



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held virtually
on **TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 28 August 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.

Note: The Council has made arrangements under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to hold this meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams. The meeting can be watched live using the following link: <https://youtu.be/u6DNxGxZ3lo>

Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council’s control.



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business

Enriching Lives

- Champion outstanding education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Safe, Strong, Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to prevent the need for long term care.
- Nurture communities and help them to thrive.
- Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all.

A Clean and Green Borough

- Do all we can to become carbon neutral and sustainable for the future.
- Protect our borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas.
- Reduce our waste, improve biodiversity and increase recycling.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

Right Homes, Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure to support and enable our borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion, minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you.
- Communicate better with you, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

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	

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.
15.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
16.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 June 2020.	7 - 14
17.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
18.		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	

- 18.1 None Specific Wesley Budd has asked the Chairman of the Children's Services O&S Committee the following question:
- Question**
 There is evidence nationally that just before schools closed for the summer holidays, pupils from more deprived backgrounds were least likely to return to school – and that this is one of a number of factors that will further widen the social developmental and academic attainment gaps between children from poorer and wealthier socio-economic backgrounds.
- What can WBC do to ensure that this aspect of the 'return to school' is monitored and understood by schools and what practical interventions and supports can be put in place to address this?
19. **MEMBER QUESTION TIME**
 To answer any member questions
20. None Specific **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS** 15 - 24
 To receive and consider the Children's Services Performance Indicators report.
21. None Specific **SCHOOLS' PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND OFSTED REPORTS**
 To receive and consider a report containing the Ofsted reports which were released since the last meeting and the Schools' Performance Indicators.
22. None Specific **FORWARD PLAN** 25 - 28
 To consider the Committee's Forward Plan.
23. **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.
24. None Specific **SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN – PART 2**
 A report containing details of schools causing concern will be considered in a Part 2 report.

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 17 JUNE 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.00 PM**

Committee Members Present

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

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Sarah Kerr and UllaKarin Clark

Officers Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Gillian Cole, Service Manager Schools
Adam Davis, Assistant Director Children's Social Care
Patrick Finegan, Virtual School Headteacher
Stephen Goss, Intelligence and Impact Performance Leader
Sal Thirlway, Assistant Director Learning Achievement and Partnerships

5. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Carol Cammiss, Director of Children's Services.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman of the Committee at a later date.

7. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

9. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

10. EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES STATEMENT

With the agreement of the Chairman, Councillor Clark, Executive Member for Children's Services addressed the Committee.

Councillor Clark stated that her statement was in relation to a question that had been submitted to the Council meeting on 16 June 2020, in respect to the impact of the Covid-19 virus on Children's Services and how the Council has countered them.

Councillor Clark's statement:

All Learning, Achievement & Partnership activity has been maintained throughout the coronavirus outbreak, with staff working from home to maintain service delivery. We have utilised online and mobile platforms to continue to engage children and families in supporting activity with them. We have worked closely with all schools and early years settings to support them in keeping them open for vulnerable children and children of key workers, and to support home learning for students that are unable to access schools

during 'lock-down'. We have offered all looked after children an online tutor to support them with their school work.

In children's social care we have followed Government guidance, lockdown restrictions and Public Health advice and we have adapted the way that work ensuring that we can continue to deliver our statutory duties, keeping both children and staff safe. Most social workers are now working from home, this has been supported by the roll out of IT equipment. The Front Door (Duty Triage and Assessment) are continuing to take referrals, although these are lower due to the reduction of children having contact with partner agencies.

All Child Protection visits in Borough are ongoing and are face to face using all safety precautions which includes PPE where required. Strategy Meetings, Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Children Reviews are taking place remotely via conference calls and all 'Looked After Children' cases have been reviewed and where possible visit time frames amended, in line with the statutory requirement relating to each case. The availability of new Apps and software has supported the use of video calling to communicate with children and families regularly.

The Bridges Resource Centre is continuing to offer a Residential Respite service for children with disabilities, although this has been slightly reduced.

All court applications for Public Law (where we need to protect a child) and Youth Justice are being completed remotely via video link.

The performance of Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCP) within 20 weeks has improved significantly from 12% in January to 95% in April 2020.

The following comments were made during the discussion of the item:

- Councillor Bray thanked officers in the service for their work during this period. She asked about what was being done to support young carers;
- Adam Davis, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care stated that young carers had been contacted as part of a welfare call to establish if they had any additional needs, support was then offered where needed;
- Councillor Mickleburgh was pleased to note the significant improvement on the number of EHCP completed within the timelines. He asked if the number of requests for assessments had been impacted during the pandemic and whether there was a risk of a back log in the future;
- Sal Thirlway, Assistant Director for Learning and Achievement stated that the number of requests for assessments continued steady throughout the period;
- The Chairman asked about the take up of the offer for online tutoring to looked after children. Patrick Finegan, Virtual School Headteacher stated that it had been increasing weekly, now there were around 15 children who had taken up the offer. He also stated that following a Corporate Parenting Board meeting, the offer was extended from two hours a week to three hours a week;
- In response to a question Patrick Finegan stated that children of various ages had taken up the offer.

The Chairman invited Councillor Clark to give an executive update to the Committee on a regular basis.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The update by the Children's Services Executive Member be noted; and
- 2) The Committee would receive regular updates by the Children's Services Executive Member.

11. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Stephen Goss, Performance Leader Intelligence and Impact presented the Children's Services Performance Indicators.

The Committee reviewed each dashboard indicator and some of the comments made during the discussions are listed below.

Dashboard 1 – Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

- Stephen Goss stated that the number of EHCPs had been completed within the 20 week of the referral target had increased;
- Members were pleased with the progresses in the timeliness of completion of EHCPs.

Dashboard 2 – Early Help

- Stephen Goss stated that the numbers in relation to referrals for Early Help fluctuated during the year. However, the numbers had increased as a result of lockdown;
- Stephen Goss stated that the average length of time taken to complete Early Help assessments had risen in Quarter 4;
- Adam Davis stated that a Task and Finish had been set up to look at ways to improve the service and work with partners. The Early Help Strategy was being developed, however, this had been delayed because of Covid-19;
- Councillor Mickleburgh asked for information in regards to the complexity of referrals and how the new way of working from home was affecting the service;
- Adam Davis stated that complex cases and where the level of concern was high, would be dealt with by Social Care; he also stated that a lot of the work undertaken by Early Help had moved online and some capacity had been created as a result of working from home. He stated that the Covid-19 related questions would be dealt with in more detail at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Dashboard 3 – Children's Social Care Front Door

- Stephen Goss stated that the number of contacts had increased;
- Adam Davis stated that with the increased number of staff now working from home, there had been a lot more virtual work; some staff who had been shielding still managed to maintain a certain level of activity by working from home;
- Stephen Goss stated that the level of staff permanency had improved and this was reflected in various areas of the service.

Dashboard 4 – Child Protection

- Stephen Goss stated that despite the current difficulties, the number of visits undertaken within the timescales had improved;
- Councillor Cheng asked what plans were put in place to prepare for the lockdown. Adam Davis stated that when it became apparent that the lockdown would be implemented, the service had reviewed all cases and sustained the level of statutory child protection visits. An assessment was made to determine where PPE would be needed, WhatsApp was downloaded into the staff phones and visits moved online where possible. A visit was only suspended if a family was presenting symptoms, in

such instances the service would weigh up the risk of the visit to staff and the risk to the child;

- In response to a question Adam Davis stated that most visits were planned and not random, depending on the case;
- Councillor Mickleburgh expressed concern around children's safeguarding, and potential increase in vulnerability during the lockdown, and asked about the schools involvement in safeguarding;
- Sal Thirlway stated that there was engagement and communication with schools, on a daily basis, to ensure children's safeguarding continued during lockdown;
- Adam Davis stated that the challenge was now to prepare for the next phase of the pandemic. The service had had good support from the IT department in the move to working from home. There was engagement with other agencies such as the Public Health England to keep up to date with current governmental advice.

Dashboard 5 – Children In Care

- The Chairman asked who did Wokingham compare to the national figures in relation to the % visits to CIC within timescale; Stephen Goss agreed to find out and circulate the response;
- Members were pleased to note the reduction in the percentage of CIC who have more than one allocated Social Worker; Adam Davis stated that this was as a result of a more stable workforce
- Stephen Goss stated that the main reason for the increase in the number of visits undertaken within timescales was better recording;
- Adam Davis stated that the permanency and recruitment strategy had changed; for example, a member of staff had been employed to promote recruitment and permanency and the offer had been reviewed;
- In response to a question Adam Davis stated that there had been an increase of around 8% in the number of CIC since the lockdown, but he could not ascertain if this was related to Covid-19. It was possible that the pressure created by the current circumstances might create an increase in the number of CIC.
- Adam Davis stated that there was new Compass Team, this team worked to support children to stay at home or to stay in stable placements.

Dashboard 6 – Care Leavers

- Stephen Goss stated that there had been a decrease in the number of Care Leavers who were NEET. The percentage of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation had decreased;
- Councillor Mickleburgh asked for more information about unsuitable accommodation, that the data include actual numbers, not just percentages; he also asked for the types of accommodation to be listed;
- Stephen Goss stated that the percentages related to small numbers, there were only 72 Care Leavers. Therefore, small changes could swing the date considerably. He stated that custody and B&B were considered unsuitable accommodation, B&Bs were rarely used;
- Adam Davis stated that it was important to understand the nuances of the situation. For example, a child who was remand in custody became a looked after child for the period of remand, they would become a care leaver by default at the of 18, they may never have been in the service's care when they were in the community;
- Adam Davis stated that the service was actively working with the young person who was in a B&B accommodation to find a suitable placement. He stated that the service had a good relationship with Housing;

- Councillor Bray asked when did the Council stopped being liable for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC);
- Adam Davis stated that the Council carried on supporting UASC up to the age of 21 financially, if needed. There could be challenges in relation to the child's legal status and a human rights assessment sometimes was necessary.

Dashboard 7 – Children Missing from Home/Care

- Stephen Goss stated that the number of children missing from home had decreased and the number of return interviews had increased;
- Members asked to have more information around the reasons for children going missing;
- Councillor Mickleburgh was concerned about the risk of child exploitation, in particular in relation to CIC, and ask for a report around this issue;
- In response to a question Stephen Goss stated that new legislation was expected in relation to children missing from education and statutory attendance, in the context of the current pandemic.

Dashboard 8 – Children's Services Workforce

- Stephen Goss sated that the turnover had stabilised, and there was a positive move towards increasing the number of permanent staff;
- In response to a question Adam Davis stated there were around just under 100 permanent qualified Social Workers employed by the Council;
- In response to a question Adam Davis confirmed that the service did employ Newly Qualified Social Workers and they did tend to stay with the Council for a period of two to three years. However, it was important to have a balance between experienced Social Workers and Newly Qualified Social Workers in the service;
- Councillor Miall asked to have numbers in the report, as well as percentages;
- In response to a question Adam Davis stated that the aspiration was to have around 10% agency staff working for the service, 100% permanent work force was difficult to achieve.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The report be noted; and
- 2) Future reports would include numbers as well as percentages.

12. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND OFSTED REPORTS

Gillian Cole, Service Manager Schools presented the Schools Performance Indicators and Ofsted reports report.

Gillian Cole stated that Ofsted had ceased its inspections process due to the current lockdown. The reports presented had been published prior to the lockdown. The reports were in relation to Maiden Erlegh and St Dominic Savio, both schools had achieved outstanding ratings.

Members were pleased to note the outcomes of the inspections at both schools. In particular, it was noted that St Dominic Savio had shown a considerable improvement.

Gillian Cole stated that St Dominic Savio had had a trajectory of improvement, from requires improvement to good and now to outstanding. She stated that St Dominic's

Headteacher had been able to talk to other primary school heads about his trajectory before the lockdown.

Members wished to formally congratulate those schools on their achievement. The Chairman agreed to write to both schools, on the Committee's behalf, to congratulate them on their significant results.

In response to a question, Gillian Cole stated that Ofsted investigated and would report bullying at schools if this was found to be the case. She confirmed that schools and academies were required to keep a log of bullying incidents.

Councillor Helliar-Symonds stated that it used to be customary for the Executive Member for Children's Services to write to schools following positive Ofsted inspections outcomes. She was particularly pleased with a sentence in St Dominic Savio's report which stated: "Leaders and teachers do not place a ceiling on what pupils can do and achieve...", she felt that this was particularly aspirational.

Gillian Cole stated that as a result of the Covid-19 situation, the government had removed the exams requirement. Therefore, there would be no performance data for this year.

Members stated that they wished to review the performance indicators for 2019 at the next meeting.

In response to a question Gillian Cole stated that there were ongoing discussions with schools' leaders to determine how schools would assess the gap in learning created by the current situation, and how to address it. The service was waiting for government guidance.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

13. VIRTUAL HEAD REPORT

The Virtual Head report was presented by Patrick Finegan, Virtual School Headteacher.

Patrick Finegan made the following points during his presentation:

- When he joined the service the Virtual School overlooked the education of 5-16 year old children, he had changed this to 0-25, to reflect the parental responsibility towards CIC;
- He had identified issues in relation to the high percentage of Care Leavers who were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET). He believed that this was because there was no Virtual School for post 16 children;
- He was pleased that the Council had now agreed to fund resources for the provision of post 16 Virtual School. However, it would take some time for the impact of this investment to be seen;
- Personal Educational Plans (PEPs) were now being carried out online. Also, carers were now being able to share their views and contribute to PEPs; there was now a website that all professionals could use to share information;
- At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 5 CIC attending school, now there were 20;
- All CIC and Care Leavers had been offered two hours a week with a private tutor. Following a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB), this had now been

extended to three hours a week. Currently 15 children had taken up this offer, but this number was growing every week;

- Additionally, CIC and Care Leavers had been given access to various online resources, including the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which was very well used;
- Eton College had offered free online courses, the service had opted to offer a course on Resilience for the CIC and Care Leavers;
- Some children had benefited from being educated at home;
- All CIC from Year 5 and above were given laptops, therefore there had been no issues with accessing education online;
- It was recognised that children may need help to catch up as a result of the current situation in relation to not being able to attend school.

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

- The Chairman asked if carers had been given printers, particularly in relation to children under Year 5;
- Patrick Finegan stated that he had not been asked for printers;
- In response to a question Patrick Finegan stated that the laptops belonged to the children, they did not have to give it back. In addition, laptops were replaced every three years;
- In response to a question Patrick Finegan stated that currently there was no support from the Virtual School to post 16 students, this included A-Level, University and Apprenticeships. This had been recognised as a weakness and had been addressed. The service had been given resources to recruit a member of staff to work with the post 16 cohort;
- Adam Davis stated that Care Leavers had a high level of contact with their Personal Advisors who supported them;
- In response to a question Patrick Finegan stated that universities encouraged CIC to attend, however they did not have priority to the same extent that they had at schools;
- In response to a question Patrick Finegan stated that the service was encouraging carers to send children back to school, however this was not being enforced. The service was minded not to put placements at risk, recognising that some carers were in the at risk group;
- In response to a question Patrick Finegan stated that the tutor offer was going to carry on during the summer and beyond;
- In response to a question Patrick Finegan stated that if a child wished to take the grammar school exams and needed extra tuition, this would be provided.

Sal Thirlway announced that Patrick Finegan would be leaving the Council at the end of July and he thanked Patrick for his contribution to improving the Virtual School during the past year.

Members of the Committee and the Executive Member for Children's Services also wished to thank Patrick Finegan for his work with the Virtual School.

Members were reassured that plans were underway to find a replacement.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

14. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for 2020/21.

It was agreed that the Executive Member for Children's Services update would become a standing item. Members also decided to add the following items:

8 September 2020

- 2019 GCSE and A-Level results

5 November 2020

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- School Placements Sufficiency

25 January 2021

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy
- Child exploitation

The Chairman would liaise with Councillor Croy about the possibility of a report being brought to the Committee around the issue of Black Lives Matter.

Members discussed the idea of having a training session at some point in the future. They suggested that the training could include:

- The legal framework around Social Work and legal definitions;
- The Social Worker's role;
- A deep dive into one or two cases, the journey through different teams and how the legal status affects the services provided;
- Details about EHCP

Adam Davis stated that a training session had been planned for newly elected Members after the May elections. He agreed to do a refresher training session for the Committee.

Councillor Richards asked that an updated list of acronyms be circulated to the Committee. Luciane Bowker, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist agreed to follow this up.

15. 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 Schedule 12A of the Act as appropriate.

16. SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN - PART 2

The report was discussed in a part 2 session.

Agenda Item 20.

TITLE	Children's Services Performance Indicators
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 September 2020
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, 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 June 2020.

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 faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	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

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.

List of Background Papers

N/A

Contact Nick Hammond	Service Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Standards
Telephone No 07789921022	Email nick.hammond@wokingham.gov.uk

Dashboard Item 1 - Education, Health & Care Plans

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
Current EHCPs in borough (snapshot at end of period)	706	577	581	612	706	749	↑
Current EHCPs out of borough (snapshot at end of period)	405	365	402	381	402	404	↑
EHCPs issued within 20 weeks of the referral	29.6%	0%	12.3%	14.0%	35.1%	88.0%	↑

What does this show us?

The numbers of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) funded by Wokingham Borough Council continues to increase. The funded EHCP numbers between the end of 2019-20 (1,108) and the end of Quarter 1 2020-21 (1,157) have risen by 4%.

There has been a striking improvement in the number of plans issued within the 20-week timescale over the course of 2019-20 and into 2020-21. In the first quarter of 2019-20, no EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks of the referral. However, by Q1 2020-21, 88% of plans were issued within the timescale.

What is the background to this?

The SEND care management team – which had been operating at less than 50% capacity since early 2018 - achieved a full staffing complement in Quarter 2 2019-20. This has driven the continued improvement on performance into the last quarter.

What action is the service taking?

Improving the timeliness and quality of EHCPs remains a priority area for the council and its partners; it is the focus of a dedicated multi-agency Task and Finish Group which meets monthly and reports directly to the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Improvement Board. Robust tracking processes are used to monitor progress of the production of EHCPs, and the SEND Improvement Board is provided with data around timescales and the reasons behind any breaches.

What is the national context?

For the calendar year 2019, 58.7% of new EHC Plans across England were issued within 20 weeks, compared to 8.7% in Wokingham. The current 88% is well above the averages for England, the South East (46.4%) and Wokingham's statistical neighbours (61.5%)

Dashboard Item 2 – Early Help

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to Early Help	203	203	159	251	239	224	↓
No. Early Help Assessments	184	184	176	181	197	250	↑
Avg. length of time in days between referral and assessment completion	35	35	25	33	42.3	38	↓

What does this show us?

The numbers of referrals to the Early Help service fluctuated over the course of 2019-20, with a dip in Quarter 1 2020-21. Nonetheless, this quarter has seen an increase on the same quarter last year. Meanwhile, the number of completed Early Help assessments increased quarter-on-quarter last year and reached a to-date peak in Q1 of this year.

After an increase toward the end of 2019-20, the average length of time taken to complete Early Help assessments has decreased in Q1 2020-21 – in spite of the growing number of assessments.

What is the background to this?

March and June 2020 saw unusually high numbers of Early Help referrals (83 and 100 respectively). The number of Early Help assessments on a monthly basis does not always correspond to the fluctuations in Early Help referrals. Assessments differ in length of time, meaning an assessment completed one month may have been referred quite a time before. Early Help has been experiencing increased activity as a result of the impact of Lockdown, and has branched out to deal with cases not previously within its remit. As a result, the improvement in assessment completion times is all the more commendable.

What action is the service taking?

While the number of referrals to Early Help may have dipped from the previous quarter, the number of assessments has increased and timeliness has improved. Both the child and parent/carer rating of the service remains above target. CSC will continue its efforts to improve completion times in the face of continued increased activity.

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	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
No. of referrals to CSC	1774	463	419	495	495	275	↓
% of referrals to CSC which are repeat referrals within 12 months	26.9%	32.4%	25.1%	20.2%	24.7%	27.3%	↑
% assessments completed within 45 working days	74.0%	87.1%	76.3%	71.6%	60.2%	62.9%	↑

What does this show us?

The implementation of Lockdown caused a substantial decrease in the number of referrals occurring, which has continued throughout Quarter 1 and therefore will not reflect the true level of service need in the Borough.

The percentage of referrals coming into CSC for children who have been the subject of a previous referral in last 12 months has increased slightly on Quarter 4 2019-20 after previously consistent decrease. However, the Q1 figure is nonetheless lower than the same quarter last year

The timeliness of initial assessments completed following a referral to CSC remains some way off the timeliness figure for Q1 2019-20 but has nonetheless improved slightly on Quarter 4 2019-20.

What is the background to this?

Prior to Lockdown, the figures for 2019-20 suggested that CSC could expect a 30% increase in demand for services on the previous year. As a result of Lockdown, this has not yet materialised.

What action is the service taking?

Children’s Social Care has been engaging in demand modelling to ensure it is prepared for the increase in front door activity as Lockdown continues to ease and schools return in September. CSC entered Lockdown with a backlog of referrals to assess and has managed to clear that and improve assessment timeliness.

Assessments are a priority for the Service moving forward, and the emphasis being placed on them at the moment should result in improvements in Q2 2020-21 so that the challenges of Q3 can be met.

What is the national context?

The South East and England averages for assessments completed within 45 days are 82% and 83% respectively. The Wokingham percentage of repeat referrals within 12 months (21.1%) is below the England average of 22.6% and the South East average of 25.1%.

Dashboard Item 4 – Child Protection

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
Children subject to CP Plans (snapshot at end of period)	142	131	129	145	146	132	↓
% of children starting a plan who had a previous one in the last 2 years	11.8%	13%	24%	5%	9.6%	3.3%	↓
% of child protection visits within timescale	71.0%	79.0%	73.6%	69.7%	75.9%	80.8%	↑

What does this show us?

The number of children on child protection plans has decreased since Q4 2019-20, but is in line with figures for the same period last year. There has been a substantial drop in the number of children who had been subject to a previous child protection plan within the last 2 years.

Following a dip in the middle of 2019-20, the proportion of visits occurring within timescale is increasing and has exceeded the average for last year. It is noteworthy that timeliness is improving despite the limitations and obstacles presented by Lockdown.

What is the background to this?

The drop in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan reflects the decrease in referrals as a result of Lockdown. Given the relatively small size of the cohort of children in Wokingham, large families becoming subject to a Child Protection plan for a second or subsequent time within 24 months can distort the figures – as was seen in Q3 2019-20. The fact that the percentage of visits taking place within timescale increased during Lockdown demonstrates the flexible approach that CSC takes to service provision and its ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

What action is the service taking?

Building on the line by line review of all out-of-timescale visits last year, visits are examined in monthly performance meetings which ensures that reporting issues do not distort the performance picture. CSC is working to ensure that the difficulties presented by Lockdown are mitigated and that vulnerable children are put on Protections Plans. The Service continues its so far successful efforts to reduce the need for children to return to a Protection Plan, be it within 24 months or longer.

What is the national context?

Wokingham's Child Protection Plan per 10,000 rate has remained consistent at just over 32 for the past two years, which is in line with Statistical Neighbours (35.0). Wokingham and its neighbours are slightly below the England average of 43.7, but the Borough's current rate is a distinct increase on 2017-18, when the figure was 12.1, compared to an England rate of 43.3.

Dashboard Item 5 – Children in Care

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
No. children in care (snapshot at end of period)	100	117	114	105	100	105	↑
% visits to children in care within timescale	81%	79%	79%	80%	83%	86%	↑
% children in care who have more than 1 allocated social worker in 12m (snapshot at end of period)	21%	69.2%	70.2%	66.7%	66.7%	21%	↓

What does this show us?

The number of children in care has increased from Q4 2019-20 but remains lower than the same period last year. The timeliness of visits to children in care has declined since last year, however the number of children now had more than one allocated social worker has improved substantially on last year's figures. The percentage of children in care who have had more than one allocated worker in the previous 12 months has fallen by nearly 46 percentage points since the last two quarters of 2019-20.

What is the background to this?

Over the course of 2019-20, improvements in recording practices led to the data better reflecting the work social workers are carrying out. The impact of efforts towards workforce stability is reflected in the notable drop in the percentage of children allocated with more than one social worker.

What action is the service taking?

Increased focus by the Service on visits to children in care and a drive to ensure timely recording of visits has led to continuous improvement in performance over 2019-20 and into the first quarter of this year. Not only are more visits taking place than the previous quarter and the same time period last year, but the percentage of visits within time continues to increase quarter on quarter.

Filling the Social Worker vacancies has had a notable positive impact on the number of allocated workers each child has been assigned.

What is the national context?

The rate of Children in Care per 10,000 is 65.0 for England and 53.0 for the South East. The Wokingham rate for 2019-20 is significantly lower, at 28.0 per 10,000.

Dashboard Item 6 – Care Leavers

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
% of care leavers 'in touch' (snapshot at end of period)	87%	94.7%	89.0%	87.0%	91.8%	91%	↔
% of care leavers aged 18-24 who are NEET	37.2%	40.4%	40.9%	38.9%	25.1%	31.4%	↑
% of care leavers in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of period)	94%	88%	80%	94%	86.9%	97%	↑

What does this show us?

The percentage of care leavers that remain in touch with CSC has been increasing over the last two quarters of 2019-20 and remains consistent into 2020-21. There has been a slight increase in the number of care leavers not in education, employment or training, returning to a comparable level with Q1 last year. The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has increased noticeably, rising to 97%.

What is the background to this?

Wokingham generally maintains good relations with care leavers, and is in touch with the vast majority; the figures reflect this. The rise in care leavers not in education, employment or training reflects the difficulty of the current economic situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In spite of this, the NEET rate is lower than Q2 last year, and in line with the same period in 2019-20. The improvement in the suitable accommodation figures reflects the importance that CSC places on the experience for care leavers and results from a 42% in those living independently and the number of those living with their parents or relatives almost doubling.

What action is the service taking?

CSC continues to place emphasis on maintaining good relations with care leavers so that they can receive all the support they need, particularly during the current challenging times. Monthly multi-disciplinary meetings to review NEET Care Leavers are an established part of the Service's approach to care leavers. CSC strives to assist care leavers in entering education, training or employment, but the current economic climate may lead to an increase in the NEET in coming quarters. At the end of Q1 2020-21, five care leavers were in unsuitable accommodation and the accommodation status of two further care leavers was unknown. Of these: CSC is working to move the two in bed and breakfast accommodation to something more sustainable, and that two care leavers are in custody is beyond the control of CSC.

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 performs consistently in line or above comparable averages in regard to care leavers.

Dashboard Item 7 – Children Missing from Home/Care

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
Children missing from home/care	163	20	53	49	49	44	↓
% return home interviews carried out on time	48%	50%	63%	50%	50%	54%	↑
Children missing from education (snapshot at end of period)		8	5	4	4	3	↓

What does this show us?

The number of children going missing from home or care continues to fall as we enter the second quarter of 2020-21.

The Return Home Interviews (RHIs) taking place within timescale has increased since the last half of 2019-20, and is higher than the same period last year.

The number of children missing from education has fallen over the course of 2019-20. CSC continues to work ardently to ensure that children across the Borough are not missing from education.

What is the background to this?

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

What action is the service taking?

Children's Social Care engages fully with the quarterly meetings of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership and its various sub-groups to explore the issues around exploitation and ensure any emerging risks are identified.

Missing children and the issue of child exploitation is a focus for CSC, this has been reflected in the increase of timely return home interviews. The Service is currently examining the problem of and risks of child exploitation and working with neighbouring local authorities to gain insight and develop a joined up approach.

The Virtual School and its new Head will continue to look at and address the issues which are causing children to miss education.

What is the national context?

There is no national data available for comparison.

Dashboard Item 8 – Children’s Services Workforce

Measure	2019-20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q3 19-20	Q4 19-20	Q1 20-21	Direction of Travel
12 months rolling turnover of permanent qualified social workers	13%	17%	8%	8%	8%	10.4%	↑
% agency staff across qualified social work workforce (snapshot at end of period)	33%	28%	34%	31%	37%	30%	↓

What does this show us?

Although there has been a slight increase since 2019-20, turnover across the social work workforce remains stable, and is more so than the same quarter last year.

The percentage of agency social workers in Children’s Services has fluctuated throughout 2019-20, but is at its lowest since Q1 2019-20.

What is the background to this?

CSC has struggled to recruit for vacant social worker posts in previous years, meaning that a high proportion of social workers were agency staff. Turnover in agency social workers is by nature high (CSC has had fifteen staff leave since January), and the successful recruitment of permanent staff over 2019-20 – as demonstrated in previous Dashboard Items – is producing results.

What action is the service taking?

CSC continues with its recruitment drive in an effort to end the dependence on agency staff, ensure that cases are dealt with at the right level, and that the Service is equipped to meet the current and anticipated demands placed upon it.

What is the national context?

Wokingham’s percentage rate of social worker turnover for 2019-20 is 8% – a substantial drop on the previous year’s 13%. The Borough is performing considerably better than Statistical Neighbours (21.1) and England/South East at 15%.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
5 November 2020	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
	Regional Schools Commissioner	To receive the RSC to discuss matters relating to the Borough's academy schools	To monitor the performance of academy schools	Regional Schools Commissioner
	School Placements Sufficiency	To receive information on the sufficiency of school places in the Borough.	To monitor the sufficiency of school places	Children's Services/ Carol Cammiss
	Executive Member update	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services	Standing item	Executive Member for Children's Services
	CAMHS Review	To receive a report reviewing the services provided by CAMHS for children and young people in the Borough	To monitor the performance of the service	Children's Services/ Carol Cammiss
	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

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER
25 January 2021	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
	SEND Strategy	To receive an update on the SEND Strategy	To monitor the development of the SEND Strategy	Children's Services/ Sal Thirlway
	Child Exploitation	To receive a report containing a review of issues relating to child exploitation in the Borough	To review the issue of child exploitation	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
	Executive Member update	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services	Standing item	Executive Member for Children's Services
	CSO&S Forward Plan	To consider the forward plan 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
DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT OFFICER

22 March 2021	Executive Member update	To receive an update from the Executive Member for Children's Services	Standing item	Executive Member for Children's Services
	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
	CSO&S Forward Plan	To consider the forward plan of the Committee	Standing item	Democratic Services / Sal Thirlway
	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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