

Leicester  
City Council

## **MEETING OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**DATE: WEDNESDAY, 18 JUNE 2025**

**TIME: 5:30 pm**

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles  
Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

### **Members of the Commission**

Councillor Batool (Chair)

Councillor Bonham (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Barnes, Cole, Gregg, Dr Moore, Singh Sangha and Westley

### **Co-opted Members (Voting)**

Dr Joycelin Eze-Okubuiro

Parent Governor Representative

### **Standing Invitees (Non-Voting)**

Young People's Council Representatives

Jennifer Day

Teaching Unions representative

Janet McKenna

UNISON Branch Secretary

Members of the Commission are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For the Monitoring Officer

### **Officer contacts:**

**Katie Jordan (Senior Governance Officer)**

**Ed Brown (Senior Governance Officer),**

Tel: , e-mail: [committees@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:committees@leicester.gov.uk)

Leicester City Council, City Hall, 3rd Floor Granby Wing, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

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### Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Katie Jordan** ([katie.jordan@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:katie.jordan@leicester.gov.uk)) or **Ed Brown** ([edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk)). Alternatively, email [committees@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:committees@leicester.gov.uk), or call in at City Hall.

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**USEFUL ACRONYMS IN RELATION TO OFSTED AND  
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**  
(updated November 2015)

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
APS	Average Point Score: the average attainment of a group of pupils; points are assigned to levels or grades attained on tests.
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
C&YP	Children and Young People
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CFST	Children and Families Support Team
CICC	Children in Care Council
CIN	Children in Need
CLA	Children Looked After
CLASS	City of Leicester Association of Special Schools
COLGA	City of Leicester Governors Association
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CYPF	Children Young People and Families Division (Leicester City Council)
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
CYPS Scrutiny	Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission
DAS	Duty and Advice Service
DCS	Director of Children's Services
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EET	Education, Employment and Training
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EHP	Early Help Partnership
EHSS	Early Help Stay Safe
EIP	Education Improvement Partnership
ELG	Early Learning Goals: aspects measured at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
EY	Early Years

EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage: (0-5); assessed at age 5.
EYFSP	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
ESFA	Education Skills and Funding Agency
FS	Foundation Stage: nursery and school Reception, ages 3-5; at start of Reception a child is assessed against the new national standard of 'expected' stage of development, then teacher assessment of Foundation Stage Profile areas of learning
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Education
GLD	Good Level of Development
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KS1	Key Stage 1: National Curriculum Years (NCYs) 1 and 2, ages 5-7; assessed at age 7.
KS2	Key Stage 2: NCYs 3, 4, 5, and 6, ages 7-11; assessed at age 11.
KS3	Key Stage 3: NCYs 7, 8 and 9, ages 11-14; no statutory assessment.
KS4	Key Stage 4: NCYs 10 and 11, ages 14-16; assessed at age 16.
KTC	Knowledge Transfer Centre
LA	Local Authority
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LARP	Leicester Access to Resources Panel
LCCIB	Leicester City Council Improvement Board
LCT	Leicester Children's Trust
LDD	Learning Difficulty or Disability
LESP	Leicester Education Strategic Partnership
LLEs	Local Leaders of Education
LP	Leicester Partnership
LPP	Leicester Primary Partnership

LPS	Leicester Partnership School
LSCB	Leicester Safeguarding Children Board
LSOAs	Lower Super Output Areas
MACFA	Multi Agency Case File Audit
NCY	National Curriculum Year
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NLEs	National Leaders of Education
NLGs	National Leaders of Governance
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PEPs	Personal Education Plans
PI	Performance Indicator
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent
QA	Quality Assurance
RAP	Resource Allocation Panel
RI	Requires Improvement
SA	Single Assessment
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SCR	Serious Case Review
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SIMS	Schools Information Management Systems
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SLEs	Specialist Leaders of Education
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRE	Sex and Relationship Education
TBC	To be Confirmed
TFL	Tertiary Federation Leicester
TP	Teenage Pregnancy
UHL	University Hospitals Leicester
WIT	Whatever it Takes
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YPC	Young People's Council

## **PUBLIC SESSION**

### **AGENDA**

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#### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To issue a welcome to those present, and to confirm if there are any apologies for absence.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

#### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Appendix A  
(Pages 1 - 22)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People, and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025 have been circulated, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION 2025/26**

The Membership of the Commission will be confirmed and noted.

<b>CHAIR</b>	Councillor Misbah Batool
<b>VICE CHAIR</b>	Councillor Stephen Bonham
	Councillor George Cole
	Councillor Lynn Moore
	Councillor Mohinder Singh Sangha
	Councillor Charleigh Barnes
	Councillor Paul Westley
	Councillor Mick Gregg
<b>CO-OPTED MEMBER</b>	Joycelin Eze-Okubuiro (Parent Governor – Primary Schools)

**5. DATES OF MEETINGS FOR THE COMMISSION  
2025/26**

Members will be asked to note the meeting dates of the commission for 2025-26:

18 June 2025  
19 August 2025  
28 October 2025  
20 January 2026  
3 March 2026  
14 April 2026

**6. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Appendix B  
(Pages 23 - 24)**

The Commission will be asked to note the Terms of Reference.

**7. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair is invited to make any announcements as they see fit.

**8. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND  
STATEMENTS OF CASE**

Dr Nizamuddin Patel asks:

1. Ofsted's latest report for children's services states LCC 'requires improvement' in every area. Whereas our neighbouring council Leicestershire County Council has received 'outstanding' in all areas bar one. Is your department planning on working with the county to share good practices to improve LCC children's services?

2. Ofsted have stated that the overall effectiveness of the department has declined since its last inspection in 2021. It also notes that there is not enough challenge from managers or that they 'were not sufficiently sighted on issues'. Have senior leaders considered 'open door' policy for any level of their staff to speak with them openly?

3. Further to this, will senior leaders consider emailing/contacting parents and other professionals involved with children's social service on a regular basis with a simple feedback form/questionnaire to gauge an understanding of how well the service is currently operating and if there can be any improvements to the service?

4. There is a national shortage of skilled social workers. I understand council

has plans of international recruitment. However, what perks or additional benefits do LCC give domestic social workers which will entice them to continue working with LCC?

5. From exit interviews with social workers leaving LCC, what are the 3 most common reasons of them leaving? Can this be mitigated?

## **9. PETITIONS**

Any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures will be reported.

## **10. INTRODUCTION TO CYPE SCRUTINY COMMISSION** **Appendix C** **(Pages 25 - 32)**

The Lead Scrutiny Directors of the Commission to outline the service areas that form part of the commission.

## **11. FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAMME** **Appendix D** **(Pages 33 - 36)**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education and the Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help will give a presentation to the Commission outlining the vision for the development of services in Leicester in response to the governments reforms to children's social care known as the Families First programme

## **12. SOCIAL CARE AND EDUCATION PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD** **Appendix E** **(Pages 37 - 42)**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submits a report to the performance dashboard that will be provided quarterly as means of overseeing performance and identifying areas for further scrutiny.

## **13. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE, EARLY HELP AND PREVENTION IMPROVEMENT PLAN** **Appendix F** **(Pages 43 - 64)**

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help submits a report on the Children's Social Care, Early Help and Prevention Improvement Plan.

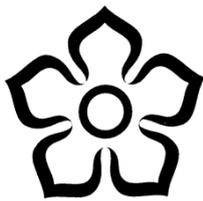
## **14. WORK PROGRAMME** **Appendix G** **(Pages 65 - 68)**

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

## **15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**







Leicester  
City Council

# Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 8 APRIL 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Batool – Chair  
Councillor Bonham – Vice Chair

Councillor Clarke  
Councillor March  
Councillor Pantling

Councillor Gregg  
Councillor Dr Moore

Joycelin Eze-Okubuiro – Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

In Attendance:

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Pantling  
Jennifer Day – Teaching Unions Representative  
Janet McKenna – UNISON Branch Secretary  
Mario Duda – Youth Representative

\* \* \* \* \*

## **134. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

Councillor Dr Moore declared that she was the Chair of the advisory board at Millgate School.

Councillor March declared that she was a governor at Avenue School.

Councillor Gregg declared that he ran a supported accommodation project which had previously taken children from Leicester City Council, however, it was no longer taking children from Leicester City Council.

## **135. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

Councillor Dr Moore declared that she was the Chair of the advisory board at

Millgate School.

Councillor March declared that she was a governor at Avenue School.

Councillor Gregg declared that he ran a supported accommodation project which had previously taken children from Leicester City Council, however, it was no longer taking children from Leicester City Council.

### **136. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **AGREED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

With regard to a matter arising regarding the item on Children and Young People with SEND Home to School/College Transport Proposed Policies 2025/2026 - 2027/2028, concern was raised that the response on a proposed fourth option did not have as much depth as hoped for.

In response to this, it was noted that the officers working on this were currently in the process of working through financial data. The budget had been set for next year and anything proposed would need to be in this budget. A decision report was being worked on and this would take into account points made in the consultation and at scrutiny. The final decision would be one for the Assistant City Mayor, and whilst there was no option for further scrutiny before the decision was made, it would be available for the usual process following the decision.

### **137. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair announced that the date of the upcoming task group meeting on the High Needs Block had been moved. The next meeting would be on 13<sup>th</sup> May and the last would be on 9<sup>th</sup> June. Members of the Commission were encouraged to join.

### **138. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Chair exercised her discretion to allow a late statement from STILL SEND 16+ (Attached).

In response, thanks were given for the comments made at the previous meeting of the Commission and for the paper presented. Additionally, STILL SEND 16+ were thanked for their considered approach. It was added that suggestions had been considered and it was hoped that when the paper was produced it would be seen that all suggestions had been considered. These suggestions had helped to shape the decision. Barristers had been worked with on the paper, which was not yet fully formed. This had not been an easy

decision and had therefore been worked hard on. It was hoped that the final decision would help to serve in a more fair and equitable way.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the decision of the High Court had been taken into account and the policy was lawful in judgement. However, the assessment of individual needs had not yet been looked at, and therefore any decision would need to look at individual circumstances.

### **139. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

### **140. FAMILY THERAPIES SERVICE (INCLUDING Q3)**

The Director of Social Care, Early Help and Prevention Service submitted a report updating on the progress of delivering Family Therapies; Multisystemic Therapy (MST), MST: Building Stronger Families (MST BSF), Functional Family Therapy for Child Welfare (FFT-CW), and Family Group Decision Making, for the period of Quarter 3.

There was a brief update on the development of the Family Functional Therapy reunification pilot.

The Assistant City Mayor for Children and Young People introduced the item by acknowledging the positive work, particularly on aspects relating to capturing the voice of the child.

The Head of Service for Prevention Services gave an overview of the report. Key points to note were as follows:

- A range of programmes were available to children and families, depending on their needs.
- A Functional Family pilot was in the early stages, which could provide significant insights on the impacts of the programmes for families.
- The Edge of Care Strategy and the Family Decision Making programme would come to future scrutiny meetings. The Relocation Pilot had already come to scrutiny.
- A six-monthly or annual report could come to scrutiny.

The Service Manager of the Family Therapy Service provided an update on the service. Key points to note were:

- Work took place with different aged children with differing needs.
- Previous models had not always gone well. A main factor being the lack of support for children returning to the family home.
- Significant research had taken place looking at best practice in managing interventions.
- The decision had been made to place the service within the area of Edge of Care.

- There had been a significant growth in teams.
- The previous financial year had seen 199 children being prevented from going into care. It was anticipated that this work could be sustained.
- For Quarter 3, work had taken place with around 93 families and 183 children across the quarter. This tended to entail working with large families who had a lot of additional needs.
- When assessing savings, the team considered the price that would have been incurred if the child had been taken into care. With this in mind, there had been an average annual avoided cost of £81K per child.
- Work was in family-based intervention, taking place within the family home.
- Success was measured in terms of sustainability. 85% of children now remained at home six months post closure, +12 months was 84% and +18 months was 92%. There would be a move to include 5-year tracking.
- Regarding capacity, the end quarter 3 saw 70% of the target for children worked with had been met. Savings were significantly over target at 194%.
- Every child subject to a plan was entitled to a family meeting which was family lead.

Members were invited to comment and raise questions. Key points to note were as follows:

- Family Therapy work was taking place for children refusing school. A number of outcomes were measured monthly. There was around an 83% success rate.
- Edge of Care cases were monitored, there was a threshold to be met for a child to come into the service. Data could be presented to scrutiny.
- Currently the length of time between referral and commencement of services was 13 days, and it was hoped that this could come to under 10 days. Delays were usually surrounding consent as a signature was required. Issues concerning trust could arise with cautious families.
- Some families required long-term support, others could be assisted over a shorter period.
- Recent central government funding would create opportunities for the Family Therapy Team.
- For children returning home, it was predicted that there would be an equitable amount of intervention, but this was not expected to last for longer than 6-9 months, to avoid fostering dependency on service.
- There would be a need to explore other avenues for the Edge of Care Strategy to include a more comprehensive offer around family decision making, and the unification process. Details on the strategy review could be brought to scrutiny as it would be refreshed annually.
- More longer-term support was planned for families with long-term neglect. It was also recognised that support might be best placed with other agencies due to a reluctance within families to work directly with

the council. The strategy was likely to evolve.

- One of the keys to the success of the service lay in the fact that children shaped their own outcomes under weekly group supervision.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) For the Edge of Care report to come to scrutiny with a report to establish metrics and delivery outcomes.

## **141. ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS UPDATE**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education gave a verbal update, outlining the decision made and the licencing position. Key points to note were:

- The City Mayor had made a decision on the 26th February 2025, with two essential elements:
  - There would be a full year of continued funding for the Play Associations.
  - This would be the final year of grants
- Some of the Play Associations had already formulated new financial models, but others were struggling.
- All Adventure Playgrounds had 5-year licences, with rights to remain on site for the next 5 years.
- There was a possibility of longer-term leases and community asset transfers.
- Maintenance work to the sites themselves were currently carried out by the council under the license agreement.
- Conversations were still live with the Play Associations about long term lease options.

Members were welcomed to provide comment and raise questions. Points to note were:

- The playground sites were separate to the Play Associations running them.
- Other organisations might tender.
- There was an ongoing dialogue with the National Lottery Association, who had not prioritised funding before due to Council funding.
- Members had differing views on how to move forwards. Some preferred continued Local Authority support, whilst others were in support of enabling the Play Associations to work independently in shaping their outcomes, once the funding had ended.
- Some of the Play Associations had diversified and found different ways to serve the community. Different models were in place which could be useful to share.

- It was suggested that Sports England or Arts Council England might be a consideration for funding opportunities.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.

*Councillor Dr Moore left the meeting prior to the consideration of this item.*

## **142. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK - IMPACT OF WORK STREAMS**

The Director of Education and SEND submitted a report to update on High Needs Block (HNB) funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

An introduction was made by The Director of Education and SEND where it was noted that the High Needs Block item had come to Scrutiny in October 2024, and a six-month update had been requested. Some questions had been picked up by the formation of a Scrutiny Task Group which was currently ongoing.

The SEND Inclusion Transformation Manager gave an overview of the report. Key points to note were as follows:

- During the six months, the focus had been on keeping children and young people at the heart of the work.
- There was a graduated approach for the school programme, working with schools and stake holders.
- There had been a reduction of children entering the SEND Statutory system from 932 to 455.
- A variety of support was in place.
- All schools were equipped to provide SEND support.
- Rising placements costs were presenting a risk for the recovery plan.
- It was hoped that central government would soon deliver a white paper confirming the way forward. Indications from the Department for Education were that strategy would focus on inclusive practice. This would align with work already in place for Leicester.
- Over recent years there had been a national narrative around the need for Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs), but children's needs could also be met in other ways.

Members had the opportunity to comment and raise questions. Key points to note were:

- Around 500 extra specialist placements had been opened within the city within recent years. The spaces were filled immediately. Two applications had been made unsuccessfully to create new SEND

schools. Recent capital funding released had not been sufficient to fund for a new school.

- Schools could apply for additional Special Needs Funding to support those who did not have an EHCP.
- Creative use of funding meant that mechanisms had been put into place for applications of support.
- A free training offer had been put in, alongside the traded agreements, to provide support to schools in areas such as applying for funding and EHCPs.
- Part of the change programme involved working with a network of head teachers to look into how to use funding for alternative provision.
- A recent meeting had been held with CEOs from a large number of academy trusts, as part of the stakeholder engagement plan. Positive feedback was received on the support provided.
- Non-statutory top up funding was available to support children with SEND without EHCPs.
- Others could be supported by SEND support services.
- Mainstream schools could also provide support with reasonable adjustments.
- Inclusive Provision Reviews were being piloted which allowed for consideration of graduated support.
- Mechanisms were in place which meant that those who hadn't qualified for an ECHP could reapply at a later stage.
- Work arising under the Central Government Change Programme had been spilt between, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Authorities. Leicester had lead on strategies including bands and tariffs, alternative provision, tiers of intervention, early language support and neurodiversity.
- Work to standardise the EHCP template was underway. There was a national trial. Data would be presented to reflect how successful this had been.
- Work had taken place, in line with government guidelines, on robust multi-agency disciplines. Panels had all come into line with these principals.
- The Department for Education had recognised the changes made.
- SEND provision was statutory, this created challenges with managing the deficit.
- There were many ways in which the voice of the child was captured throughout their support plan.
- A significant number of Local Authorities nationally were in a deficit budget.
- The long-term goal for SEND services was to ensure that children and young people could learn and thrive in the most appropriate setting.

AGRRED:

- 1) That the report be noted

- 2) Scrutiny members would be kept up to date with any key issues relating to the topic.
- 3) For the report produced by the HNB Task Group to come back to the CYPE meeting.
- 4) Information would be provided on whether guidance had improved on EHCPs.

*Councillor Clarke joined the meeting during the consideration of this item.*

### **143. PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submitted a report providing a summary of the progress made since the last placement sufficiency strategy of 2020/24, and setting out the proposed long-term priorities for 2025/30.

The Head of Corporate Parenting presented the report and gave a presentation:

Key points other than those on the slides (attached with agenda) included:

- The service was demand-led, so there was a need to think about what the population may look like.
- It was aimed to ensure that care was a last resort, therefore there was a dependency on Edge of Care. Edge of Care had a place in sufficiency in terms of helping children to stay with their families.
- It was also important to ensure that children were in care for the shortest time possible, so it was necessary to look at permanence, such as special guardianship arrangements. Therefore, a strand of work sat under this. A key part of this was the ability to recruit and retain more foster carers.
- It was important to ensure that most children in care were with Council Carers rather than private ones.
- Looking at the age profile of foster carers, it was recognised that some may be looking to retire, so it was important that more were recruited. This was critical as there was a national shortage of foster carers and there was also competition with other authorities an Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA).
- The figures of children in IFA in the City were low and the Council maintained seven of its own residential homes with another opening this summer. Six of these homes were rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. Another required improvement and this was being worked on.
- More children with challenging and complex behaviour were being looked after. These had fared better than those placed out of the area. Therefore, there was a plan to increase the number of children in their

own homes.

- Capital expansion was a competitive process, and therefore it was a vote of confidence in the Council's ability to manage homes effectively.
- The Council had an established workforce in the residential sector and there had been succession planning. This was a critical part of the strategy.
- It was necessary to consider the best ways of commissioning in terms of cost. It was more expensive for a child to live in residential accommodation than it was for them to live with family. This highest placement costs could range from £12k-£15k per week.
- The market was broken, and profiteering had been taking place, therefore there was a need to invest.
- Children were best off living locally and attending local schools. Therefore, there was an ambition to keep children in care living locally.
- Care Leavers included young people up to the age of 25. This meant actively engaging and providing high-quality accommodation.
- There were pressures in housing as this was a demand-led service.
- The Leicester Ask Survey was a wide survey looking into the wishes and views of young people. The responses had been very positive regarding how they felt about accommodation.
- There was a focus on place and stability. When children in care needed to move, the move needed to be kept to a minimum. The figures for moves held up well in this respect. Some children in care were coming into care in an emergency situation and sometimes needed to move quickly, however, these numbers were kept low as it was disruptive to education and the health needs of the children in care.
- The numbers of children in care were stable, this went against the national trend.
- There was an increase in older adolescents coming into care relatively late. It was more challenging to find foster placements for 16-17-year-olds than it was for the under 5s.
- It was necessary to get placements of the right type and the best value.

The Commission were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- In response to questions surrounding the recruitment of foster carers, it was explained that the Council was looking to recruit from all of the communities it served. It was noted that in terms of ethnicity, white children were over-represented in the care system, and it was necessary to ensure that the best cultural matches were made.
- Recruitment of foster carers would not be done internationally as there would be legislative issues and issues around accountability.
- Each foster carer had a supporting social worker. This was sometimes a factor in foster carers joining the Council having previously been private as they valued the support from social work staff.
- It was aimed to recruit foster carers locally, but not exclusively.

- It was aimed to promote flexible fostering, for example, carers could be short-break or respite carers and did not necessarily have to be full time.
- There was no clear answer as to why there was an increase in older children coming into care as there was complexity surrounding it. It was suggested that these children could be at risk of criminal and/or sexual exploitation and may need to be placed outside the area for safeguarding purposes. There had also been an overlap on children with complex health needs who were coming into the system late. This was a trend that had been seen nationally.
- With regard to points made about the cost-of-living, it was acknowledged that this was relevant for people considering becoming foster carers as people may need a change in working patterns to become foster carers, therefore it was important to ensure that foster carers were remunerated.
- The main reason for children coming into care was neglect.
- It was clarified that sometimes foster carers from IFA mentioned they wanted to work for the Council, but these people were not approached separately by the Council. It was noted that former IFA carers had felt under pressure regarding the matching process due to an unacceptable notice period where high-cost carers had terminated placements. This would not happen with Council homes.
- There was a different kind of engagement with the private sector, however, the Council were satisfied that children's needs were met in all placements. However, there were ways to look after children better and provide better value.
- With regard to pocket-money and clothing allowance, this was offered by the Council but not marketed in the same way as it was for IFA. The Council offer included support for holidays and religious festivals that had not been publicised in the same way that they were for IFA.
- The Council did not have supported lodgings in-house, but opportunities and feasibility were being looked at.
- In terms of the reasons that children and young people were brought into care, only a primary reason was recorded. Definitions were set by the Department for Education. In terms of the demographic spread across the local authority, the major reason would be abuse and neglect.
- Missing figures could be provided.
- In terms of positive lessons learned from other authorities, the Council were part of a network on fostering in the East Midlands and from this it had been learned that the trends and pressures faced were not unique to Leicester. It had been possible to learn different ways of fostering, such as the flexible approach and an additional band of foster care payments for those with additional needs. Additionally, the Council were looking to keep in touch with foster carers through digital media.
- It was estimated that there was a national shortage of 10,000-15,000 foster carers nationally, this was a challenging position. As such it was important to think about the unique selling points of Leicester.
- In terms of local figures on foster care shortage, it was clarified that all

CLA were placed appropriately other than in emergencies (and this was a very small number). However, the 15-20 foster carers gained each year was offset by those moving on or retiring. Therefore, if nothing was done, there would be more pressure. As such, it was aimed to shift from IFA to fostering households. 12% of CLA were in residential accommodation, but it was thought that this figure could come down significantly. It was necessary to keep children local and invest better and earlier.

- Officers were always willing to come out to local communities to promote fostering in local areas.
- In terms of reunification with families, there was a need to ask questions about whether children could return to families. The vast majority return to Leicester and engage with families, therefore conversations were needed to ensure there was a safeguarding approach. In terms of placement with parents provisions, steps to reunification with birth parents would be considered.
- It had previously been the case that often the Council had worked less with parents once a child was removed. Therefore, part of the family model would be about ensuring that children could return to families with the right support. This would not always be possible, but there was work to do on contact with parents.
- With regard to the national shortage of foster carers in local authorities and in IFA, it was suggested that this could partly be due to the Covid-19 pandemic and people valuing their own time more or being more hesitant to take people into their houses. It was also suggested that it could be due to wider demographic shifts such as women working longer.
- It was acknowledged that foster carers made good recruiters, however, the volumes recruited were not as large as they had been.

AGREED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That the report come back to the Commission in six months' time.

#### **144. WORK PROGRAMME**

Members of the Commission were invited to consider content of the work programme and were invited to make suggestions for additions as appropriate to be brought to future meetings.

The work programme was noted.

#### **145. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

In response to questions raised about 16+ SEND home-to school transport, it was noted that:

- The suggested fourth option would be considered within the decision making. Ideas would be looked at and costed as part of this, however, it would not be an appendix to the decision report.
- In terms of timescales, when the decision was made, there would be time for scrutiny and Full Council meetings as required.

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:43.

# Minute Item 138

## **Points from STILL SEND 16+ ahead of Scrutiny Committee in response to CYPE Scrutiny 25.02.2025 Action Update with specific reference to High Court Judgement on TYC (by his litigation friend and mother, KVD) and Birmingham City Council, dated 13 March 2025**

We are pleased to hear that in-depth work is taking place with finance and legal teams to develop the policy on Post-16 Transport.

However, we note that since STILL SEND 16+ submitted their statement for consideration the landscape has changed considerably. We proposed an Option 4. We asked that all applications be considered individually and that alternatives to a Personal Transport Budget be provided where applicable. It is our understanding that in the recent high court judgement noted above these points were supported by the Judge. In Analysis and Conclusion (17) of the judgement, the Judge stated that “Local Authorities must act reasonably in the performance of their functions. They should not have a blanket policy of never providing discretionary travel and must properly consider and engage with the reasons given by a parent as to why they consider that their child’s particular circumstances are exceptional and justify an award of travel support to school.” We expect that the published policy will follow the legal precedent set in this case.

We continue to be concerned that officers stand by the belief that the needs of all Post-16 young people with SEND can be met within Leicester City boundaries (Action Update, 2.3). Whilst we appreciate and support the development of options within the city, officers must acknowledge that in some cases young people will be placed outside of the city boundary to meet their needs. Although there is a range of SEND provision within Leicester City, these places will not currently meet the variation of needs for this cohort of young people. For example, some young people require therapeutic settings in rural areas. To claim otherwise is to contradict the council’s own decision making on suitable education.

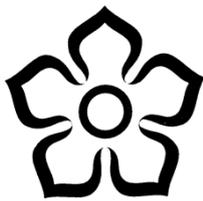
In regard to Actions 3 and 4 of the Action Update, we continue to make the case that young people who have begun courses need to be supported to complete them, wherever those placements may be. In the recent High Court judgement, the Judge quoted evidence from the young person’s school which stated that the Claimant’s attendance “sharply declined” and the “disruptions to his routine have had a profound impact on his overall wellbeing”. We therefore expect that the policy will ensure that young people in Leicester City are not disadvantaged in a similar way.

We are concerned by the homogenisation of behaviours and SEND needs. In our experience these issues are inexorably linked and cannot be determined in the way suggested in the Action Update (6.2). We note that the young person who successfully brought a claim against Birmingham City Council has a range of conditions including challenging behaviour.

During a recent meeting with Government Minister Liz Kendall expressed concern about the council’s complacency over the inevitable increase in NEET young people, which is admitted within the draft decision report. She emphasised the importance of young people “earning or learning, and we expect the council take rigorous action to ensure no young person becomes NEET as a result of policy changes.

We believe there is no sense in irrational decision making when such an important policy change is under consideration. We expect the council to take into account the recent High Court Judgement and develop a rational, legal and ethical policy rather than simply publish an Appendix.





Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 22 MAY 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Batool – Chair  
Councillor Bonham – Vice-Chair

Councillor Barnes  
Councillor March  
Councillor Pantling

Councillor Mahesh  
Councillor Dr Moore  
Councillor Singh Sangha

\* \* \* \* \*

**146. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None were received.

**147. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

**148. CALL-IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION: SEND POST-16 TRANSPORT: PROPOSED POLICIES**

The Monitoring Offer submitted a report informing the Commission that the Executive decision, taken by the Assistant City Mayor for Children and Young People on 13 May 2025 relating to Post-16 SEND Transport, had been the subject of a 5-member call-in under the procedures at Rule 12 of Part 4D, City Mayor and Executive Procedure Rules, of the Council's Constitution.

The Chair invited the proposer of the call-in, Councillor Bonham, to present their reasons for the call-in. The following points were raised:

- The proposed policy did not offer adequate provision for Post 16 SEND school transport assistance.
- Proposals would not ensure that every young person could travel to their

- place of education.
- A policy was needed that did not lead to parents / carers having to their end employment.
- Families could be forced into poverty if paying for school transport.
- The following statement was submitted:

*The CYPE Commission notes the changes in the SEND Post-16 Transport Proposed Policies since consideration by the CYPE Commission on 25/02/2025.*

*We welcome that it is now proposed that council funded bus or taxi can be considered in some circumstances. But we note that the Equality Impact Assessment estimates that only 4% (11 Young People) might be offered council funded bus or taxi whereas 80% (167 Young People) travel by council provided bus or taxi this year.*

*We are concerned that the “demonstratable financial hardship” criteria for consideration of council provided bus or taxi will leave some parents or carers: in severe financial hardship; or unable to source alternative transport; or compelled to give up employment in order to transport young people.*

*We are concerned that the proposed policy will lead to some Young People not receiving appropriate education and becoming NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training)*

*The CYPE commission therefore recommends that the following changes be made to the SEND Post-16 Transport Proposed Policies:*

*Remove the wording of 5.10. and replace with: -*

*5.10 “Limited exceptional circumstances” will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applications for consideration could be made for example in cases where: -*

- *A student or a parent/carer can evidence that the student’s needs are such that the standard PTB offer will be insufficient and without further support they could not attend their place of education.*
- *Where despite the support of the standard PTB it is not reasonably practical for parents or carers to provide transport themselves or to source suitable arrangements.*
- *Where immediate family or family network members cannot consistently be available to support the student with their journey or they do not have use of a suitable vehicle or public transport route.*
- *Where a parent or carer supporting the student with their journey is not reasonably practical without adverse effects on their other caring responsibilities.*
- *Where a parent or carer supporting the student with their journey is not reasonably practical whilst continuing in employment, or a reduction or flexibility in hours of employment would cause financial hardship as described.*
- *Other relevant factors may exceptionally be considered.*
- *Financial assessments would take account of the income, savings and*

*essential spending of the household and those with parental responsibility.*

Further verbal clarification was given as follows:

*The CYPE commission therefore wishes:*

- *For a recorded resolution that the Strategic Director will put into operation, guidance and in communication to all impacted by the changes and examples where considerations could be made in limited exceptional circumstances.*
- *The first of these:*
  - *A student or a parent/carer can evidence that the student's needs are such that the standard PTB offer will be insufficient and without further support they could not attend their place of education.*
  - *Secondly, situations where the circumstances mean that practically and or financially, it is not possible for parents or carers to make arrangements for transport despite their best efforts.*
  - *Thirdly, where a parent or carer supporting the student with their journey is not reasonably practical while continuing employment, or a reduction or flexibility hours as following could cause fractural hardship described. Each case should be decided after a holistic assessment of the circumstances on a case by case basis.*
- *Financial assessment should take into account the income, savings and essential spending of the household of those with parental responsibility.*

The Chair invited the seconder of the call-in, Councillor Dr Moore, to add to the proposer's statement. The following points were raised:

- Thanks were given for the contributions of Parents / Carers and Councillor Bonham toward the call-in process.
- Paragraph 6.7 of the proposed policy referenced potential withdrawal of transport due to challenging behaviour. Those with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health needs (SEMH) were likely to exhibit such behavioural patterns – This was clarified by the Director of Education to mean behaviour beyond these circumstances. SEMH considerations would be addressed in the Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). Further clarification could be provided in the practical guidance for school transport assistance applications.

The Chair invited Assistant City Mayor for Children and Young People, Councillor Pantling, to respond and the following points were raised:

- Thanks were reiterated to families and Officers for their efforts towards the policy reviews.
- Matters had been scrutinised thoroughly throughout the process.

- Significant effort was invested in fulfilling the legal responsibilities to support the young people in the city.
- The policy had been designed to create the best outcomes possible for young people and families within budget.
- All children would be assessed individually to meet their needs.

The Chair invited the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education, to respond and the following points were raised:

- The scrutiny work and proposed motion was welcomed.
- A recent judicial review for Birmingham City Council had been held in mind when considering changes to policy.
- A holistic approach would be taken in school transport eligibility assessments, considering individual circumstances.

Members of the Commission discussed the report which highlighted the following points:

- Young People's Council Representative (YPCR) Mario advised that the YPCR's are available to represent and support the young people of Leicester.
- Alternative support mechanisms in place included; Independent Travel Training, supporting families to access other benefits, use of the disabled persons travel pass, the Motability Scheme and the Connexions Information and Guidance Service. Bursaries were also available from some colleges.
- Independent Travel Training had been of noted benefit to those young people with sight impairments.
- School Transport Assistance eligibility assessments were aligned with the free school meals network. Those qualifying under this criteria would not be required to supplement costs towards school transport assistance.
- Young people assessed as having complex SEND needs would continue to qualify for Post 16 SEND School Transport Assistance.
- There was a strong offer of good college courses within the Leicester City boundaries. Post 16 Young people with complex SEND needs attending establishments outside of the boundaries could qualify for school transport assistance under new policy.
- The Connexions service provided assistance to those with EHCPs that did not evidence complex SEND Needs.
- Further scrutiny to track the impact of Travel Training was suggested.
- Young people with continued course arrangements, transitioning from Year 12 to Year 13 would receive continued transport assistance.
- A £300K investment into Travel Training, funded from savings made, was dependent on the call-in decision and would be expand the current offer. A Train the Trainers programme would aid in furthering expertise.
- Bespoke Travel Training was tailored towards needs and could be repeated.

- Best Travel Training practise could be shared from highly successful venues, such as at Ellesmere College.
- Data gathered on applications, appeals and outcomes could come back to scrutiny.
- Regarding appeals, the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines gave a 40 working day timeframe. Where possible, timescales would be less.
- Appeals were likely to be handled by senior staff. Heads of Service, Special Education Service, Transport Manager, Connexions, and Senior SEND Staff would be involved.
- For families requiring additional support, outside of the aforementioned avenues, some colleges offered additional support, and independent advice could be sought through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).
- A quality impact assessment had taken place, and mitigations had been put in.
- Regarding Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) there was a generous allowance when benchmarked against other Local Authorities.
- It was rare for EHCP's to include a requirement for school transport assistance as an educational outcome, however where this was the case, provision be made.
- Moving forward, it was hoped that self-assessment would come in and this would allow for evidence to be gathered and measured.
- Appeal outcomes provided vital information and reports could come annually to scrutiny.
- Resourcing levels and digital ways were sufficient to meet with the demands of the proposed policy.
- For young people in education, there could be a narrowing of choice, but educational needs would still be met. Internships were an example of good alternatives.
- If upcoming data showed gaps in provision, this would be monitored and developments to the offer could come.
- Peaks in demand during the academic year were anticipated, but this was a continuing sequence. Resource monitoring and shifting would continue as before on pressure points.
- Savings made on Post 16 SEND school transport would feed into the increasing demand on statutory school transport assistance.
- PTB shortfall figures given by Homefield College (under jurisdiction of Leicestershire County Council) were referenced by members and would be circulated.
- Regarding family financial assessments, there would always be an element of intrusiveness. This was unavoidable with the means testing but the aim was to reduce this where possible.
- Due to the timing of the proposed policy, placements for the upcoming academic year would already be in place. This formed the reasoning for continued provision for those transitioning from years 12-13. SENDIAS were available for independent advice.
- Travel Training was a holistic offer which considered mental, emotional and physical health.
- Supporting professionals had a responsibility Key Stage 4 onwards to

work towards Travel Training.

- To qualify for assistance under low-income criteria there would be a hardship test based on parents / carers income. Some post 18 students had EHCPs up to the age of 25 and this was accounted for within the proposed Post 16 SEND School Transport policy.
- For those with fluctuating issues, this should be stated on the eligibility application.
- Parents / Carers would be consulted over any Travel Training issues arising.
- A significant number of other Local Authorities had already ceased to offer, or reduced their Post 16 SEND School Transport provision.
- Those needing to apply under the Exceptional Circumstances element of policy would need to highlight circumstances at the point of application.
- University education was not covered in EHCPs.
- A round of communications regarding the application process would go out to families imminently.
- Where institutions located outside of the City boundary were the closest establishment able to meet the needs of the young person, this would need to be considered within the holistic eligibility assessment and evident as an educational outcome on the EHCP.
- The SEND system was due to be reviewed very soon, and this could affect the situation more widely.
- The Equality Impact Assessment was transparent in that potential negative impacts on families and young people had been recognised. Financial requirements had led to a policy change requirement and mitigation strategies had been put into place, such as increasing the Travel Training offer. The proposed policy was lawful.
- Those without transport and having parental responsibility should make this evident at the point of transport application for assessment.
- Parents / carers had assumed responsibility to resolve school transport issues where eligibility for assistance was not met. For Post 16 young people, aid was available from the supporting services where parents / carers did not support.
- Forecasting had been achieved by separating data on educational cohorts.
- There was a holistic approach to travel training which was sensitive to the fluctuating motivation of the young person.
- Benchmarking evidenced successful outcomes for neighbouring authorities who had adopted similar Post 16 SEND school transport policies.

The Chair asked if the proposer wished to withdraw the call-in.

Councillor Bonham moved that, following the points raised during the meeting and the guidance adopting the points made as per the earlier statement, the call-in be withdrawn. This was seconded by Cllr Dr Moore and the call-in was withdrawn.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the call-in be withdrawn.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- For operational guides to inform on the changes to policy and give more information on policy regarding student behavioural matters as per the statement put forward by the proposer.
- To review best practise on Travel Training with an eye to successful venues such Ellesmere College.

ACTIONS:

- Outcome specifics gathered on Travel Training, applications, appeals and outcomes would come back to scrutiny.
- PTB shortfall figures given by Homefield College referenced by members would be circulated.

The meeting finished at 19:30.



## SCRUTINY COMMITTEES: TERMS OF REFERENCE

### INTRODUCTION

Scrutiny Committees hold the Executive and partners to account by reviewing and scrutinising policy and practices. Scrutiny Committees will have regard to the Political Conventions and the Scrutiny Operating Protocols and Handbook in fulfilling their work.

The Overview Select Committee and each Scrutiny Commission will perform the role as set out in Article 8 of the Constitution in relation to the functions set out in its Terms of Reference.

Scrutiny Committees may:

- i. review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the City Mayor, Executive, Committees and Council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time.
- ii. develop policy, generate ideas, review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas.
- iii. question the City Mayor, members of the Executive, committees and Directors about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to their initiatives or projects.
- iv. make recommendations to the City Mayor, Executive, committees and the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.
- v. review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance; and
- vi. question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent). •

**Annual report:** The Overview Select Committee will report annually to Full Council on its work and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate. Scrutiny Commissions / committees will report from time to time as appropriate to Council.

The Scrutiny Committees which have currently been established by the Council in accordance with Article 8 of the Constitution are:

- Overview Select Committee (OSC)
- Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission
- Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission (which also sits as the statutory Education Committee)

- Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
- Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission
- Housing Scrutiny Commission
- Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission

The key work areas covered by each Scrutiny Commission are to be found here <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/decisions-meetings-and-minutes/overviewand-scrutiny>

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE**

The Overview Select Committee **will**:

- Scrutinise the work of the City Mayor and Deputy City Mayors and areas of the Council's work overseen by them.
- Consider cross cutting issues such as monitoring of petitions
- Consider cross-cutting issues which span across Executive portfolios.
- Manage the work of Scrutiny Commissions where the proposed work is considered to have impact on more than one portfolio.
- Consider work which would normally be considered by a Scrutiny Commission but cannot be considered in time due to scheduling issues.
- Report annually to Council.
- Be responsible for overseeing the work of scrutiny and the commissions and to refer certain matters to particular commissions as appropriate.

## **SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS**

Scrutiny Commissions **will**:

- Normally undertake overview of Executive work, reviewing items for Executive decision where it chooses.
- Engage in policy development within its remit.
- Normally be attended by the relevant Executive Member(s), who will be a standing invitee.
- Have their own work programme and may make recommendations to the Executive on work areas where appropriate.
- Consider requests by the Executive to carry forward items of work and report to the Executive as appropriate.
- Report on their work to Council from time to time as required.
- Be classed as specific Scrutiny Committees in terms of legislation but will refer cross cutting work to the OSC.

# Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission

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## SEND and Education

Presented by :  
Sophie Maltby  
Director of SEND, Education and Early Help



Appendix C

# Structure

**Sophie Maltby** Director of SEND and Education

**Jane Pierce**

Programme  
Manager  
(Business  
Change)

Partnerships and  
Programmes

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Childrens  
Performance  
Team

Comms

**Caroline  
Jolliffe**

Head of SEND  
Integrated  
Services (0-25)

Special Education  
Service

Passenger and  
Transport  
Services

Connexions

Children's  
Commissioning

**Jessica  
Nicholls**

Head of SEND  
Support Services

Social, Emotional  
and Mental  
Health Team

Early Years  
Support Team &  
Pindar Nursery

Education  
Psychology

Learning,  
Communication &  
Interaction Team

Hearing Support  
Team

Quality Inclusion  
Team

Vision Support  
Team

**Michael  
Wilsher**

Head of  
Education  
Sufficiency and  
Admissions

Pupil Place  
Planning

Development  
Consultant  
Officers

Admissions

**Melanie  
Gaiderman**

Lead Raising  
Achievement  
Advisor

Governor  
Services

Raising  
Achievement  
Consultants

**Esther  
Popp**

Virtual Head  
Teacher  
(Reports to  
Jessica Nicholls)

Virtual School  
Officers

**Ellen  
Collier**

Education  
Welfare  
Service Manager  
(Reports to  
Michael Wilsher)

Education  
Welfare Officers

Home Education  
Officers

Exclusions  
Officers

**Claire  
Lakin**

Early Education  
Development  
Manager

Early Education  
Development  
Officers

# SEND, Education and Early Help



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# Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission

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## Children's Social Care, Early Help, and Prevention

Presented by :  
Damian Elcock  
Director of Children's Social Care



Appendix C

# Children's Social Care, Early Help and Prevention



# Damian Elcock Director of Children's Social Care

<b>Amy Smith/Lynda Hartley</b> Head of Early Help	<b>Kate Wells</b> Head of Children's Social Work	<b>David Thrussell</b> Head of Corporate Parenting	<b>Julia Khoosal</b> Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	<b>Karen Manville</b> Head of Prevention and Safer Communities	<b>Keral Patel</b> Principal Social Worker
Children Centres	Duty and Advice Teams x2	Fostering recruitment and Assessment teams x2	Independent Chairs	Youth Justice Services	Strengths Based Practice
Family Hubs	Early Help Response Team	Fostering Support and Supervision teams x2	Independent Reviewing Officers	Youth Service	Family Group Conferencing coordination team
31 Early Help Cluster Teams	Child in Need Teams x8	Adoption Team x1	Local Authority Designated Officers	Restorative Justice Volunteer Coordination	Centre for Professional Practice
Adventure Playgrounds	Looked After Children Teams x4	Children and Families Support MD Team (for children in foster care)	Quality Assurance and Practice Audit Manager	Exploitation prevention	Learning and Development
Supporting Families Programme	Families Together Team	Leaving Care Teams x2	Complaints and Access to Records team	Family Therapies service	Workforce
Disabled Children's Service		Placement and Commissioning Team	Safeguarding in Education Development Officers	Edge of Care support services	
		Residential Children's Homes x 6 (soon to be 7)		Rights and Participation Team	



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# **Families First Programme**

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny  
Commission

Date of meeting: 18 June 2025

Lead Director: Laurence Jones / Damian Elcock

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### Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Laurence Jones
- Author contact details: Laurence.jones@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1.1

## 1. Summary

1.1 A Presentation will be made to the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission outline the vision for the development of services in Leicester in response to the governments reforms to children's social care known as the Families First programme.

1.2 The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme is a national initiative in England aimed at transforming children's social care by prioritising early intervention and family-focused support. It emphasises a whole-system approach to ensure that families receive timely, coordinated, and effective support tailored to their needs. The FFP aims to keep more children in safe and loving homes and improve child protection outcomes

## 2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission are asked to note the plans for development.

## 5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

### 5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report or presentation. The work described in the presentation will be delivered using existing budgets and grants.

Signed: Mohammed Irfan, Head of Finance

Dated: 09 June 2025

### 5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report aimed at early intervention.

Signed: Susan Holmes

Dated: 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025

### 5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The Families First Partnership (FFP) program aims to improve children's social care in England by promoting a more integrated, family-focused approach to early help and child protection. It emphasises early intervention, multi-agency collaboration, and ensuring that children and families access the right support when they need it, with the goal of keeping children within their family networks whenever possible. The development of services in Leicester in response to these government reforms to children's social care should lead to positive impacts for people from across many protected characteristics. It is important that we understand and account for the diverse backgrounds of families when providing support.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 9 June 2025

#### 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no climate emergency implications arising from this report.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2246

Dated: 9 June 2025

#### 5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)



# **Social Care and Education Performance Dashboard**

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny  
Commission

Date of meeting: 18 June 2025

Lead Director: Laurence Jones

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### **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Laurence Jones
- Author contact details: Laurence.jones@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1.2

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 From April 2025 the Social Care and Education department will be producing a new quarterly performance dashboard which will include key data on performance, volumes and finance across children's service, education and adult social care.
- 1.2 The Dashboard will be produced approximately two months past the end of each quarter and will be presented to the Lead Member and the to the City Mayor' Education, Health and Care Board (EHCB).
- 1.3 It is proposed to provide a version of the dashboard to members of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission and the Adult Social Care Commission following presentation at the EHCB. That will allow Scrutiny Commission Members a chance to both scrutinise performance and to use the information to generate future plan items to deep dive into areas of interest.

## **2. Recommended actions/decision**

- 2.1 That Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission be provided with the quarterly dashboard as means of overseeing performance and identifying areas for further scrutiny.

## **3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement**

## **4. Background and options with supporting evidence**

- 4.1 From April 2025 the Social Care and Education department will be producing a new quarterly performance dashboard which will include key data on performance, volumes and finance across children's service, education and adult social care. The performance dashboard is a Microsoft Excel document which is interactive and allows site of top-level data and an ability to drill down in more detail in certain areas. The Dashboard will be produced approximately two months past the end of each quarter and will be presented to the Lead Member and the to the City Mayor' Education, Health and Care Board (EHCB).
- 4.2 The first tab is a summary page with three sections containing finance workforce and performance metrics across children's services, adult services and education including comparator figures for previous years and benchmarking against national, statistical neighbour authorities when available. The headlines for each section are shown below.

	<b>FINANCIAL METRICS</b>
Children	Average cost of children's placement
	Spend on children's social care agency social workers
	High Needs Block (£'000)
	Continuing Care, Funded Nursing Care and s117 income from ICB (childrens)
Adult	ASC working age package cost per head of population
	Average ASC working age package cost per client
	ASC 65+ package cost per head of population
	Average ASC 65+ package cost per client
	Continuing Care, Funded Nursing Care and s117 income from ICB (adults)

	<b>WORKFORCE METRICS</b>
Children	Children's Social Worker vacancy rate
	Overall children's vacancy rate
	Agency Usage
Adult	Overall adult's vacancy rate

	<b>PERFORMANCE METRICS</b>
Children Looked After	Number at period end
	Full Care Orders at period end
	Interim Care Orders at period end
	S20 arrangements at period end
	Other order types at period end
	Exits from care
	Exits to adoption
	Exits to Special Guardianship Orders
	Placed in Council residential (number)
	Placed in Council residential (%)
	Placed with Council foster carers (number)
	Placed with own Council carers (%)
	Placement vacancies - Fostering
	Placement vacancies - Residential
Unregulated placements	
Safeguarding	Serious Incident Notifications
SEND – Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)	Requests to assess
	Assessments started
	EHCP in 20 weeks (%)

	EHCP in 20 weeks (% calendar YTD)
	EHCP annual review (12 months)
	EHCP annual review (amendments 12 week)
Adult Care Providers CQC Rating	All Settings: Outstanding
	All Settings: Good
	All Settings: Requires Improvement
	All Settings: Inadequate
	All Settings: CQC not inspected service yet
	All Settings: Insufficient evidence to rate
	All Settings: Inspected but not rated
Hospital discharges	% of Discharges from UHL - Pathway 1
	% of Discharges from UHL - Pathway 2
	% of Discharges from UHL - Pathway 3

4.3 The second tab will give the latest financial forecast information by divisions within the department set against budget and a breakdown of average adult care costs across a range of types. This will come with narrative to explain variances and trends.

4.4 The third and fourth tabs will contain present more detailed information from the performance metrics in the first tab in chart and graph form including further benchmarking, including for the East Midlands where this is available, narrative on context, trend and performance against target when one has been set. One tab covers children's services information, the other adults social care.

4.5 The fifth tab contain information on the ten current most expensive looked after placements for children. As this identifies placements for children which could place them at risk this section will need partial redaction but will offer insight into the financial challenges of finding homes for looked after children with the most complex needs. It also shows those independent providers most used by the local authority.

4.6 A sixth tab is under development to try and represent where the highest cost adult packages are and those providers most used.

4.7 The Scrutiny Commissions will also be able to make suggestions for additions or improvements to the dashboard which can be considered by the data, performance and finance teams to improve understanding and oversight.

## 5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

### 5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Signed: Mohammed Irfan, Head of Finance

Dated: 04.06.25

### 5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Signed: Kevin Carter

Dated:04.06.25

### 5.3 Equalities implications

The report is about the Social Care and Education department producing a new quarterly performance dashboard which will include key data on performance, volumes and finance across children’s service, education and adult social care.

Moving forward, the department's new performance dashboard can be a useful asset for advancing and showcasing equality. However, its effectiveness in this regard hinges on embedding equality considerations into its design, how data is collected, how that data is analysed and how it is reported.

Signed: Equality Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 4 June 2025

### 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications arising from this report

Signed: Phil Ball

Dated: 04/06/2025

### 5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

## **6. Background information and other papers:**

## **7. Summary of appendices:**

## **8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

## **9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?**



# **Children's Social Care, Early Help and Prevention Improvement Plan**

**Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny  
Commission**

Date of meeting: 18 June

Lead director/officer: Damian Elcock

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### **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Helen Sheppard
- Author contact details: [helen.sheppard@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:helen.sheppard@leicester.gov.uk), 0116 454 1170
- Report version number: v1

## **1. Summary**

Under Ofsted's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework, a short inspection was carried out in Leicester during September 2024. This inspection resulted in the overall rating of 'requires improvement to be good' across all key areas.

Though there were areas of strength recognised, with acknowledgement provided of where previous recommendations had been addressed and significant improvements made, five areas requiring action were identified.

In response to these areas for improvement, an action plan has been developed to drive forward change and strengthen practice. This action plan is being overseen through the Improvement Planning and Children's Transformation (IMPACT) governance, to ensure there is a cohesive approach to change that aligns to a number of drivers of transformation.

## **2. Recommended actions/decision**

It is recommended that members of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission note the action plan and the progress that has already been made to deliver the necessary change.

## **3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement**

The full Ofsted Action Plan has been shared with Ofsted. It is anticipated that there will be discussion of this plan and further progress as part of the Annual Engagement Meeting, scheduled to take place in September 2025.

## **4. Background and options with supporting evidence**

### **Inspection process**

In September 2024, a team of Ofsted inspectors spent a week on site in Leicester to evaluate:

- the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements to help and protect children, and enable families to stay together and get the help they need
- the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home
- the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, in stable, loving homes, including adoption
- the experiences and progress of care leavers

The inspectors also evaluated:

- the effectiveness of leaders and managers

- the impact they have on the lives of children and young people
- the quality of professional practice delivered by a workforce that is equipped and effective

The inspectors' judgements were made on the basis of case reviews, discussions with frontline staff and evidence submitted in advance (including policies, procedures and performance data).

### **Inspection findings**

Inspectors acknowledged that social workers are well-supported, maintain manageable caseloads and demonstrate a strong understanding of the children they work with. However, they found that children do not always receive the support they need, and some care plans lack ambition and clarity.

The inspection also identified delays in responding to referrals and concerns about neglect, with some children experiencing avoidable delays in receiving appropriate support. It was suggested that the council's response to domestic abuse cases sometimes placed undue responsibility on parents without fully considering their own experiences of trauma.

Inspectors commented that support for care leavers was inconsistent, particularly for those in custody or facing homelessness.

The report noted that while there is a clear commitment from leaders to meet the challenges faced by vulnerable children, the overall effectiveness of services had declined since the last inspection in 2021. Inspectors pointed out the need for improved oversight and a more consistent approach to evaluating performance.

### **Inspection recommendations**

The following recommendations were made in the inspection report:

1. The range and accuracy of information used by leaders to evaluate service performance and the quality and impact of management oversight and supervision.
2. The timeliness and robustness of responses to contacts and referrals.
3. The quality and consistency of care plans and pathway plans.
4. Arrangements to identify, safeguard and support the most vulnerable children in care and care leavers, including children in unregistered children's homes.
5. Support for care leavers who may be more reluctant to accept help, including those in custody and those facing homelessness.

### **Responding to the inspection**

Acknowledging the areas for improvement identified through the inspection, a detailed action plan was put together to outline the specific activity required to drive the necessary change. This identifies the action owner and outlines timelines for the delivery of activity. The plan also provides a BRAG rating for both the progress on the activity itself and the impact the activity has had. The plan was shared with Ofsted on 12 May 2025. A summarised version of this plan has also been created to provide a high-level outline of the key work being carried out in response to the inspection.

### **Governance for overseeing improvement**

The delivery of this action plan is being overseen through the Improvement Planning and Children's Transformation (IMPACT) governance, alongside other key areas of transformation. This ensures that the activity aligns with work being carried out in

response to a number of other drivers of change, such as the Families First Partnership Programme and Placement Sufficiency Programme. Focus will be placed on the action plan at the IMPACT Board meeting on 30 June, enabling key partners to provide challenge and identify further opportunities for multi-agency working to strengthen practice.

## **5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications**

### 5.1 Financial implications

The 25/26 budget for Education and Children's services is £120.6m. The actions contained in this report will be funded within the existing budget.

Signed: Paresh Radia

Dated: 05/06/2025

### 5.2 Legal implications

I have considered this report alongside the summary improvement plan and post inspection plan. These identify key actions to ensure that, as an authority, we are meeting our statutory duties towards children and young people in need. There are no direct legal implications arising from these documents.

Signed: S Holmes

Dated: 6th June 2025

### 5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

ILACS is Ofsted's comprehensive framework for scrutinising and evaluating how effectively local authorities in England are providing children's social care services, with a strong emphasis on the child's experience and the impact of leadership and practice. The report provides an overview of the action plan that has been developed to drive forward change and strengthen practice in response to the areas that require improvement as per the Ofsted inspection in September 2024. Initiatives and actions that aim to strengthen practice should lead to positive outcomes for people from across many protected characteristics.

There may be actions arising from the plans which would benefit from further consideration of the equalities implications and possibly a full equality impact assessment in certain circumstances. It would be conducive to utilise disaggregated data to understand who is being impacted by any identified weaknesses and tailor interventions accordingly. Victims of domestic abuse can come from any background, but certain groups may face additional

barriers to reporting or receiving support due to cultural factors, language barriers, immigration status, or fear of discrimination.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 5 June 2025

#### 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications arising from this report.

Signed: Phil Ball

Dated: 05/06/2025

#### 5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

### **6. Background information and other papers:**

### **7. Summary of appendices:**

- a. Summary improvement plan
- b. Ofsted Action Plan – ILACS Autumn 2024

### **8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

### **9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?**



An 'Ofsted Action Plan' was shared with inspectors on 12 May, responding to the areas for improvement identified in the short inspection carried out September 2024. The delivery of this action plan is being overseen through the Improvement Planning and Children's Transformation (IMPACT) governance, alongside other key areas of transformation. The full improvement plan is available to view [here](#) and a high level summary provided below.

What needs to improve	Key activities we are carrying out	Activity RAG	The impact we want our work to have	How we will monitor and measure impact	IMPACT RAG
The range and accuracy of information used by leaders to evaluate service performance and the quality and impact of management oversight and supervision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implanting a comprehensive performance management framework to support data-driven decision making</li> <li>Strengthening the practice and recording of management oversight</li> </ul>	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved quality of management oversight and supervision, progressing plans and reducing drift and delay.</li> <li>Increased confidence of senior management in adherence to statutory requirements and practice guidance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance data review in SMT/ESMT/service areas</li> <li>Spotlight audit activity</li> <li>Reduced length of pre-proceedings/care proceedings</li> <li>Numbers of escalations/complaints</li> </ul>	Amber
The timeliness and robustness of responses to contacts and referrals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing and developing step up/step down processes</li> <li>Improving awareness of the early help offer</li> <li>Reviewing all re-referrals and NFAs at regular intervals</li> <li>Strengthening performance reporting</li> </ul>	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved timeliness of recording of contacts and referrals</li> <li>Families getting the right support at the right time</li> <li>Confidence that appropriate curiosity and understanding of children's lives is informing decision making at the front door</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance data</li> <li>CASP performance meetings</li> <li>Spotlight audits</li> <li>Feedback from step up/step down panel</li> </ul>	Red/ Amber
The quality and consistency of care plans and pathway plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening pathway plans</li> <li>Reviewing all forms and paperwork</li> <li>Developing practice around child protection plans, enabled</li> </ul>	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved quality of care plans, which reflect children's identity and aspirations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spotlight and collaborative audits,</li> <li>Feedback from CYPF</li> <li>Commendations</li> <li>Website monitoring</li> </ul>	Amber

What needs to improve	Key activities we are carrying out	Activity RAG	The impact we want our work to have	How we will monitor and measure impact	IMPACT RAG
	<p>through audits and strengthened use of performance data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on aspirational care planning</li> <li>• Piloting a family version of care plans</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable planning at all levels of statutory intervention</li> <li>• To increase awareness and use of Local Offer</li> <li>• Increase engagement of care leavers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulting with Care Leavers</li> <li>• Reviewing pathway plans</li> <li>• Care Leavers Support Group</li> </ul>	
Arrangements to identify, safeguard and support the most vulnerable children in care and care leavers, including children in unregistered children's homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing QA of external provision and unregulated placements</li> <li>• Reviewing visiting frequency, risk assessments, advocacy referrals and safety planning for new placements</li> <li>• Strengthening HoS oversight of unregulated/unregistered placements</li> </ul>	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unregulated placements only to be used and agreed in exceptional circumstances.</li> <li>• Children and YP in these placements have increased support and input, with clear safety plans to meet needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spotlight QA</li> <li>• LAC reviews</li> <li>• HOS monitoring and oversight</li> <li>• Feedback from CYPF</li> </ul>	Amber
Support for care leavers who may be more reluctant to accept help, including those in custody and those facing homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening practice around involving prisons in pathway planning</li> <li>• Improving engage with reluctant care leavers through work with Connexions</li> <li>• Reviewing and promoting support for care leavers living outside Leicester</li> </ul>	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased engagement with care leavers in custody and improved pre-release pathway planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care leavers visited in custody</li> <li>• Oversight QA of Pathway Plans</li> <li>• Multi agency pre-release plans</li> <li>• Housing, EET &amp; re-offending</li> </ul>	Green

# Ofsted Action Plan – ILACS Autumn 2024

The range and accuracy of information used by leaders to evaluate service performance and the quality and impact of management oversight and supervision. ....2

The timeliness and robustness of responses to contacts and referrals. ....5

The quality and consistency of care plans and pathway plans. ....7

Arrangements to identify, safeguard and support the most vulnerable children in care and care leavers, including children in unregistered children’s homes. .... 10

Support for care leavers who may be more reluctant to accept help, including those in custody and those facing homelessness. .... 12

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Colour	Descriptor	
	Activity	Impact
Blue	Action completed.	Impact to date seen as very good & any outstanding issues fully identified.
Green	Action on track.	Evidence of some good impact.
Amber	Action mainly on track, though in early stages.	Impact of work is limited.
Red	Action, although agreed, not yet implemented.	Impact of work seen to be very limited or no impact to date.
NA	RAG-rating not applicable as work not yet scheduled to commence or already concluded.	

What needs to improve						
The range and accuracy of information used by leaders to evaluate service performance and the quality and impact of management oversight and supervision.						
Section Lead		Damian Elcock and Kate Wells				
What inspectors found		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance management arrangements are not consistently underpinned by accurate and up-to-date information. For example, data in relation to initial contacts at the front door or to measure the timeliness of response to children identified as living in private fostering arrangements is not accurate. This means leaders do not have a sufficiently precise understanding of the volume and pace of service responses to children.</li> <li>Managers in all tiers of the organisation are not consistently maintaining a tight enough oversight and grip to ensure that effective, timely support is provided to children and care leavers.</li> <li>The quality and impact of frontline management oversight and supervision are not consistently strong enough to ensure that children receive the right support at the right pace to help keep them safer and improve their experiences. A culture of 'high support' from managers is not backed up by 'high challenge' to consistently improve the impact of support that is provided to children and care leavers. Supervision records are often very brief and do not show sufficient tracking of children's progress.</li> </ul>				
Ref	Action	Action owner	Due by	Status	BRAG rating	
					Activity	Impact
1.	Implement a comprehensive performance management framework to support data-driven decision-making					
1.1.	Agree a core data set for leaders to review on a regular basis	Damian Elcock	June 25	In progress	Amber	Amber
1.2.	Establish regular reporting into SMT of performance and quality assurance, with team level data delved into during supervision	All HoS	August 25	Not yet started		
1.3.	Set thresholds of where to expect performance to be (minimum expectations), with reporting of exceptions against this	Damian Elcock	July 25	Not yet started		
2.	Strengthen the practice and recording of management oversight					

2.1.	Create management oversight template and guidance to evidence risk and safety	Keral Patel	June 25	In progress	Amber	
2.2.	Review and relaunch case recording template and guidance	Keral Patel	Aug 25	In progress	Green	
2.3.	QA activity around management oversight/case recording	Julia Khoosal	Sept 25	Not yet started		
2.4.	Design skills audit to confirm strengths and areas for development of frontline team managers	Keral Patel	June 25	Not yet started	Amber	Amber
2.5.	Complete skills audit to identify support and training needs	All HoS	Jul 25	In progress	Red	Red
2.6.	Launch buddying offer / Reflective 1:1 session for new managers	Keral Patel	May 25	Complete	Blue	Green
2.7.	Refresh case supervision template with clear progression of actions	Kate Wells	Mar 25	Complete	Blue	Amber
2.8.	Review and reissue personal supervision, supervision agreement and quality conversation expectations	Keral Patel	May 25	In progress	Green	Amber
2.9.	Undertake spotlight audit of case supervision (building on ongoing dip sampling in CIN managers performance meeting) and embed in feedback cycles	ESMT	Sept 25	Not yet started		
2.10.	Adapt LL forms so management oversight regarding decision making is clearer, including: a. Update PWP form b. Add comment boxes for management authorisation to relevant forms c. Update LPM form	Kate Wells	a. Dec 24 b. Jan 25 c. Mar 25 d. May 25	a. Complete b. Complete c. Complete d. In progress	Green	Amber

	d. Review strategy discussion form					
2.11.	Focus on purposeful use of pre-proceeding, including: a. Increased oversight and tracking by case progression manager, SM and HOS b. Work with legal regarding reducing expert assessments c. Skilling social workers up in different assessment tools d. Early identification of alternative carers through network meetings		a. March 25 b. Dec 25 c. Dec 25 d. June 25	In progress	Amber	Amber
2.12.	Capture all management oversight re HoS chaired panels and trackers on LiquidLogic	All HOS	Ongoing	Complete	Blue	Amber
2.13.	Review escalation process and put tracker to be in place with SM and HOS oversight	Julia Khoosal	April 25	In progress	Amber	Amber
<b>The impact we hope this work will have</b>		Improved quality of management oversight and supervision, progressing plans and reducing drift and delay. Increased confidence of senior management in adherence to statutory requirements and practice guidance.		<b>How we will monitor and measure impact</b>		Performance data review in SMT / ESMT / service areas Spotlight audit activity Reduced length of pre-proceedings / care proceedings Numbers of escalations / complaints

What needs to improve						
The timeliness and robustness of responses to contacts and referrals.						
Section Lead		Kate Wells and Amy Smith				
What inspectors found		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspectors found a small number of examples of delays in contacts being responded to and entered on the electronic recording system. In these examples, the date of contact is shown as the date the contact has been created, not the date it was received. This means some children wait a number of days before their contact is responded to, and performance data in this area is not accurate.</li> <li>Responses by the CASP to contacts and referrals do not always demonstrate sufficient professional curiosity or fully consider family history. This means that children are not always receiving the support they need.</li> </ul>				
Ref	Action	Action owner	Due by	Status	BRAG rating	
					Activity	Impact
4.	Brief team managers regarding issues with responses to contacts and referrals (including understanding and addressing any drivers of delay, ensuring the date recorded is date of contact)	Kate Wells/ Karen Dawson	In weekly CASP performance meetings	Complete	Blue	Amber
5.	Ensure key messages re curiosity, history, what is keeping the child safe, day to day experiences and child's voice are evidenced in referral and decision making via <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- team meetings / performance meeting</li> <li>- reiteration of service expectations</li> <li>- focused curious questions for managers</li> </ul>	Karen Dawson/ Kate Wells	April 25	Complete	Blue	Amber
6.	Review all re-referrals and NFAs at regular intervals	Karen Dawson / Kate Wells	Ongoing	In progress	Amber	Amber

7.	Review performance reporting and set what is to be picked up in the reports	Kate Wells (CSC)	LAC visiting: May 25 Contacts/referrals: Sept 25	In progress	Amber	Red
8.	Review and develop step up/step down processes reviewed to ensure timely and effective application of threshold, including review of all step up/step downs and update to guidance	Kate Wells / Amy Smith	April 25	Complete	Blue	Green
9.	Improve awareness of EH offer and service structure within CASP, alongside relationship building across CASP and clusters	Amy Smith / Kate Wells / Karen Dawson / Vibha Gohil	May 25	In progress	Green	Red
10.	Complete spotlight audit of front door contacts/referrals	Julia Khoosal	June 25	In progress	Red	Red
<b>The impact we hope this work will have</b>		Improved timeliness of recording of contacts and referrals Families getting the right support at the right time Confidence that appropriate curiosity and understanding of children's lives is informing decision making at the front door	<b>How we will monitor and measure impact</b>		Performance data, CASP performance meetings, spotlight audits, feedback from step up / step down panel	

What needs to improve						
The quality and consistency of care plans and pathway plans.						
Section Lead		Julia Khoosal and David Thrussell				
What inspectors found		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of plans varies and while they identify needs, actions are not always sufficiently specific in terms of timescales and the outcomes being sought. Overoptimism about the sustainability of change means that some children are stepped down from child protection plans too soon.</li> <li>The quality of children's plans is variable. Stronger plans are detailed, taking careful account of children's wishes and feelings, reflecting their religious and cultural needs. Weaker plans lack this level of detail and specificity.</li> <li>LCAs are not always clear about what the local offer is, and a small number of pathway plans contain out-of-date information about the offer. This means that young people will not be clear about all their entitlements and may miss out on them.</li> <li>The quality of pathway plans is highly variable. Some pathway plans demonstrate a strong understanding of the young person's views and needs and are very specific and detailed about how the young person will achieve their ambitions. Other written plans lack detail and do not reflect the range of work being undertaken to support the young person. When circumstances change for a young person, pathway plans are not updated to reflect the meaningful change in circumstances.</li> </ul>				
Ref	Action	Action owner	Due by	Status	BRAG rating	
					Activity	Impact
11.	Review, update and promote the Local Offer for Care Leavers	David Thrussell	June 25	In progress	Green	Green
12.	Strengthening Pathway Plans - Audits Review practice guidance for plans Arrange SOS Training and recording Strengthening family networks to engage hard to reach care leavers	David Thrussell	June 25	In progress	Green	Green
13.	Review of all forms and paperwork, including: a. Development of assessment that spans EH/CSC	Kate Wells	Recommendation to be made re assessment	Not yet started		

	b. Clarity about what could be changed / what can't (link to v25 LL update and future updates)		forms/version of LL by Sept 25  Initial scoping by June 25  Mar 26 (links Family Help)			
14.	Child Protection Plans					
14.1.	Ensure that any cases stepped down to CIN have clear actions identified and actions are completed prior to closure	Charlene Collins/Helen Smith	April 25	In progress	Amber	Amber
14.2.	Re-audit step downs	Megan Hill, Sarah Hanlon, Julia Khoosal	April 25	Complete	Blue	Amber
14.3.	Review of performance data re: re-referrals for CP – via ChAT and Performance Data. Identify themes.	Kate Wells with Karen Dawson, Charlene Collins, Helen Smith, Megan Hill	Bimonthly	In progress	Amber	Amber
15.	Care Plans					
15.1.	Focus on aspirational care planning: All care plans to focus both on longer term goals and steps to get there and actions to be taken in the next 6 months to progress this. - LAC service event focusing on care planning (26 <sup>th</sup> March 2025) - Good quality care plans shared - Ensure holistic assessments / intervention for CYP are integrated	Rina Begum	Service event / Good quality plans shared March 25  Integrated care plans expectations - Sept 25  QA – Dec 25	Complete	Blue	Amber

	(CYPJS, EHCP). Clearly reference / analysis in care plans. - QA of care plans and feedback from LAC reviews					
15.2.	Family version of care plans shared, piloted and reviewed, will final versions implemented by Sept 25	Rina Begum	April 25	In progress	Amber	
<b>The impact we hope this work will have</b>		Improved quality of care plans, which reflect children's identity and aspirations Sustainable planning at all levels of statutory intervention To increase awareness and use of Local Offer Increase engagement of CL		<b>How we will monitor and measure impact</b>		Spotlight and collaborative audits, Feedback from CYPF Commendations Website Monitoring Consulting with Care Leavers Reviewing pathway plans Care Leavers Support Group

What needs to improve						
Arrangements to identify, safeguard and support the most vulnerable children in care and care leavers, including children in unregistered children's homes.						
Section Lead		Kate Wells and David Thrussell				
What inspectors found		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The frequency of visits and monitoring activity for the small number of children living in unregistered children's homes do not provide adequate assurance about the care that they receive.</li> <li>A small number of children have been or are living in unregistered children's homes. These placements are only made in emergencies when no suitable option is available. Placement searches continue and children are moved to more appropriate homes as soon as this is possible. However, during their time in unregistered homes, some of these children are not being visited more frequently by their social workers considering their potential vulnerability. IRO oversight is not regular and robust enough for these children.</li> <li>When young people say they do not want support, this is sometimes too easily and readily accepted, without persistence to provide the support they may need. While based on a well-intentioned desire to recognise an adult's right to self-determination, this approach can lead to risks to more vulnerable care leavers not being identified or adequately addressed.</li> </ul>				
Ref	Action	Action owner	Due by	Status	BRAG rating	
					Activity	Impact
16.	Unregistered/unregulated placements expectations and process signed off at SMT and shared across division (to include unregulated fostering placements)	KW	Feb 25	Complete	Blue	Amber
17.	Monthly HoS oversight of unregistered/unregulated placements oversight and monitoring	KW / ME	Ongoing	In progress	Green	Amber
18.	Review visiting frequency, risk assessments, advocacy referrals and safety planning for all new placements	KW / ME / HL / JJ / RR	From March 25	In progress	Amber	Amber

19.	Invite IRO SM to monthly meeting to report on oversight of new and existing arrangements	KW / JJ / RR	From March 25	Complete	Blue	Amber
20.	Ongoing QA of external provision and unregulated placements via Placement and Commissioning Team and Care experienced consultants	Hannah Lacey / Sam Merry	Ongoing	In progress	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
21.	Spotlight audit to assess impact/adherence to expectations and QA processes	Sarah Hanlon	June 25	In progress	Amber	Amber
<b>The impact we hope this work will have</b>		Unregulated placements only to be used and agreed in exceptional circumstances. Children and YP in these placements have increased support and input, with clear safety plans to meet needs.	<b>How we will monitor and measure impact</b>		Spotlight QA LAC reviews HOS monitoring and oversight Feedback from CYPF	

What needs to improve						
Support for care leavers who may be more reluctant to accept help, including those in custody and those facing homelessness.						
<b>Section Lead</b>		David Thrussell				
<b>What inspectors found</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most care leavers in custody have very brief pathway plans that leave most actions to the prison service or family members. LCAs do not pull those actions together into a cohesive plan, instead noting that others are doing things. As a result, LCAs do not always show drive and ambition to ensure that those care leavers in custody have their health, education or other needs met. Sometimes it is not clear how young people in custody are being helped to prepare for release.</li> <li>• When care leavers are not in education, employment or training, the planning and support provided to them is not always sufficiently ambitious. Their plans do not clearly or sufficiently set out what steps need to be taken and by whom to bring some structure and meaningful activity to their lives.</li> <li>• Most care leavers are in suitable accommodation and care leavers said that they like where they live and feel safe there. When care leavers are homeless, they are appropriately supported to find temporary, and then more permanent, accommodation. A very small number of care leavers living away from Leicester, who are vulnerable because of their histories and specific needs, are not adequately supported to find accommodation when they are at risk of becoming homeless. This means the local authority cannot be assured that they have somewhere suitable to live.</li> </ul>				
Ref	Action	Action owner	Due by	Status	BRAG rating	
					Activity	Impact
22.	LCAs will liaise directly with Prison OM Involve prisons in pathway planning Pro-active use of consent forms to support access to prisons Liaison with LLR to discuss best practice Agree action plan with NPS and CYPJS	David Thrussell	June 2025	In progress	Green	Green
23.	Work with Connexions Team to improve engagement with reluctant care leavers Encourage and promote Job fairs Use WA broadcast system to promote EET opportunities Promote LCT ASDAN	David Thrussell	June 2025	In progress	Green	Green

24.	Review and promote support for Care Leavers living outside LA Continue to promote band 1 status for returners to the city	David Thrussell	June 2025	In progress	Green	Green
<b>The impact we hope this work will have</b>		Increased engagement with care leavers in custody and improved pre-release pathway planning		<b>How we will monitor and measure impact</b>		Care leavers visited in custody Oversight QA of Pathway Plans Multi agency pre-release plans Housing, EET & re-offending



**Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission (CYPE)  
Work Programme 2025 – 2026**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
18 June 2025	<p>Overview of CYPE</p> <p>Children’s Social Care Reforms</p> <p>Introduction to the Performance Dashboard</p> <p>Plan for Ofsted</p>		
4 September 2025	<p>Edge of Care</p> <p>SEND Transport Update</p> <p>HNB Task Group Report</p> <p>Children’s Services Finances</p> <p>Children’s Centres – Verbal update</p> <p>Performance Dashboard</p>		

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
28 October 2025	<p><b>Sufficiency for CLA and Care Leavers</b></p> <p><b>Sufficiency in Mainstream and Special Schools</b></p> <p><b>Ofsted update</b></p> <p><b>Children from Abroad Seeking Safety</b></p>	To include impact monitoring on the Fostering Service microsite launched on the Council website which includes the fostering offer.	
20 January 2026	<p><b>SEND Transport Update</b></p> <p><b>Fostering Annual Report</b></p> <p><b>Corporate Parenting Annual Report</b></p> <p><b>Performance Dashboard</b></p>	<p>Outcome specifics gathered on Travel Training, applications, appeals and outcomes.</p> <p>To include costs relating to Customer Relationship management tool, the Ofsted thematic report, information on family finding events and more detail on advertising techniques for recruitment.</p>	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
3 March 2026			
14 April 2026	Performance Dashboard		

### Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Children from Abroad Seeking Safety	6-monthly report.	
Youth Services - overview		
Academies – Performance Report		
Needs Assessment in Relation to Families in the City		
Children not in state-maintained schools e.g.: Academies, Independent, Faith schools		
Multi-Academy Trusts - Overview		

<sup>3</sup>Click here to enter text.

Update from local DfE Officer		
Fostering Annual Report		
Fostering Community Champions update	Deferred from 26 March 2024	
Corporate Parenting Update	Annual report.	
Fostering Service – Marketing Strategy		
SEN support and funding		
Pupil Place Planning (Primary and Secondary)		
Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Report		
Children in Care Council/Care Leavers		
School Holiday Activity and Food Provision		
Education Govt reports e.g.: white paper / green paper		
Ofsted Inspection reports		
Children’s Social Care – Recruitment Issues		
Mental Health impacts on children	Likely to be examined jointly with other commissions	
Informal Scrutiny on DSG High Needs Block	To commence following the full report to the Commission.	
Leicester Children’s Services – Self Evaluation		
Covid impact and response to early childhood development		