



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in
David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40
1B Non **TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2020 AT 7.00 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 13 January 2020

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to provide independent “critical friend” challenge and to work with the Council’s Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. The Committee considers submissions from a range of sources and reaches conclusions based on the weight of evidence – not on party political grounds.

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

Appendix Acronyms

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EYFS	Early Years Foundations Stage
FGB	Full Governing Body
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
NLE	National Leader of Education
NLG	National Leader of Governance
RI	Requires Improvement
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner
SDP	School Development Plan
SEF	Self Evaluation Form
SIB	School Improvement Board
SIO	School Improvement Officer
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TSA	Teaching School Alliance
WLP	Wokingham Learning Partnership

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillors

Alison Swaddle (Chairman)	Jenny Cheng (Vice-Chairman)	Prue Bray
Andy Croy	Pauline Helliar-Symons	Ken Miall
Andrew Mickleburgh	Malcolm Richards	

Substitutes

Shirley Boyt	Carl Doran	David Hare
Emma Hobbs	Sarah Kerr	Barrie Patman

Parent Governor Representatives

Darryl Ward, Parent Governor Representative
Vacancy, Parent Governor Representative

Diocesan Representatives

Vacancy, Roman Catholic Representative
Vacancy, C of E Representative

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
40.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
41.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 January 2020.	7 - 14
42.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
43.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee. Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	

44.		MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions	
45.	None Specific	CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS To receive and consider the Children's Services Performance Indicators.	15 - 24
46.	None Specific	CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REVIEW To receive a report giving details of the new Corporate Parenting Board's structure.	25 - 36
47.	None Specific	SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND OFSTED REPORTS To receive a report containing details of the latest Ofsted reports since the last meeting of the Committee and other schools' performance indicators.	To Follow
48.	None Specific	SEND STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN To receive and consider the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy and Action Plan report.	To Follow
49.	None Specific	WOKINGHAM YOUNG CARERS SERVICE To receive and consider the Wokingham Young Carers Service report.	37 - 50
50.		FORWARD PLAN To consider the Committee's forward plan.	51 - 52
51.		EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.	
52.	None Specific	SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN - PART 2 A report containing details of schools causing concern will be considered in a part 2 report.	To Follow

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 7 JANUARY 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.10 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Alison Swaddle (Chairman), Prue Bray, Andy Croy, Pauline Helliar-Symons, Ken Miall, Andrew Mickleburgh and Malcolm Richards

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Sarah Kerr

Officers Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Gillian Cole, Service Manager Schools
Adam Davis, Assistant Director Children's Social Care
Nick Hammond, Service Manager Intelligence and Impact
Mustafa Kamara, Senior Public Health Programme Officer
Tony Penge, Contract Manager for Places Leisure
Kelli Scott, Service Manager Children with Disability and Early Help
Beverley Thompson, Service Manager Sports and Leisure

27. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Darryl Ward and Councillor Jenny Cheng.

28. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 September 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

Members reiterated that they would like to receive a report about home educated children. It was requested that any data available and the educational outcomes of homed educated children be included in the report. *Subsequently it was agreed to add this item to the 17 March 2020 meeting of the Committee.*

The Chairman stated that a query had been received in relation to the statement on page 10 which read: *"In response to a question Jim Leviers stated that home educators would have to register with Ofsted when they reached a certain number of children."*

Officers clarified by reading out point 3 on page 4 of the guidance issued by the Department for Education:

An 'independent school' is defined as a school that is not maintained by a local authority or is not a non-maintained special school, and at which full-time education is provided (a) for five or more pupils of compulsory school age or (b) for at least one pupil of that age who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989) or has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

The document that Officers referred to can be found in the link below:

29. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

31. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

31.1 Sarah Kerr asked the Chairman of the Children's Services O&S Committee the following question:

Question

In relation to agenda item 36, Youth Offending Service, I note that on page 58 of the agenda under Operational Practice, it mentions that preventative and early intervention work will be done in schools. With this in mind, I'm surprised it doesn't mention a restorative justice programme being introduced in the Borough's schools. Restorative justice has been proven to be successful in the justice system and in schools, and Andy Couldrick, previous CEO of this Council, started rolling it out across various services, including schools, but for some reason, this project stalled, despite the reported success it was having. Will the Youth Offending Service consider rolling this out more fully?

Answer

The implementation of restorative approaches in schools was previously supported through Police and Crime Commissioner funded Youth Workers being attached to specific settings, the Youth Offending Service was not involved in this project.

Some schools in the Borough do adopt a restorative practice approach in relation to wider behaviour management practice. Where schools are engaged in this approach they select their own training based on needs and preferences. Schools that adopt a restorative approach to behaviour management do so as part of their strategic decision making in relation to their school ethos, adopting strategies that they believe will best deliver their vision. Where schools make reference to a restorative approach this is usually found in school behaviour management policies.

Whilst the Youth Offending Service engages in restorative approaches, as part of its juvenile justice, this occurs on a smaller scale, with the overarching aim of reducing the risk of children becoming criminalised. Some examples of this include 1:1 work with children and delivering training to children's homes in the Wokingham area. As part of the Youth Justice Plan, it has been agreed that in 2020 the Restorative Justice worker will deliver training to Foster Carers and the Fostering Team, the aim of which is to reduce the occurrence of children in care becoming criminalised.

The Youth Offending Service would be happy to engage with colleagues in any developments of restorative work in schools.

Supplementary question

Thank you, I noticed that it was mentioned about the Foster Carers and the Foster Carers Team and the schools that I am aware that currently have this, St Crispin's is a good

example of one of the schools have gone down this route and benefited from this funding. There were other schools in the phase 2 roll out though that were going to benefit from the programme, what can we do for this to continue?

Supplementary answer

Adam Davis, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care stated that this depended on what approach schools used, the Youth Services did not have the resources to fund this.

Gillian Cole, Service Manager Schools stated that schools were using their own training budget for this.

Councillor Miall stated that around eight years ago the Council had cut the funding for youth support due to Budget constraints. He believed that the Council should consider investing in this service again if the resources became available.

Officers were not able to ascertain where the funding for this service had come from, it was possible that this might have been a one off funding grant. Some Members suggested that this deserved further consideration, including a cost/benefit analysis.

32. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Nick Hammond, Service Manager Intelligence and Impact presented the Children's Services Performance Indicators report which was set out in agenda pages 15-24.

Members felt frustrated that the data contained in the report was not up to date and that this was an ongoing issue. It was explained that this report had been written for the November meeting which was postponed, and due to the timelines it had not been possible to update the report.

The following point arose from questions and discussions:

- Members agreed that the format of the report was much improved but asked that trends be included in future reports;
- Councillor Helliard-Symonds expected the data to be more up to date as a result of a new software which was implemented last year;
- Nick Hammond stated that monthly data could be made available to the Committee, but this would not necessarily tie in with quarterly reports;
- Adam Davis stated that it was important to be selective with data to avoid an overload, it might be more productive to concentrate on the narrative;
- Members asked that the next report to the 21 January meeting contain more up to date information;
- Members asked why the Early Help indicator did not contain national statistics. Nick Hammond stated that there was no statutory return for this indicator. Also, Early Help was not a statutory service and different authorities used different approaches, therefore it was not comparable;
- Members asked why the number of referrals for Early Help Assessments was lower than the number of Early Help Assessments. Kelli Scott, Interim Service Manager Early Help stated that not all referrals led to assessments, and also not all families engaged with the service;
- Members were pleased to note the improvement in dashboard 3 – Children's Social Care Front Door;
- Members were concerned with the percentage of children in care who have more than one allocated social worker in 12 months (dashboard 5) and asked Officers what

actions were being undertaken to improve this indicator. Adam Davies stated that a recruitment and retention campaign was underway; the service was seeking to employ more permanent Social Workers and reduce the number of agency staff;

- Adam Davis stated that the service had employed a dedicated recruitment and retention member of staff, this was already making a difference;
- In response to a question Nick Hammond stated that there was no obligation for care leavers to keep in touch, therefore the service could not force care leavers to keep in touch;
- Nick Hammond stated that work was being undertaken to understand, on an individual basis, the reasons why some care leaver were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET);
- Nick Hammond stated that there were good links with Housing and the use of B&B's was being reduced;
- In response to a question Adam Davis stated that there were around 80 care leavers in Wokingham. Members asked that figures as well as percentages be included in future reports;
- There was questioning around the number of children missing from home/care (dashboard 7) as members felt that 53 was a high number. Officers explained that this referred to the number of incidents not the number of children. Members requested information on how many children this related to, how long the missing incidents were and to separate the number of incidents of children missing from parental home or from care in future reports;
- In response to a question Adam Davis stated that the number of incidents was higher in the summer and children missing were always a cause of concern;
- Members noted the improvement in the percentage of return home interviews carried out on time;
- Councillor Helliar-Symonds stated that last year there had been a Social Worker Recruitment and Retention Working Group, the resulting report contained various recommendations. She asked if this report had been taken into account in setting up the Social Worker Recruitment and Retention Strategy. Adam Davis stated that this strategy was not yet finalised and that this report was being taken into account.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Future reports would contain more up to date information;
- 2) Future reports would include trends; and
- 3) Officers would provide more information around dashboard 7 and the narrative behind the figures.

33. TAKE UP OF SPORTS AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE BOROUGH

Beverly Thompson, Sports and Leisure Manager and Tony Penge, Contract Manager for Places Leisure presented the report which gave details of the take up of sports and leisure activities by children and young people in the Borough.

Beverly Thompson stated that the recommendation was that children should exercise for 60 minutes every day, Wokingham scored well in this regard in comparison to national statistics. Members asked for further clarification on the National Picture on Physical Activity graph as the numbers were not clear. Beverley Thompson agreed to check the graph and report back.

Some of the points that were made during the presentation and discussions are listed below:

- Wokingham employed a Schools Sport Co-ordinator for three days a week based at Bulmerhshe School who oversaw school games and offered mentoring for Physical Education staff;
- Elite athletes received sponsorship from the Council;
- Beverly Thompson stated that care leavers and Looked After Children (LAC) were entitled to free use of leisure centres. This was made possible with the new leisure contract and had not incurred a cost to the Council;
- In response to a question Beverly Thompson stated that the take up of the free membership at leisure centres by care leavers was low, mainly because it was difficult to know who they were;
- In response to a question Beverly Thompson stated that she could find out how many LAC had leisure centre cards and inform the Committee;
- Beverly Thompson stated that all swimming pools now had been fitted with hoists;
- Tony Penge stated that one initiative that proved to be successful in encouraging participation was allowing people to play football without the need to hire the whole pitch out, by paying only £1 to play. There were a variety of after school activities available, and many classes for mothers and babies;
- Members were interested to know how the service promoted sports take up. Beverly Thompson stated that the activities were advertised on social media, schools and various other places;
- Members asked about the methodology used to work out the data in the report. Beverly Thompson stated that a snapshot of 500 people had been used by Sport England;
- Members were interested to know how to promote sports activities to those children that were currently inactive and to minority communities;
- In response to a question Beverly Thompson stated that swimming sessions for women only had been tried in the Borough, however this had stopped as result of complaints;
- It was recognised that girls tended to drop out of sports activities at around the age of 14. Tony Penge stated that the service was looking at the possibility of adopting a scheme produced by Les Mills which targeted this age group;
- Councillor Croy stated that in his experience young people tended to use basketball hoops at school during break times;
- Members were interested to know if there were enough fields in the Borough for sports activities. Beverly Thompson stated that there had been improvements to Cantley Park for example, with additional lighting having been recently added, allowing people to play all year;
- Members felt that the Council should invest to make fields useable all year round;
- Members were informed that there were 116 clubs in the Borough. Members pointed out that it was important to also encourage informal play;
- Councillor Bray was interested to know what the offer was for people who did not like team sports. Tony Penge stated that those people could use gym equipment, classes and trampoline;
- Members asked for an update on the Grays Farm project. Beverly Thompson informed that this was on hold awaiting the final plans for the new road;
- Members noted that although Wokingham was statistically above the national average, the take up of sports activities was low;

- In response to a question Beverly Thompson stated that if she could she would improve sports facilities at all schools;
- Members were informed that there were other initiatives to promote exercise, such as incentivising walking and cycling to school and health walks;
- In response to a question Beverly Thompson stated that the Council had funded Park Run in the Borough

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

Sports and Leisure Activities presentation (attached)

34. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND OFSTED REPORTS

Gillian Cole, Service Manager Schools presented the Schools Performance Indicators and Ofsted reports, this was set out in agenda pages 31- 42.

Gillian Cole stated that there was a new inspection framework from 2019, there were significant changes in both style and report format.

Members asked what was meant by 'gaming' and 'off-rolling' mentioned on page 32. Gillian Cole stated that some schools had been gaming the system, this meant that schools were discouraging some children from undertaking certain subjects and unofficially excluding children (by asking the parents to take their children out of the school as their children were at risk of a permanent exclusion).

Gillian Cole stated that a Section 5 inspection did not investigate governance arrangements. A Section 8 inspection was more detailed and did look at governance, only a Section 8 inspection could change the school's overall rating.

Members asked that, when available, the final data on the 2019 outcomes be presented to the Committee with a breakdown by individual schools. Councillor Helliard-Symonds asked that information on Edgbarrow Secondary School be included in the report as many Wokingham's children attended that school.

In response to a question Gillian Cole stated that there were two officers in the Borough who were employed to give support to children with English as an additional language (EAL). These two officers were bilingual in Arabic and Polish. The funding for this service came from the de-delegated element of the schools' budget (for maintained schools). She stated that there was a significant number of languages spoken in the Borough. Some support was also given through university students.

In relation to the destinations of 2019 cohort who were not going on to study A levels, Members were curious to know why the number of apprenticeships was not higher. Gillian Cole stated that it was a different department that was responsible for apprenticeships, the Committee could invite the relevant officer to explain more about apprenticeships.

RESOLVED That;

- 1) When available, the final educational outcomes for 2019 would be brought back to the Committee; and
- 2) The report be noted.

35. JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Mustafa Kamara, Senior Public Health Programme Officer presented the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Update report which was set out in agenda pages 43-54.

Mustafa Kamara stated that the report contained a list of 50 indicators which highlighted areas of inequalities, population needs and service gaps across all areas of health and social care. He stated that he was involved in the analysis of the data but was not involved in setting up strategies to tackle the issues identified in the report.

Mustafa Kamara stated that four problem areas were highlighted in the report, these were: respiratory tract infection admissions, MMR vaccination, mental health and sexual health.

During the discussion of the item the following comments were made:

- Members were surprised that the indicator 18 stated that the number of Special Educational Needs (SEN) children in Wokingham was decreasing. Children's Services Officers believed that this was incorrect and disputed this statistic;
- In response to a question Mustafa Kamara stated that the data contained in the report had been collated from various sources;
- Members expressed concern over the rate of self-harm related hospital admissions and suggested that the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider investigating this issue. Councillor Miall agreed to contact the relevant officer.

Mustafa Kamara stated that a website had been created in order to facilitate the collection and accessibility of data. This website was designed to automatically update data points in real time. He urged Members to visit the Berkshire Data Observatory.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

36. YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

Kelli Scott, Interim Service Manager Children with Disabilities and Early Help presented the Youth Offending Service report which was set out in agenda pages 55-59.

In response to a question Kelli Scott stated that the service had linked with West Berkshire before Christmas and volunteered to take part in a pilot inspection. This was due to take place in February and would be over a five day period.

Members asked what was the c-card scheme which was mentioned on page 57. Adam Davis believed that this card gave access to sex education and health services. He stated that since the production of this report, it had been decided to re-instate the scheme.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

37. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered its forward plan and added the following items:

21 January 2020

Corporate Parenting Board Review

17 March 2020

Ofsted Inspection Action Plan – 6 month review

Home Education

38. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

That under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of the Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the act as appropriate.

39. SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

The report was discussed in a part 2 session.

Agenda Item 45.

TITLE	Children's Services Performance Indicators
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2020
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Children's Services performance indicators underpin the council's priorities and principles to focus on every child reaching their potential and looking after the vulnerable.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Children's Services performance indicators be noted.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The timing of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee means that the information reported against in each performance indicator relates to the position at the end of December 2019.

Background

A full report covering the broad scope of Children's Services is included as an appendix to this report.

Analysis of Issues

Please see Appendix A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

N/A

Public Sector Equality Duty

Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

N/A

Contact Mandi Beresford, Nick Hammond	Service Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Standards
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CHILDREN'S SERVICES DASHBOARD – QUARTER 3 2019-20

Dashboard Item 1 - Education, Health & Care Plans

Measure	2018-19	Q3 18-19	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Direction of Travel
Current EHCPs in borough (snapshot at end of period)	560	537	577	581	612	↑
Current EHCPs out of borough (snapshot at end of period)	349	339	365	402	381	↓
EHCPs issued within 20 weeks of the referral	30%	0%	0%	12.9%	14.3%	↑

What does this show us?

The numbers of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) funded by Wokingham Borough Council are increasing. The funded EHCP numbers between the end of 2018-19 (934) and the end of Quarter 3 2019-20 (1,066) have risen by almost 14%.

In the first quarter of 2019-20, no EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks of the referral. However, in Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 2019-20, a number of EHCPs were issued within the 20-week timescale; this indicates a short-term improvement in performance for this area.

What is the background to this?

The service's ability to issue EHC Plans within the required timescales is dependent on its ability to appoint appropriately qualified and experienced workers. After operating at less than 50% capacity since early 2018, the SEND care management team achieved a full staffing complement in Quarter 2 2019-20. At the end of Quarter 3, the service remained fully staffed.

What action is the service taking?

We will continue to monitor the numbers of EHCPs to ensure resource levels remain appropriate. The short-term improvements in EHCP timeliness are likely to continue, and we are hopeful that we will move more in line with the national picture by the end of the year.

Alongside this, the service is also re-introducing the co-production meetings for parents and other professionals, in order to capture the child/young person's voice as well as parent's voice.

What is the national context?

For the calendar year 2018, 58% of new EHC Plans across England were issued within 20 weeks.

Dashboard Item 2 – Early Help

Measure	2018-19	Q3 18-19	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to Early Help	840	293	203	159	251	↑
No. Early Help Assessments	638	202	184	176	181	↑
Avg. length of time in days between referral and assessment completion	40	39	35	25	33	↑

What does this show us?

The numbers of referrals to the Early Help service has fluctuated between Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 2019-20, with a dip in Quarter 2. Meanwhile, the number of completed Early Help assessments has remained relatively stable throughout the year.

The average length of time it is taking to complete Early Help assessments has risen in Quarter 3 2019-20 compared to Quarter 2, but performance in all quarters of 2019-20 has been better than the 2018-19 average. It is important to note that 33 days is still within the 35 day timeframe for completion.

What is the background to this?

There are stark differences in the number of Early Help referrals from month to month. October 2019 saw 110 referrals, compared to 39 in September. The main source of referrals in October were schools; the numbers of referrals coming from schools are affected by the summer holidays in August and September.

The number of Early Help assessments from month to month do not always correspond to the same fluctuations of Early Help referrals. The reason for this is that assessments differ in the length of time they take, so the assessments completed in a month can date back to referrals across a broad period of time. Also, not every Early Help referral will result in an assessment; Early Help work can happen alongside Social Care work meaning an Early Help assessment is not required, and on some occasions families do not engage with the Early Help service and an assessment cannot be completed.

What action is the service taking?

A review of Early Help is underway, which will, amongst other things, look to capture the activity that other agencies carry out in relation to Early Help. The current performance suite around Early Help focusses solely on what happens within the Early Help service, and doesn't take into account what our partners are doing to help children and families within Wokingham.

What is the national context?

Comparative national figures are not available for Early Help activity and timeliness.

Dashboard Item 3 – Children’s Social Care Front Door

Measure	2018-19	Q3 18-19	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to CSC	1,787	478	463	419	495	↑
% of referrals to CSC which are repeat referrals within 12 months	21.7%	19.9%	32.4%	25.1%	20.2%	↓
% assessments completed within 45 working days	67.4%	75.6%	87.1%	76.3%	71.6%	↓

What does this show us?

The number of referrals to Children’s Social Care (CSC) has increased by 19%; 495 in Quarter 3 2019-20 compared to 419 for Quarter 2.

The percentage of referrals coming into CSC for children who have been the subject of a previous referral in last 12 months has decreased in Quarter 3 after high levels in Quarters 1 and 2. This brings Wokingham more in-line with national figures.

The timeliness of initial assessments completed following a referral to CSC has declined since Quarter 1 2019-20, but due to the increase in numbers of assessments, whilst the percentage of assessments completed in 45 working days has decreased, the actual number completed in timeframes has increased.

What is the background to this?

The high-levels of demand experienced in 2018-19 appears to have become the normal level. Work has been done to ensure that the front-door team is resourced to meet this demand.

What action is the service taking?

In order to improve assessment timeliness, the front-door team has reviewed the way that work is allocated across the team and is trialling a new method that has proven successful in other authorities. Assessment timeliness is being monitored weekly to ensure that those reaching the statutory limit of 45 working days are prioritised and actioned accordingly.

A recent audit of 80 cases where a referral to social care was made within 12 months of a previous referral has led to an action plan that was approved and signed off by the Quality Assurance board in early December. The improvement in this measure across Quarter 3 indicates that the lessons learned from the audit and the initial actions taken are having a positive effect.

What is the national context?

Nationally, in 2018-19, 82.7% of assessments were completed within 45 days, and 21.9% of referrals were re-referrals to CSC within 12 months.

Dashboard Item 4 – Child Protection

Measure	2018-19	Q3 18-19	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Direction of Travel
Children subject to CP Plans (snapshot at end of period)	124	146	131	129	145	↑
% of children starting a plan who had a previous one in the last 2 years	8.7%	2%	13%	24%	5%	↓
% of child protection visits within timescale	65.2%	61%	79.0%	73.6%	69.7%	↓

What does this show us?

The number of children on child protection plans has increased by 16 (12%) between the end of Quarter 2 2019-20 and the end of Quarter 3.

Of those children who came onto a child protection plan in Quarter 3 2019-20, just 5% had been subject to a previous child protection plan within the last 2 years.

Whilst more child protection visits are now happening within mandated timescales compared to previous periods, the percentage has reduced in Quarter 3 compared with previous quarters due to the higher numbers of children on a CP plan in Q3.

What is the background to this?

In previous quarters, large families becoming subject to a Child Protection plan for a second or subsequent time within 24 months have distorted the indicator. This can be seen in the significant decrease in Quarter 3, where 3 families and 3 children became subject to a plan for a second or subsequent time within 24 months.

What action is the service taking?

Where children become subject to child protections plans for a second or subsequent time, Service Managers go back through the case files to look for any points of learning that can be applied to future cases.

What was apparent was the level of activity and In early January, a line by line review of all out-of-timescale visits took place, identifying themes and considering approaches to improve performance around visit timeliness. effort undertaken to achieve visits with resistant families, alongside competing demands that resulted in recording issues.

What is the national context?

Nationally, there is a child protection plan rate of 45.3 per 10,000 children. In Wokingham, this was 38.9 at the end of Quarter 3.

Dashboard Item 5 – Children in Care

Measure	2018-19	Q3 18-19	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Direction of Travel
No. children in care (snapshot at end of period)	114	104	117	114	105	↓
% visits to children in care within timescale	68.4%	82.3%	79.2%	74.3%	80.0%	↑
% children in care who have more than 1 allocated social worker in 12m (snapshot at end of period)	65.0%	57.7%	69.2%	70.2%	66.7%	↓

What does this show us?

The number of children in care has fallen between the end of Quarter 2 2019-20 and the end of Quarter 3; there has also been significant improvement in the number of visits taking place within timescales.

The percentage of children in care who have had more than 1 allocated worker in the previous 12 months has fallen by 3.5 percentage points since the end of Quarter 2 2019-20.

What is the background to this?

There was some concern in 2018-19 that visits to children in care were not being recorded in a timely manner and that performance was artificially low as a result. Some work was done alongside social workers to remove barriers to recording, with the expectation that the visit timeliness indicator would begin to move in line with the anecdotal reality.

The Ofsted report published in July 2019 drew attention to repeated changes of social work for children, “making it difficult for them to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with [social workers]”.

What action is the service taking?

In early January, a line by line review of all out-of-timescale visits took place, identifying themes and considering approaches to improve performance around visit timeliness. Performance has improved but recording issues were identified indicating that the current figure could be higher.

The stability of the workforce is key in the allocated worker indicator. Recruitment activity is underway to address this.

What is the national context?

The national rate of Children in Care per 10,000 is 64.0. In Wokingham, the equivalent figure at the end of Quarter 3 is 28.2.

Dashboard Item 6 – Care Leavers

Measure	2018-19	Q3 18-19	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Direction of Travel
% of care leavers 'in touch' (snapshot at end of period)	94.4%	98.5%	94.7%	89.0%	87.0%	↓
% of care leavers aged 18-24 who are NEET (snapshot at end of period)	45.8%	40.0%	39.5%	44.3%	37.2%	↓
% of care leavers in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of period)	91.7%	95.4%	88%	80%	94%	↑

What does this show us?

There has been a decline in the percentage of care leavers that we are in touch with compared to the end of Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2019-20.

The percentage of care leavers aged 18-24 who are NEET has decreased slightly since the end of Quarter 2 2019-20.

The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has remained stable since the end of Quarter 2 2019-20.

What is the background to this?

Wokingham generally maintains good relations with care leavers, and is in touch with the vast majority. However, due to the age of the children and their individual preferences, it is not always possible to remain in contact; some children actively refuse contact with the service.

Some care leavers are housed in temporary accommodation as part of their housing journey.

What action is the service taking?

The service takes steps to understand the reasons why Care Leavers are not in education, employment or training - some will be due to a disability or maternity leave which means they will remain NEET for a long period of time. Care Leavers are visited regularly and supported to engage and remain in education, employment or training, as appropriate.

Close working with housing colleagues has meant that fewer care leavers are in unsuitable accommodation.

What is the national context?

Nationally, 93% of care leavers are in touch with their LA; 39% of care leavers are NEET, and; 84% are in suitable accommodation. Wokingham compares favourably to all these.

Dashboard Item 7 – Children Missing from Home/Care

Measure	2018-19	Q3 18-19	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Direction of Travel
Children missing from home/care	123	29	20	53	49	↓
% return home interviews carried out on time	38%	31.6%	50%	62.5%	50.0%	↓
Children missing from education (snapshot at end of period)	13	n/a	8	5	4	↓

What does this show us?

The number of children going missing from home or care has fallen in Quarter 3 2019-20 in comparison to Quarter 2.

A smaller percentage of return home interviews are happening within timescales, falling by 37.5 percentage points between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 2019-20.

There number of children missing from education has been falling since the end of 2018-19. These are children are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise.

What is the background to this?

A total of 49 children went missing 82 times between them in Quarter 3. The 11 Children in Care within this cohort went missing a total of 20 times; six of them for more than 24 hours.

Although a child returning home may agree to an interview taking place initially, it is often hard to engage them in completing the interview within timescales. This is particularly the case with older children or Children in Care placed outside the Borough.

Ofsted judged the LA's oversight of children who are missing education to be effective in their latest inspection report.

What action is the service taking?

It has been recognised that on some occasions our process flow for missing children upon return has not been as efficient or effective as it could be which has erroneously led to reported delay. A full review of the missing child process is underway.

Children missing in education will continue to be tracked by the Virtual School

What is the national context?

There is no national data available for comparison.

Dashboard Item 8 – Children’s Services Workforce

Measure	2018-19	Q3 18-19	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Direction of Travel
12 months rolling turnover of qualified social workers	22%	30%	17%	8%	8%	↔
% agency staff across qualified social work workforce (snapshot at end of period)	34%	35%	28%	34%	31%	↓

What does this show us?

Stability across the social work workforce is stabilising, with turnover remaining at 8% across the previous two quarters.

The percentage of agency social workers in Children’s Services has fallen slightly between the end of Quarter 2 2019-20 and the end of Quarter 3.

What is the background to this?

Children’s Services has struggled to recruit to vacant social worker posts over the last few years, meaning that a high number of social workers have been agency staff. A number of extra-establishment agency social workers have also been recruited to meet increased levels in demand.

Turnover amongst permanent staff has been steadily improving in recent quarters. However, turnover amongst agency social workers is high, and subsequently social worker changes for looked after children in particular remains high.

What action is the service taking?

A review of the establishment is under way with the intention of setting an appropriate budget for 2020-21 alongside the appropriate number of establishment social worker posts to meet the current levels of demand. A number of interviews for social work posts have taken place in early January 2020; following these, six job offers were made.

A retention and recruitment worker has also been recruited to assist with our approach to this.

What is the national context?

Nationally, the percentage of agency social workers across the entire social work workforce is 15.4%, which is lower than Wokingham’s 34%.

The national 12-month rolling turnover of social workers is 16.2%. Wokingham has now surpassed this national average.

TITLE	Corporate Parenting Board Review
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2020
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This proposal was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board on the 23rd October 2019.

The aim of the proposal was to develop the Corporate Parenting Board and make it more effective, while at the same time increasing the influence and engagement of children in care and care leavers.

RECOMMENDATION

This is for information only for Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This report was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) on the 23rd October 2019. The recommendation was for the Board to accept the proposals outlined in the report. The minutes of the meeting on the 23rd October 2019 (please note these are still draft) state that: ' Upon being put to the vote most Members were in favor of the new proposal'

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Corporate Parenting Board previously met every two months. It is administered and run as a committee. The membership includes 10 Cllr's and it is attended on average by 6 Cllr's. A range of reports are presented to the board throughout the year. A number of officers and external agencies are core members, with other agencies attending when required to present reports. Looked after Children and Care leavers attended with their advocate and shared information on topics or their experience of being looked after by Wokingham Borough Council. Their feedback suggested that they did not find attending the CPB of value or child focused.

The aim of the proposal was to develop the role of the board so that it equally focused on:

Overview: Reports, Data understanding of themes and patterns

Engagement: Meeting with looked after children and care leavers, staff and care providers.

Opportunity: Cllr's and officers drawing on their role in the council and community to advocate and promote the needs and develop opportunities for looked after children and care leavers

Outcomes: Development of services, enrichment, attainment and outcomes for children

The proposal was also to reduce the frequency that the formal board sat, change and develop the method and approach of how board members engage and heard from children and young people and establish an operational group that sits below the Board.

The information in this report below is the same as that presented to the CPB on the 23rd October 2019.

Background

The OFSTED ILACS report published in July 2019 listed five areas under the heading '*What needs to Improve*'. One of these was '*The oversight and impact of the corporate parenting board*'.

Point 46 of the OFSTED report states:

While the local authority generally acts as a responsible corporate parent, senior leaders have recognised that the corporate parenting board (CPB) needs to be overhauled. Their aim is to make it more effective, while at the same time increasing the influence and engagement of children in care and care leavers. Currently, the CPB has limited oversight of the work of the virtual school, and its interface with the children in care council is stilted.

The Corporate Parenting Board currently meets every two months. It is administered and run as a committee. Its membership includes 10 Cllr's and it is attended on average by 6 Cllr's. A range of reports are presented to the board throughout the year. A number of officers and external agencies are core members, with other agencies attending when required to present reports. Looked after Children and Care leavers attend with their advocate and share information on topics or their experience of being looked after by Wokingham Borough Council. Their feedback would suggest that they do not find attending the CPB of value or child focused.

The proposal is to develop the role of the board so that it equally focuses on:

Overview: Reports, Data understanding of themes and patterns

Engagement: Meeting with looked after children and care leavers, staff and care providers

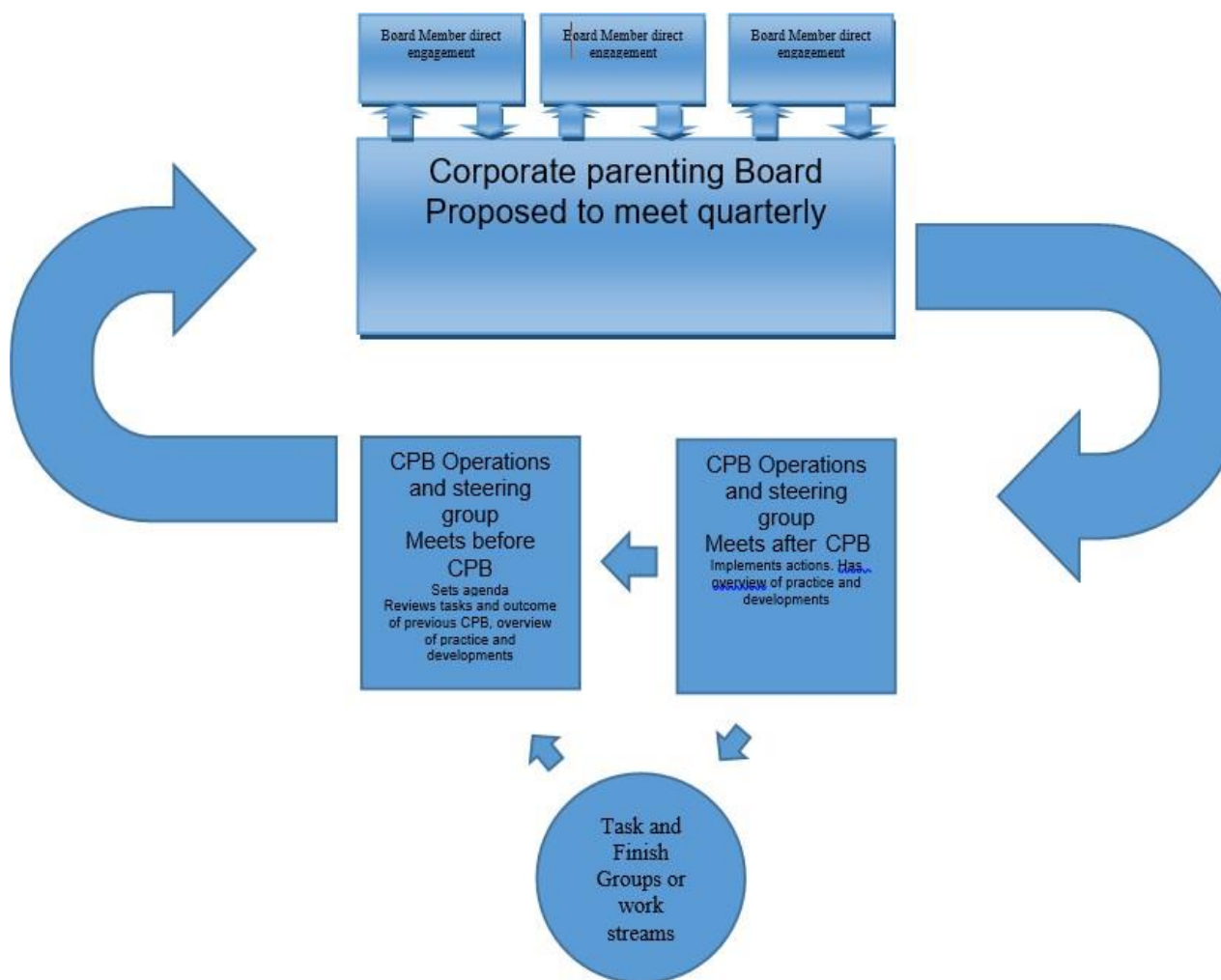
Opportunity: Cllr's and officers drawing on their role in the council and community to advocate and promote the needs and develop opportunities for looked after children and care leavers

Outcomes: Development of services, enrichment, attainment and outcomes for children.

The proposal is also to reduce the frequency that the formal board sits, change and develop the method and approach of how board members engage and hear from children and young people and establish an operational group that sits below the Board.

How would this look:

- The Board would reduce the number of formal meetings to every 3 months.
- A set agenda would be created for Key reports being submitted to the board, with others coming when required.
- The board would scrutinise the reports, identify themes, challenge and celebrate performance and ask relevant questions, of the author and relevant officers.
- A fixed data set would be available for each board giving an overview of key performance indicators.
- After each Board and prior to the next meeting the CPB Operations Group would meet to implement any actions and prepare the agenda for the next meeting. The Operations Group would have an overview and provide governance of all ongoing activity and actions in relation to the 'offer' and service delivery developments in Wokingham and nationally. It would act as the conduit between the Board, operational service delivery and developments.
- Between Board meetings there would be an opportunity for members of the Board to meet and engage directly with looked after children, care leavers (protocol required re setting up and relevant checks being undertaken i.e. DBS), workers and carers in a non-committee setting. This would provide an opportunity to obtain direct feedback and experiences of those in receipt of or who deliver our services. Observations and insight from this direct interface would be fed back at the next meeting. This would create the opportunity for the Board to have a fuller understanding of the services we deliver and lived experience of children and young people, through both direct engagement and also scrutiny and overview of the reports presented.



Analysis of Issues

The aims of these proposals are to:

Ensure that we build into our routine interactions with children and young people, opportunities for them to have a voice, give feedback and make proposals about their experience of being in our care

- Ensure that Board members and officers who deliver corporate parenting responsibilities hear the views of children and young people; engage in a dialogue with them; understand their circumstances and monitor their progress and development
- Provide a clear line of oversight and Governance of our corporate parenting responsibilities, our offer, delivery and developments

This will be done by:

- Ensuring that children views are routinely collected and considered in planning and service development.

- Ensuring that we give children and young people the chance to be part of a group of children in care where they can share and discuss their experiences and aspirations with.
- Ensuring that children in care are represented by a Children in Care Council (CiCC).
- Committing to arranging special consultation and participation events for children in care and young people on specific issues (e.g. health, education and so on).
- Creating opportunities for CPB members to meet directly with looked after children and care leavers, visit placements and meet with teams and individuals who deliver social work and look after children.
- Celebrating the achievements and progress of children and young people in care and care leavers.

Enabling the views of children and young people to be effectively received and responded to, through:

- The creation of a Corporate Parenting Board involving representatives of all sections of the Council and representatives of children in care.
- Ensuring that our Offer is dynamic and nimble to the changing needs of children in care and care leavers.

Purpose of the Board

The Corporate Parenting Board should ensure that all elements of the Council work collectively together to make sure the children in Wokingham's care get the best possible support and service that can be offered. Corporate Parenting requires ownership and leadership at a senior level, including from elected members in the Council.

A DfE guide for Councillors "If this were my Child..." (October 2003) identified the following issues as key to good corporate parenting:

- acceptance of responsibility for children in the Council's care
- making the needs of children and young people in care a priority
- seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

For both officers and Councillors, being a corporate parent means that when any service is being reviewed that could impact upon looked-after children and care leavers, or when you're hearing feedback from, or reports about, children in the council's care, consider:

“What if this were my child?”

“What can we do to put this right?”

It is important to remember that, just as not all children are the same, looked-after children and care leavers are not one homogenous group. While it is true that some will have experienced trauma and disruption in their lives and need support to cope with those experiences, others will have adjusted well to being in care and may be flourishing. As corporate parents, Councillors need to recognise the uniqueness of the children in their care, and make sure each child is getting what they need to do their best.

Children in care and care leavers have significant and complex needs and are among the most vulnerable children and young people in our society. Yet they have the right to expect the outcomes we want for every child. And that they should:

- be healthy
- be safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution to society
- achieve economic well-being

The outcomes for children in care are, nationally, below those of their peers (in terms of education achievement, employment, mental health involvement, and so on). It is therefore necessary for better monitoring and coordination at a strategic level of the parenting, and other services and support that children in care receive.

2. BACKGROUND

The term Corporate Parenting is used to describe the Council and its partners' duties and responsibilities to children and young people who are in care. Its central principle is that the Local Authority and partners should parent children in care much as one would parent their own child or children in their own family. So as corporate parents we perform a parenting role for all our children in care and as, former secretary of state, Frank Dobson said when he was the minister responsible for this area: 'we should have no less aspirations for children in care than we have for our own children'.

These views were reiterated in the *Care Matters: Time for Change* White Paper 2007:

“Improving the role of the corporate parent is key to improving the outcomes for children in care.... A good corporate parent must offer everything that a good parent would, including stability. It must address both the difficulties which children in care experience and the challenges of parenting within a complex system of different services. Equally it is important that children

have a chance to shape and influence the parenting they receive.”
(P7)

We therefore need to take the best features of birth parenting and seek to apply them to the more complicated and varied area of corporate parenting.

The best features of parenting include parents who:

- love and enjoy their children, celebrate their achievements and - be their advocate
- take an active interest in their children, their progress and their development and know how well they are doing. They promote good health, and educational achievements and support them to become successful adults.
- seek out development opportunities for them be that in leisure, the arts, sports, or employment opportunities
- provide additional support for their children so they can maximise educational and social opportunities
- engage in a dialogue with children to ensure that they know their views and how they are experiencing their education and other development opportunities; they take those views into consideration, but they retain the final say, until age appropriate decisions can be left with the young person.
- use that dialogue to actively influence children and young people, to boost their confidence, to let them know they are special and important to them, to encourage them to set goals
- let children know the realities and limits of what they as parents can do and provide for them

We need to apply these features to the parenting role and responsibilities we have for children in care.

A key challenge for us as corporate parents is to involve, and consult with children and young people and give them a real voice in the process of developing and delivering the range of support and services they need to achieve good outcomes.

While parents perform these actions naturally through the day-to-day interactions they have with their children (perhaps over the breakfast table or when their children returned from school etc), as corporate parents we need to identify and create ways in which corporate parents can interact with children and young

people, hear their views, have an influence on them and reflect on what steps we can take to improve their development opportunities.

The corporate parenting principles set out seven areas that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their homelives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

As corporate parents, it is every Councillor's responsibility to make sure that the council is meeting these duties towards children in care and care leavers. The Corporate Parenting Board can undertake this through:

- staying informed about children in the council's care, and care leavers
- provide a useful forum for regular, detailed discussion of issues,
- Develop positive link with children in care forums

Members of the Corporate Parenting Board can also use their position to raise awareness of the role amongst colleagues, and provide support to the lead member for children's services

The corporate parenting Board does not replace the duty of all Councillors; members of all committees have a responsibility to consider how reports before them impact upon children in care and care leavers. Receive regular progress reports with regard to looked-after children and care leavers, Review Data to have an overview of medium-to-long-term trends.

There are certain risks that particularly affect children in care and care leavers that corporate parents need to be aware of for example missing, and exploitation.

3. STAKEHOLDERS

Corporate parenting is not just the responsibility of the children's services department it is a whole Council responsibility. Because parenting involves every aspect of a child's life it is essential that the Council's corporate parenting board representatives reflect all relevant services. The key stakeholders responsible for delivering corporate parenting include social workers, those from education, health, CAMHS, housing, and other departments who may not have a frontline role but offer leisure, housing, and employment opportunities.

Children in care are key stakeholders of the Corporate Parenting Board.

- At any one time there are around 117 children in care.
- During one calendar year up to 400 will have been looked after
- Ages range from birth to 18 years old
- Children come into care because of different reasons: abuse or neglect; family dysfunction; family stress; absent parenting; child's disability; child beyond parental control
- Children have diverse needs. Some have special education need or disability; some are involved with the justice system; some have experienced serious trauma; some are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- Some children live in in foster homes, children's homes, residential homes, and semi-independent accommodation. Some placed for adoption and live with prospective adopters

Our challenge is to find ways of ensuring that all sections of this diverse group are able to participate and have their voice heard by corporate parenting representatives.

Other important stakeholders are those who work closely with children in care. These include:

- Foster carers - most children in care are placed with foster carers.
- Independent Reviewing Officers. The plans for children in care are reviewed by Independent Reviewing Officers who have an important role for children in care and have a statutory responsibility to ensure that their views are obtained and taken into account.

- Social workers and their managers. The social workers for children in care have a crucial role in how well children in care do and how we care for them.
- Virtual school; accommodation providers and key workers

4. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT

The Corporate Parenting Board will comprise of key stakeholders for delivering care and support to children in care alongside elected members

5. CORPORATE PARENTING IN ACTION

The Corporate Parenting Board will monitor and scrutinise services and progress of children in care and care leavers; and will routinely receive information relating to:

- How children in care and care leavers are doing
- Views of children in care and care leavers
- How services and outcomes for children in care and care leavers can be improved

To do this the Corporate Parenting Board will need:

- statistical data set which shows, numbers, progress and outcomes for children in care and care leavers
- the views of children and young people
- the views and impact of key stakeholders

A list of regular reports to the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) will need to be agreed, but should cover the health and education of children in care, placement and housing issues, and other issues. There will be presentations to the CPB on specific issues as required, and discussion of focused issues following each participation event.

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The views of children and young people will need to be collected:

- routinely at their reviews and in meetings with their social workers.
- through the children in care groups and the Children in Care Council.

- through special events that encourage participation of children in care and care leavers. Feedback gathered at these events would be fed back to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- CPB members meeting and visiting Looked after children and care leavers (DBS checks will be required)

The objectives of the board will be:

- to routinely examine and challenge performance relating to children in care and inquire into those areas where performance is poor or of concern
- to explore the extent to which the Council is contributing to meeting the needs of children in care and care leavers
- ensure that the strategic plans for children in care and care leavers are being effectively delivered
- identify and celebrate the achievements of individual children in care and care leavers
- meet and listen to children and care leavers in their context or environment. Respond to what they or their representatives (on the board) say about their experiences of being in care and the kinds of services they want
- be a champion for children in care and care leavers in the Council using the standard: **“is this good enough for my child?”** to challenge and scrutinise services provided by the Council and partners
- ensure national initiatives in relation to children in care and care leavers are disseminated and embedded in practice.
- ensure those planning, delivering, and monitoring services have taken account of diversity and equality issues affecting children in care and care leavers.
- monitor the implementation of agreed actions, in particular actions taken in response to the views of children and young people

This will be done by:

- listening to the feedback from children and young people and making proposals for action within the Council to improve services to children in care and care leavers
- monitoring progress and development of children and young people in key areas such as education, health, accommodation, and employment opportunities by using regular management

information

- making recommendations to the Council on ways of improving development opportunities for children and young people, and the quality of care offered to children in care and care leavers in Wokingham.

PARTICIPATION AND OBTAINING THE VIEWS OF

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

Public Sector Equality Duty

Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers

Contact Adam Davis	Service Social Care and Early Help
Telephone No Tel: 0118 974 6128	Email adam.davis@wokingham.gov.uk

TITLE	Wokingham Young Carers Service
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2020
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Wokingham Young Carers Service is delivered by Carers Trust East Midland (CTEM). In 2016 they were awarded a three year contract to deliver a young carers service to with an associated contract value of £60,149.00 per annum. The new service specification reflected an ambition to move towards group work and community engagement, including multi agency working within schools. This was a significant change from how this service had been delivered in previous years which was predominantly one-to-one work with young carers.

Since the beginning of this contract Wokingham Young Carers Service has worked with over 200 young carers supporting them in managing the impact their caring role has on their:

- Educational achievement
- Emotional wellbeing
- Feelings of isolation or loneliness

Under the Children's Act 2014¹, local authorities have a duty to actively identify young carers, carry out young carer's assessments and to implement support to reduce impact. Wokingham Borough Council commissions CTEM to do this on our behalf.

RECOMMENDATION

This report has been provided for information only

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides an overview of the Wokingham Young Carers Service and the impact it has made to the lives of our young carers over a period of three and a half years. During this period our young carers' service has seen an increase in the number of young

¹ Children Act (1989) [inserted in Children and Families Act 2014]
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/96/enacted>

carers receiving a service by over 700%. This can be attributed to a number of factors including:

- The effective working relationships with the new provider
- A robust contract mobilisation plan
- Additional resources made available for the sustainability of this contract from the provider
- The effective delivery of the commissioned provider e.g. proactive engagement with schools and children's services which has led to increased identification and referral of young carers this has directly contributed to the significant increase in the numbers of young carers being supported under the contract

Wokingham Young Carers Service is now delivering services that meet the needs of young carers in the borough. The service has moved away from traditional one to one work with young carers towards a group work/peer support approach.

Wokingham Young Carers Service offer to young carers includes:

- Group support and social activities
- Working with schools
- Young Carers Forum

In 2016 Wokingham Young Carers Service supported around 24 young carers. Improvements in commissioned services has led to an increase of provision, with over 205 young carers since the start of the contract. This amounts to a total growth of 754%. The largest rate of growth has been in the last 18 months on average receiving 11 referrals to the service each month.

There are currently 194 active registered young carers being supported by the service with an average engagement rate of 59 unique young carers per month. This is an increase of 125% from July 2018 at which time we there were 85 young carers active and an average engagement of 27 unique young carers per a month.

In 2019 there were 126 referrals to the service. 55% of referrals resulted in young carers assessments and being registered as a young carer, 37% of referrals where declined by the family, 8% were assessed and deemed not to be a young carer.

The young carers' service has fostered relationships within the community and have been successful in recruiting volunteers to support them to run youth groups and activities. They have become an integral part of the Early Help Hub in Wokingham, working alongside them to provide whole family support. The Early Help Hub was the largest referrer in 2019 with a total of 57 referrals. The second largest referral group was schools with 23 referrals and Children's Service workers including early help workers were the third highest referrer with a total of 19 referrals,

The service has established itself as a substantial resource within a number of schools, proving to be invaluable in providing additional support to young carers who may be falling behind in either attendance or academically. Three secondary schools in the Wokingham borough have taken up the Young Carers in Schools award.

The Young Carers Forum has enabled young carers to have a voice, and become active participants in shaping their own futures.

The service has ambitious plans going forward including supporting young carers to set up their own support groups in their schools, developing study support groups and ensuring young carers in Wokingham have the opportunity to participate in national young carers' events.

CTEM have been actively engaged in co-producing the young carers section of the broader forthcoming Carers Strategy 2020-2025, which will be presented to the Executive Committee in March 2020.

Background

It is estimated that there are around 700,000 children and young people across the UK are caring for family members. In 2016, the Children's Commissioner issued a survey to all local authorities in England to request data on referrals relating to children and young people providing care. Analysis suggested that 4 out of 5 local authorities were not offering any support to young carers, with too much focus on assessments alone at the expense of engaging, providing activities and working with the young carers. According to the report young carers want to enjoy their childhood and for services to listen to them and respect their views².

The Census 2011 determined there are 230 young carers aged 16 or below living in Wokingham. These figures are recognised as being extremely conservative. This is because young carers do not provide the information themselves and are dependent on parents providing this information in the census. 11% of young carers we currently work with have been referred to statutory services suffering with mental health issues.

In 2016 Wokingham Borough Council re-commissioned its' young carers service. The specification of the service reflected changes in the Children's Act 2014 and our duty to actively identify young carers, carry out young carer's assessments and to implement support to reduce impact. Service delivery, In line with current research, moved towards a more inclusive group work model.

Over the last three and a half years this service has grown from strength to strength and was cited at a national carers' conference in relation to how they have worked with a number of schools to embed the Young Carers in Schools award. This service has a significant presence in the community, with over 100 young carers and their families attending a summer fete organised by CTEM for young carers last year, promoting young carers through an art exhibition and by having a stall in the market place.

Young carers have been afforded opportunities for social recreation and emotional support. For many of our young carers the impact of this service has seen a reduction in their feelings of social isolation, increased attendance in school and improved confidence and well-being.

Areas for consideration

There has been capacity issues from the increased number of referrals and assessments. It is critical that the service still has the capacity to facilitate the group support sessions as well as identify and register new young carers.

The service is now exceeding targets determined in the service specification. The number of young carers they are now working with is far greater than we envisaged.

² HM Gov.UK (2016) The Support Provided to Young Carers in England
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/the-support-provided-to-young-carers-in-england/>

The Governments' *Carers Action Plan 2018-2020: Supporting carers today*³ identified that even more needs to be done in identifying and supporting young carers. We are now in a good position to achieve this.

Whilst to date this has been a managed growth and risk the service will be re-commissioned in 2021 as part of the voluntary sector procurement programme. In order to continue to meet our statutory requirements we will need to review local need and demand the financial envelope for this service.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	60,149.00		Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	60,149.00		Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	To be determined		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

WBC funding does not cover the full cost of this service, additional costs are currently supplemented by the provider and fund raising

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

Public Sector Equality Duty

Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers

³ DoHSC (2018) Carers Action Plan 2018 -2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713781/carers-action-plan-2018-2020.pdf

Wokingham Young Carers Service: Report for Wokingham Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny
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WOKINGHAM YOUNG CARERS SERVICE

REPORT FOR WOKINGHAM BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

January 2020



1. The Young Carers Service

i Wokingham Young Carers service is a commissioned service which is delivered by The Berkshire West Carers Hub a department of Carers Trust East Midlands (CTEM). The contract management and monitoring of the service is undertaken by a lead officer in Strategy and Commissioning at Wokingham Borough Council.

The contract to deliver a young carers service was awarded to CTEM in 2016. The contract value is £60,149 per annum. The service is commissioned until March 2021 and 1.5 staff are employed by CTEM to deliver the service. The local authority funding does not currently cover the whole cost of delivering the service (although the funding equates to a high percentage of the total cost to run the service) and additional costs are currently supplemented by our organization and fundraising.

There is no definitive number for how many young carers there are in the borough or in England, the 2011 census estimated that 166,000 young carers were identified in England alone.¹ Recently it has been suggested by a BBC research paper that as many as 1:5 secondary school students in England have a caring role.

In the borough of Wokingham the conservative number of young carers under the age of 16 based on the 2011 census is 230. This is considered to be far lower than the actual number. Families may hide that their children have a caring role out of concern of them being taken into care, or in other cases, caring is seen as a normal part of family life and don't identify with the term 'Young Carer.'

In 2016 the Wokingham Young Carers Service supported around 24 young carers, over the last three and a half years the service has grown to support over 205 young carers. This amounts to a total growth of 754%. Our largest rate of growth has been in the last 18 months on average receiving 11 referrals to our service each month.

A young carer is anyone under the age of 18 whose life is in some way restricted because of the need to take responsibility for the care of a person who is ill, has a disability, is experiencing mental distress, and is affected by substance use (Carers National Association, 1998)

¹ UK Data Service > Case Study. Beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk. <https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/impact/case-studies/case-study?id=207>. Published 2019. Accessed August 8, 2019.

2. Current Service Statistics

i These statistics are current as of the 31st December 2019.

Young Carers Supported

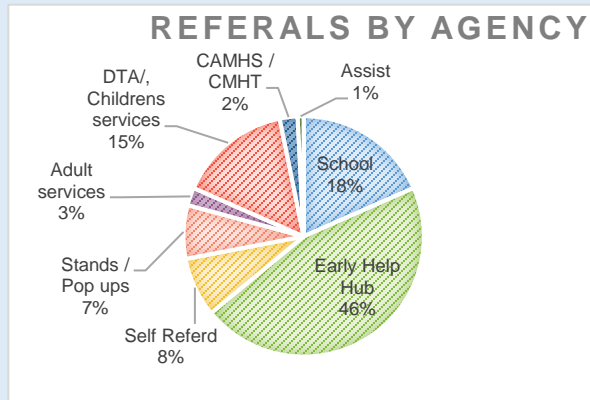
There are currently 194 active registered young carers being supported by our service with an average engagement rate of 59 unique young carers per month. This is up 125% from July 2018 at which time we had 85 young carers active and an average engagement of 27 unique young carers per a month.

Gender	No of YC's	School age	No. of YC's
Female	100	Junior school	58
Male	93	Secondary school	118
Transgender	1	College/ 6th form	18

The youngest registered young carer is aged 5 and the oldest is 17, our largest grouping of young carers is secondary school age with an even split across male and female.

In 2019 we received 126 referrals to our service. 55% of referrals resulted in young carers assessments and being registered as a young carer, 37% of referrals were declined by the family, 8% were assessed and deemed not to be a young carer.

In terms of organizations referring, 57 referrals came from the weekly Early Help Hub. This was our largest referrer in 2019. Our second largest referral group was schools with 23 referrals and Children's Service workers including early help workers were the third highest referrer with a total of 19 referrals.



3. Needs of young carers

i According to *Barnardo's Still hidden Still ignored; Emma James, December 2017* the three most commonly identified challenges that young carers experience are the impact their role has on their educational achievement, emotional wellbeing and feelings of isolation or loneliness. This extensive study was based on research involving 800 teachers, 40 front line young carers workers and 79 young carers.

Most young carers will be late to school during the year, many will receive on average lower grades at GCSE than students who have no caring role. Young carers often feel isolated and

not able to engage in the same social activities as others due to their caring role, and many suffer with anxiety due to worrying about the wellbeing of the person they care for.

This study showed three clear goals for young carers support; Identification, Education and ongoing peer support. These are the key areas of support we now offer.

4. Current Support offered

i Identification

Under the Children's Act 2014, local authorities have the duty to actively identify young carers, carry out young carers' assessments and to implement support to reduce impact. This is both when a young person is caring and preventative when there is evidence to suggest a young person will be a young carer e.g. a 5 year old who's parent is severely disabled.²

- Wokingham young carers service carries out the statutory young carers' assessments for Wokingham borough council.
- We have actively increased the number of young carers identified in the borough by 754% over the period of our contract.
- Over the last year we have become an integral part of the Early Help Hub in Wokingham; in 2019 we have received 57 referrals from this source. Being part of their team meetings allows us to advocate for cases involving young carers we work with and we are able to give input into the support the family needs as a whole.
- In February 2019 we attended team meetings for all workers of Early Help and children centres to explain the support we offer and deliver information about the identification of young carers. Building an effective working relationship with Early Help has increased the multi-agency support available to young carers

Education

- We work with schools to establish support for young carers. We offer all schools, free assemblies, staff training and support and send out materials for schools including lesson plans on a quarterly basis.
- We currently have 3 secondary schools in Wokingham borough that have taken up the Young Carers in Schools award and 3 others, that although not on the award have a working relationship with the young carers service. One of the schools has made us their nominated charity for the next year. We also have many primary schools we work with referring children to us and receiving advice and support from our service.
- In the last year we have worked with St Crispin's school, meeting weekly with 3 students who were young carers whose attendance had dropped below 60%, and

² Carers Trust, *Rights for young carers and young adult carers in the Children and Families Act*, Carers trust, March 2015. [accessed online 8.8.19]

supported the students to increase their attendance significantly. St. Crispin's has now appointed a member of staff to lead the support for young carers in school.

Ongoing Group support

Wokingham young carers' service offers a continuous support model. Unlike other services which offer targeted intervention for 6 – 8 weeks, a young person or child once registered with us has access to our continuous support till they stop being a young carer in our borough.

- All young carers receive a monthly newsletter from our service which invites them to activities and provides updates about our services.
- Starting in September 2018 we provide weekly groups for young carers all year round. During term time we run separate weekly children's and youth groups in Wokingham and in Lower Earley. The aim of the groups is; to allow young carers to meet up and build relationships with one another to reduce the impact of loneliness and isolation, to give them a place to be kids/ youth and to give them access to workers to chat to and get any support they need in their caring role, education or personal wellbeing.
- During holidays we run different activities for youth and children. For our children we run day camps at Dinton Pastures in the summer and have this year also put on; a drum workshop, Halloween party, Christmas party, Easter egg hunt and other fun activities. For our youth we have run; a snow tubing trip, bake off competition, ice skating, archery, pizza and movie nights and more. This year we also put on a family fete day for the whole family which was attend by 100 people, as well as two Scottish premiership players and the Deputy Mayor of the borough.
- We run a young carers forum which empowers our young carers to lead the direction of our service and encourages them to raise awareness. In January a group of our young carers took to Wokingham market wearing shirts and handing out flyers to local residents to raise awareness of the impact being a young carers has on mental health.
- This year we took 8 young carers to the Young carers festival for a weekend , the young carers who went loved the event and all grew closer to one another sharing more about their home lives and supporting each other via the Social media group they set up on what's app and snap chat.

Other support

- Carer assessments- When coming across families in particular where there is a lot of practical support and especially if the young person or child is the primary/ sole carer we will contact the adult social care team to arrange a carers needs assessment to reduce the practical impact on the young carer.
- Signposting – we at times sign post young carers to additional support such as CAMHS and other agencies. Staff from the service meet monthly with primary CAMHS to get advice and resources to support young carers.
- Cross working –When needed, we attend or submit reports for TAF and CIN meetings and advocate for our young carers at these meetings. We have also

carried out joint home visits with staff of the early help team to support transitions from Early Help into Young Carers or when a young carer's assessment would help identify next steps for early help in supporting a family.

- This year we nominated three young carers for the Mayors honour role to acknowledge their hard work, commitment and contribution to their families. All three candidates were successful and presented the award at a council meeting in Shute End.

5. Support via Wokingham borough services

i Under the Children's and families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014, young carers have a right to a young carers assessment and support, and local authorities are required to be proactive in identifying and supporting young carers and reducing the impact of their caring role. Carers Trust has developed clear guidelines for the acts in plain English.³ Although we have been commissioned to support young carers the onus to identify still remains on the children's and adults services team when they come into contact with families and people with disabilities.

Over the last year we have improved in particular our working relationship with the Early Help team in supporting and identifying young carers in the borough. We have also cross worked many cases and carried out home visits together when appropriate. As well as attending team meetings to give advice on identifying young carers and the support we offer. This is an important relationship and we are thankful to the managers of the children's centres for their work to ensure we work together well to support the families in our borough.

We are part of the Carers Strategic Group and through this have developed relationships with the adult social care team allowing us to contact them and get support for young carers and family in terms of care assessment resulting in equipment being put into the family home and in some cases arranging for paid carers to support families. We have also been able to actively contribute to the new carers strategy and receive contract monitoring and support from the Strategy and Commissioning Team.

We have been successful in working with Early Help to increase the support they give to young carers. We are continuing to develop good working relationships with other teams in the council such as Adult Social Care.

The following case study from May 2019 demonstrates the support we have provided to a young carer. (*Used with permission of young carer*).

We received a referral in January from Children's Services after a family had gone through child protection and court proceedings.

We carried out a young carer's assessment on a 15yr old male and confirmed he was delivering a high level of care to his disabled mum and younger siblings. Once the young person was identified we were able, together with the adult disability

³ https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/children_and_families_act_briefing.pdf

services, to implement home support both in terms of equipment, support in school, and the young carer attending our weekly our youth groups. The support has helped this family and the young person feel safe, we have reduced the impact of their caring role and the family has now been stepped down to CIN (Child in need) as services continue to work to get the right level of support for the family including in home care support.

The young person while at the young carers' festival spoke with me about the impact this process has had on him and how much fear it had caused him. His father died some years before he was looking after his mum. The young boy talked to me about the huge emotional turmoil he experienced faced with a reality that because of the disability in his family he could lose his mother also.

This year we will see the implementation of the new carers' strategy for the borough as part of this we hope to see clearer pathways put in place in particular between children's social services, adult disabilities and the young carers' service to ensure young carers are being identified at the earliest opportunity and supported holistically.

6. Future support

i Our contract has been extended to March 2021 as the new voluntary sector review is undertaken. We hope to have the opportunity to bid for the new contract to continue to deliver this service. We will be working with commissioners to ensure they are fully aware of the growing needs and demands of the service and hope that this growth would be reflective in the new contract value.

We would like to develop a study group as young carers have asked for support with their education. Through the creation of a study group with tutors, we hope to support them in overcoming the hurdles they face in completing school work at home. This alongside multi-agencies working together it would allow us to offer support to cover the three key noted areas of impact.

In the coming year we will be focusing on improving our current work and creating more opportunities to empower young carers to speak out and affect change:

- In January 2020 we will, be sending 3 young carer ambassadors to an event run by The Children's Society to explore how to improve identification of young carers.
- Young carers will be meeting with the Rt. Hon. John Redwood MP around the new governments' social care green paper.
- We will be setting up a program to help young carers become ambassadors in their schools and supporting them to set up their own groups in school with support from the young carers' staff.

APPROVAL OF REPORT

We approve the above report to be submitted to the oversight and scrutiny committee.

Name	Title	Date
Phillip Hollis –(author)	Young carers support worker	29.08.19
Brigid. Dos. Santos	Manager West Berkshire Carers Hub	14.08.19
Hayley Rees	Lead Commissioner for Children's Services, Wokingham Borough Council	29.08.19
Children's Services Leadership Team	DCS Carol Cammiss	08.1.2020
Phillip Hollis	Young carers support worker (stats updated)	08.1.2020

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2020 WORK PROGRAMME

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
21 January 2020	Children's Services Performance Indicators	To receive an update and monitor Children's Services performance measured by local indicators	Standing item	Children's Services / Carol Cammiss
	School Performance Indicators and Ofsted Reports	To receive information on schools' performance, and to review recent Ofsted Reports.	Standing item	Children's Services / Sal Thirlway
	SEND Strategy and Action Plan	To review the revised SEND Strategy and the action plan.	To comment and make suggestions	Children's Services/ Sal Thirlway
	Support for Young Carers	To receive a report giving details of the support provided to young carers in the Borough.	To comment and make suggestions	Children's Services/ Carol Cammiss
	CPB Review	To receive an update on the re-structure of Corporate Parenting Board	To comment and make suggestions	Children Services/ Adam Davis
	CSO&S Forward Plan	To consider the forward programme of the Committee.	Standing item	Democratic Services / Luciane Bowker
	Schools Causing Concern – Part 2	To receive information about any school(s) causing concern.	Standing item	Children's Services / Sal Thirlway

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Agenda Item 50.

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
17 March 2020	Children's Services Performance Indicators	To receive an update and monitor Children's Services performance measured by local indicators.	Standing item	Children's Services / Carol Cammiss
	School Performance Indicators and Ofsted Reports	To receive information on schools' performance, and to review recent Ofsted Reports.	Standing item	Children's Services / Sal Thirlway
	Permanent/Fixed Term Exclusions and Part Time Tables	To receive a report outlining the current situation.	To receive an update make recommendations.	Children's Services/ Sal Thirlway
	Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing	To receive a report giving details of children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.	To receive an update and make recommendations	Children's Services/ Carol Cammiss
	Ofsted Inspection Update on Action Plan	To review the development of the action plan.	To receive an update and make recommendations	Children's Services/ Carol Cammiss
	Home Education	To review the data around home educated children in the Borough and review their educational outcomes.	To monitor and make recommendations	Children's Services/ Sal Thirlway
	CSO&S Forward Programme	To consider the forward programme of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services / Luciane Bowker
	Schools Causing Concern – Part 2	To receive information about any school(s) causing concern	Standing item	Children's Services / Sal Thirlway