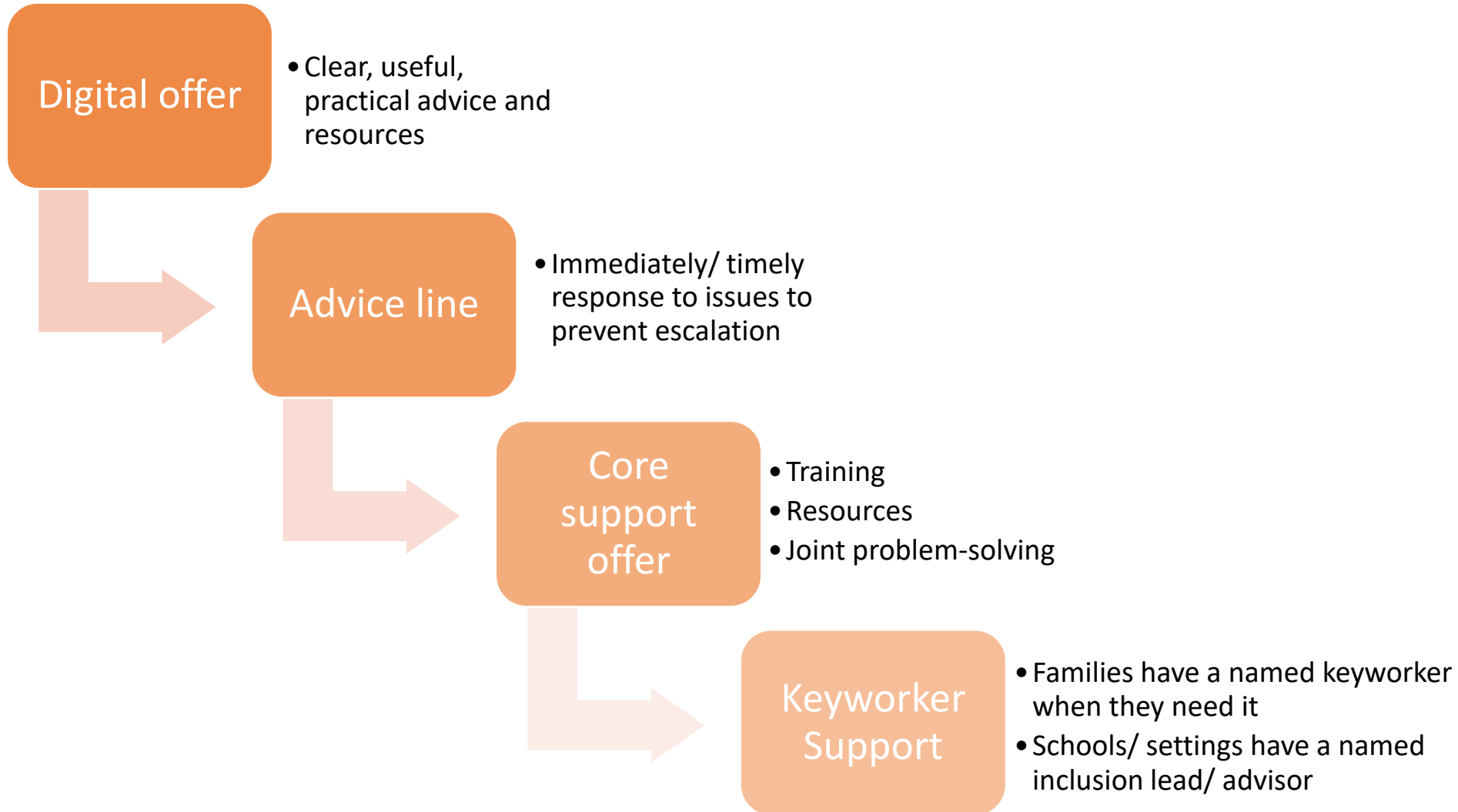


How can we build confidence?





Accessing the right support and advice





Priorities

- Area **Inclusion Partnerships** – school leaders, LA and other agencies working together to develop an offer that is responsive to local need.
- Investment in **Inclusion Pathfinders** and **Inclusion Hubs** to support schools to develop their own practice, and then support other schools.
- Special schools and mainstream schools working together to design flexible inclusive specialist provision as part of a **Local First Approach**.
- Redesign **LA inclusion offer** to ensure right balance of advice, key-working and direct intervention.
- Align to broader developments – early help, family hubs, mental health and emotional wellbeing.



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Homes for children, high needs fostering and therapeutic education

Update to Scrutiny Committee

- February 2022

Page 79



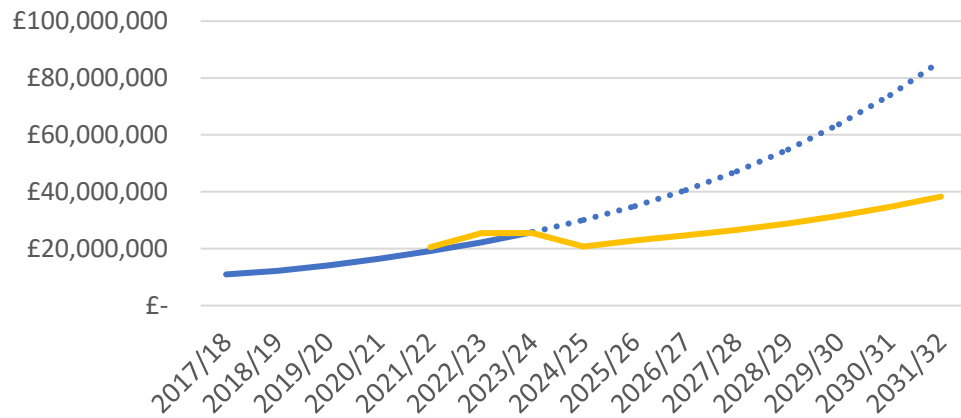
Agenda item 8

Improving
LIVES

Why are we doing this?

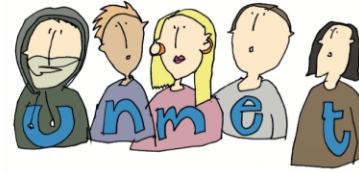
- Demand for good quality, small, local homes outstrips supply for our most vulnerable young people
- Costs are rising, outcomes aren't improving – this cohort continues to have very poor outcomes and life chances
- Local market segmentation suggests reliance on bigger providers – no reason to commit to Somerset children
- Lack of choice results in children living far away from home, family, friends and school
- Need to do something different

Page 80

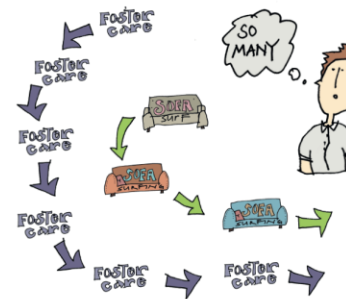


Ensuring lived experience is at the heart of our thinking

WHAT THE STORIES TOLD US ABOUT THE YOUNG PERSON'S EXPERIENCE BEFORE THEY CAME TO THEIR CURRENT HOME

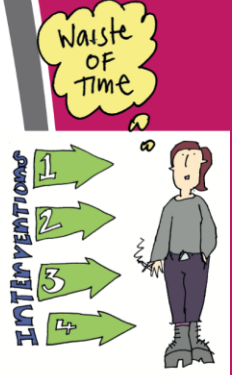


Young people present with a whole range of unmet needs and trauma experiences



Many different 'placements' (which may have been with different foster carers or on different people's sofas)

Life had felt very fragmented

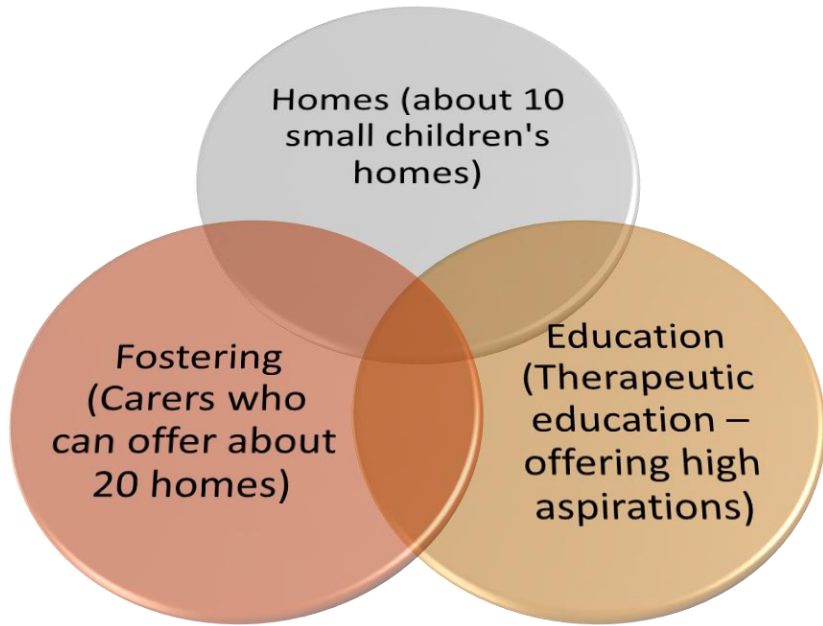


Many of the interventions they had received to date had not worked

DESMOND TUTU: "THERE COMES A POINT WHERE WE JUST NEED TO STOP PULLING PEOPLE OUT OF THE RIVER. WE NEED TO GO UPSTREAM AND FIND OUT WHY THEY ARE FALLING IN."



We started with this concept.....



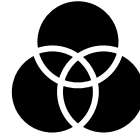
Page 81

Supported by....

- Revenue start up funding of £2.7million (covid recovery)
- Capital investment of £3million to purchase the first houses for children’s homes



High standards and ambitions for young people



Blended care



Agile and responsive service



Shared workforce aims and integrated management systems



Investment to create jobs in Somerset



Good platform for joint developments



What happened?

- 13 organisations put in initial bids – we took 8 through to the dialogue phase (asked what have you changed as a result of listening to children)
- Dialogue phase involved a wide range of interested people! Senior NHS (CCG and provider trusts), finance, operational social care, police MISPER rep
- Care experienced group changed fully involved in dialogue then evaluation (12%) – undertook visits to homes
- Following dialogue phase received 5 tender responses – very strong field
- Strengthened relationships across the system
- Generated a lot of interest from other councils
- Appointed Homes 2 Inspire, Fostering2Inspire and Shaw Education Trust (all part of The Shaw Trust)



Homes2Inspire (H2I) including Fostering to Inspire, part of the Shaw Trust Group (STG) (including Shaw Trust, Shaw Education Trust, Ixion and Prospects)

- H2I deliver 30 Ofsted registered residential homes
 - Deliver Trevone House in Gloucester
 - Block contract with Nottingham
- Fostering to inspire – Independent fostering agency
- Shaw Trust – deliver employment services across the UK
- Shaw Education Trust (SET)
 - Manage 26 schools/academies that range from nursery, primary, secondary, specialist (SEND) and alternative (Pupil referral units)
 - Wigan down to Birmingham and across from Merseyside to Derby
 - Support a total of 10,715 pupils
 - 1,276 with EHC Plans
 - 2,010 requiring SEND support
 - 167 CLA
- Ixion – Training provider for adults getting in employment
- Prospects
 - Careers information, advice and guidance, supported traineeships
 - Provides education within Young Offenders Institutes
 - Manage 2 large leaving care services and YOT
- Shaw Trust Foundation – charitable purpose and activity

shaw trust



Fostering to Inspire



ixion
part of Shaw Trust

prospects

Inspiring People: Developing Potential

Where are we now?

- Agreeing and adjusting the partnership agreement
- Almost secured home one, looking for home two
- Successful in bidding to the DfE for capital funding (£1.026 million) – feedback on the bid included
 - The approach to innovation and the realisation of improved outcomes for children was exceptional as we had clearly evidenced that we had consulted closely with young people to identify their needs, they were actively involved in the procurement.
 - It evidenced a clear and significant need of provision - sufficiency
 - Provided an innovative approach which addressed the different needs of children in residential care.
 - Value for money was evidenced through the implementation of a competitive procurement exercise.
- Institute of Public Care (Oxford Brooks) are evaluating
 - Talking to everyone involved
 - What worked well and lessons to be learnt



To Summarise

- Innovative approach – led to significant level of interest from providers – very good field
- Children and young peoples involvement, views and thinking were central – providers liked our values based approach
- Will offer a different experience of homes and support – more stable relationships with the people who can help them - aspirational for them
- Will offer better value for money – Controlling spend, blending care to make effective use of resources.
- Secured an experienced, diverse and good not for profit provider – making significant investment themselves
- Supporting lots of councils to do something similar – interest has been huge

"It really felt like they were trying to get the best out of everybody, and it showed commitment and passion that they want to get this right for young people" – Bidding organisation

"We all got together a week after with the commissioners and we all shared what we thought, and I really felt my views were heard. We definitely felt listened to, 100%." - Young person

"I said I wanted to stay in one of the homes as it was so good" – Young person



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