

# Public Document Pack



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Monday 27 January 2025

## Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

### Children's Scrutiny Panel

The **Children's Scrutiny Panel** will meet in the **Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield** at **10.30 am** on **Tuesday 4 February 2025**.

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view via the Council's website.

The items which will be discussed are described in the agenda and there are reports attached which give more details.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Lawton".

**Samantha Lawton**

**Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning**

Kirklees Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair/Clerk of their intentions prior to the meeting.

## **The Children's Scrutiny Panel members are:-**

### **Member**

Councillor Itrat Ali (Chair)

Councillor Ashleigh Robinson

Councillor Jane Rylah

Councillor Hannah McKerchar

Councillor Richard Smith

Councillor Tanisha Bramwell

# Agenda

## Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

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### Pages

**1: Membership of the Panel**

To receive apologies for absence from those Members who are unable to attend the meeting.

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**2: Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

1 - 10

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024.

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**3: Declaration of Interests**

11 - 12

Members will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have any disclosable pecuniary interests or any other interests, which may prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items.

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**4: Admission of the Public**

Most agenda items take place in public. This only changes where there is a need to consider exempt information, as contained at Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. You will be informed at this point which items are to be recommended for exclusion and to be resolved by the Committee.

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**5: Deputations/Petitions**

The Panel will receive any petitions and/or deputations from members of the public. A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also submit a petition at the meeting relating to a matter on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, Members of the Public must submit a deputation in writing, at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting and shall subsequently be notified if the deputation shall be heard. A maximum of four deputations shall be heard at any one meeting.

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## **6: Public Question Time**

To receive any public questions.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, the period for the asking and answering of public questions shall not exceed 15 minutes.

Any questions must be submitted in writing at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

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## **7: Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report** 13 - 36

The Panel will consider the Annual Report from the Kirklees Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

Contact: Jo-Anne Sanders – Service Director, Learning and Early Support  
Mark Janes – Chair of SACRE

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## **8: Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Overview** 37 - 50

The Panel will consider an overview report on the Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Contact: Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director (Learning and Early Support)

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## **9: Review of Children's Residential Homes and Fostering Provision** 51 - 58

The Panel will consider a report for information providing assurance on Residential Children's Homes and Fostering Provision.

Contact: Joel Hanna – Head of Service, Children Looked After and Residential Services  
Anna Gledhill – Head of Service, Fostering Services

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**10: Performance Data (Children's Services) - verbal update on highlights**

The Panel will consider a verbal update on the performance highlights from the latest Children's Services data report covering period ending 30th November 2024.

Contact: Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director  
Pam Allen, Interim Service Director  
Robert Fordyce, Head of Quality Assurance and Practice Development

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**11: Pre-decision scrutiny - Cabinet decisions on the horizon**

The Panel will consider any potential areas of pre-decision scrutiny in accordance with any cabinet decisions relating to children and young people which are on the horizon and receive updates from senior officers in Children's Services.

Contact: Service Directors (Children's Services)

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**12: Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board**

Panel Members who attend the Kirklees Parenting Board, will feedback on key areas of focus considered by the Board, which will be of interest to the Panel.

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**13: Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 2024/25**

59 - 70

The Panel will consider the proposed areas of focus and activity for the 2024/25 municipal year and discuss the method and means to be used to continue the Panel's work going forward.

Contact: Helen Kilroy, Assistant Democracy Manager

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Contact Officer: Helen Kilroy

## KIRKLEES COUNCIL

### CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL

**Friday 22nd November 2024**

Present: Councillor Itrat Ali (Chair)  
Councillor Ashleigh Robinson  
Councillor Jane Rylah  
Councillor Hannah McKerchar

In attendance: Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director - Learning and Early Support  
Rob Fordyce, Principal Social Worker for Kirklees and Head of Service - Quality Assurance and Practice Development  
Pam Allen, Interim Service Manager, Childrens Resources, Improvements and Partnerships  
Adrian Wisniewski, SEND Programme Manager  
Cllr Kendrick, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Apologies: Councillor Richard Smith

**1 Membership of the Panel**

Apologies were received from Councillor Richard Smith.

**2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

That the minutes of the meetings held on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**3 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

**4 Admission of the Public**

All items were considered in public session.

**5 Deputations/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

**6 Public Question Time**

No public questions were received.

**7 The Kirklees Safety Valve agreement**

The Panel considered a report providing insight into the Council's "Safety Valve" agreement with the Department of Education (DfE) in relation to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), presented by Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director for Learning and Early Support.

## Children's Scrutiny Panel - 22 November 2024

Jo-Anne Sanders highlighted the following key points -

- **The Designated Schools Grant (DSG)** - was funding given by the government to local authorities, most of which was allocated to schools directly and was split into three parts: for mainstream schools, the early years and for children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).
- **The Safety Valve Agreement** was an intervention programme from the Department for Education (DfE) which was introduced to assist local authorities with significant annual overspend on supporting the education of children and young people with SEND (the High Needs Block). Kirklees began the agreement in 2021/22 due to having a significant deficit in this area; many other local authorities were also affected.
- **Quarterly Returns** - were made on a quarterly basis, both financial and to report on the activity that had taken place, including where the authority was on or off track to meet delivery timescales.
- **Ambitious Transformation Plan** - The report detailed the ambitious transformation plan that was in place before the Safety Valve Agreement, and aligned with its aims.
- **SEND big plan** - Kirklees had co-produced the SEND Big Plan which clearly set out what would be done and when, to provide support for children and young people with SEND.
- **Additional funding** of £33.5 million in revenue would be provided by the DfE over the lifetime of the agreement, to clear the historic deficit caused by the overspend, in exchange for meeting financial and transformational targets and reaching a balanced in-year position on its Designated Schools Grant (DSG).
- **Capital funding** - £8.2 million capital funding had also been provided, which along with additional investment from the Council, was being used to rebuild Joseph Norton Academy and Woodley School and College.
- **Funding for ARPs** - Capital funding was also being used to fund Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) at mainstream schools.

Jo-Anne Sanders referred to the Appendix where strategies with the biggest impact on children and young people had been outlined. These included:

- Rebuilding the two special schools and increasing the number of places.
- Ensure youngsters were included in mainstream schools.
- Creating more ARPs to support youngsters to be able to be educated locally.
- Commissioning services to wraparound the youngsters, such as therapies.
- Improving the quality and compliance of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs), within the statutory 20 week timescale.
- Working with schools and social care and health professionals to identify need and provide children with the right support as soon as they need it.
- Creative strategies such as Assistive Technology



## Children's Scrutiny Panel - 22 November 2024

The Panel was informed that there were challenges around funding, but that there was strength in the area partnerships such as the Parent/Carer Forum, Health and Education Partners to ensure value for money and the best possible outcomes.

The Panel asked for clarification on the deficit profile and were advised that:

- The agreement was signed in March 2022 and ran until 2029/2030.
- A positive in year balance would be in place by 2026/27 to ensure that the Council did not overspend.
- The table referred to the cumulative deficit, which in 2021/22 was £35.8m, and was predicted to increase over future years while strategies were put in place.
- Future years figures were forecasts, and it was forecast that by 2029/30 the historic deficit would be £33million.
- The government had committed to £33.5million which should mean that the deficit would be cleared.
- The forecasts included a council contribution.
- The revenue funding was being paid on a quarterly basis subject to satisfactory quarterly monitoring and the payments were incremental over the term of the agreement.

In answer to a question about how confident the Service was that the targets would be met, the Panel were advised that despite the challenges, the last payment had been secured and despite being off-track currently, there was no indication that future payments would not be made. Jo-Anne Sanders advised that there was continuing engagement with the DfE Advisors over rising costs due to inflation, a rise in demand for services and increased complexity of need, which all authorities were experiencing. More Alternative Provision (AP) was needed, and delays to the AP Free School that was planned had been built into the forecast. The Panel was informed that there was close monitoring of every aspect of the Transformation Plan and being open and transparent in terms of the reporting.

The Panel were also advised, in answer to a question, that the DfE had previously placed the service under enhanced monitoring and had provided suitable support and challenge. Schools and Early Years had been supportive by transferring funding to the High Needs Block, and the DfE recognised that every effort was being made to adhere to the plan.

### **RESOLVED:**

The Panel gave their support for the report and asked that officers consider and take on board any questions and comments raised by the Panel in future reports.

### **8 Performance Data (Children's Services) - verbal update on highlights**

The Panel considered a verbal update on the performance highlights from the latest Children's Services data report covering period ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Robert Fordyce, Principal Social Worker for Kirklees and Head of Service - Quality Assurance and Practice Development gave a presentation on behalf of Vicky

## Children's Scrutiny Panel - 22 November 2024

Metheringham (Service Director for Children and Families) and highlighted the following key points –

- **Front Door** – There had been an increase in the timeliness of screening compared to last year's figures, at 78%. Further improvements were planned to track the progress, to help strike the balance between dealing efficiently with legitimate referrals and those contacts which need to be referred elsewhere.
- **Re-referrals** were at 21%, and although this was below the national figure of 22%, the figure was still higher than the Service would like, so a deep dive was taking place to look at the data and assess the reasons why.
- **Child Protection Plans** - The number of children on a Child Protection Plan had remained stable at 430. The percentage of children who were on a second or subsequent plan was 11%, lower than the national figure of 23%. This was positive, as when children were on plans multiple times it may indicate that the first plan had not been as good as it could be.
- **Children Going Missing** - There was a further rise in children going missing episodes, which might be due to a change in the recording policy by the Police. The rate of "return interviews" had increased.
- **Children Subject to Care Proceedings** – The average length of time it took to apply for a court order and have the case concluded was now 34 weeks, compared to the national average of 42 weeks. This was a reduction of 9 weeks from last month.
- **Children in Care** - The number of Children in Care had reduced slightly, in part because of the reduction in the length of time children were subject to care proceedings. Health performance against all indicators was improving, although there were improvements to be made in dental assessments. Placement stability was still a concern, especially those children with three placements or more in the last 12 months, and improvements were being considered
- **Care Leavers** - The service was in touch with 96% of Care Leavers which was in line with national and regional data. The number of Care Leavers in Education, Training or Employment had decreased, and additional support such as mentoring had been offered, along with support for job applications and communication with educational institutions.
- **Assessment and Intervention Teams** – caseloads for social workers were increasing due to staff vacancies in the social work teams. Strategies in places to address this included enhanced oversight of caseloads, providing student placements and apprenticeships, and being part of the Frontline and Step-Up programmes which enabled graduates of other subjects to qualify in social work.
- **Initial Child Protection Conference timeliness** – this had previously reduced to 73%, but after an improvement plan had been put in place, had recently increased to 100%.
- **Children in care Placements** - stability of placements was still an area of concern and work was underway to increase placement stability.
- **Care Leavers** – number of children in educational, training or employment had slightly reduced and as much additional support as possible was being given to care leavers, such as mentoring support from partners in the local area, updating CVs, applying for jobs and preparing for interviews. The

## Children's Scrutiny Panel - 22 November 2024

service also worked closely with colleges and universities where concerns had been raised regarding a young person's engagement.

In answer to a question about the retention of Social Workers, Robert Fordyce advised that a focus on a programme for Newly Qualified Social Workers had been prompted by a survey which had been taken across the region to look at retention rates and incentive offers and look at best practice. The programme offered additional support and training for newly qualified social workers, along with a reduced caseload and a greater variety of training packages, recognising that the first two years of social work practice were the most difficult.

Councillor Viv Kendrick, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, advised that C and K Careers provided individualised support to Care Leavers to support them with training and employment opportunities. In response to the question about retention, Cllr Kendrick added that vacancies within social services often arose because staff were promoted internally.

The Panel welcomed the varied initiatives in place to support the methods of recruiting social workers to the service and commended the continued multi-disciplinary approach around Care Leavers, including health services, mental health services, and housing, all of which contributed to their overall stability.

Pam Allen, Interim Service Manager – Children's Resources, Improvements and Partnerships, highlighted the following key points on foster care and placement stability:-

- **Children in foster placements** - 70% of the 608 children in care in Kirklees were in foster placements, compared to a 68% national average. Foster placements were with in-house foster carers, placements supplied through fostering agencies or family and friends.
- **Recruitment of foster carers** - More foster carers were needed for the remaining 30% of children in care, who were currently living in residential placements in Kirklees or in care external to Kirklees.
- **External placements** – these were not the best option for children, and were a drain on financial resources.
- **Placement stability figures** - related to children who have had three or more placements in a year. The trauma caused to children from having to move home more than once, significantly affected their wellbeing so the service was trying to recruit more foster carers.
- **Strategy for recruiting Foster Carers** – this was being refreshed to meet the challenge of finding appropriate foster placements and using modern techniques to recruit. This was a national challenge and not specific to Kirklees.
- **Ofsted Inspections at Children's Residential Homes** - The Ofsted Inspection ratings for children's homes which had been recently updated and the results were positive. Work was continuing to get ratings in place which were 'Good' at the children's homes.

In answer to a question about how more Foster Carers would be recruited, Pam Allen advised that:

## Children's Scrutiny Panel - 22 November 2024

- Segmentation was to be used as a strategy, which meant targeting people who were more likely to become Foster Carers, such as those working in public services.
- To attract Foster Carers, Kirklees Council was working hard to operate as a fostering friendly employer, giving staff the time off for reviews, medical appointments and other statutory requirements relating to the child, and allowing staff to do this in their working time.
- Councillors were being encouraged to raise the issue of foster carers within their constituencies and signpost those interested to where to go for initial discussions.
- Awareness was being raised through social media and digital communications.
- The position of a salaried Foster Carer had been introduced at some other local authorities for children with complex care needs and this was being looked at.
- Where redundancies had occurred, staff had been told about fostering as an option to consider.
- As the strategy was being updated, ideas from the community and Councillors were welcome.

Councillor Kendrick advised that Foster Carers for children in Kirklees could live in surrounding areas such as Bradford, Calderdale, and Wakefield and that foster carers from these areas would be welcomed.

The Panel asked if figures were available for children who were placed in locations that were further away from the surrounding areas in the region, and what was being done to ensure the children could be brought closer to home. Pam Allen advised the Panel that there were a number of children placed both outside the 20 mile boundary and other places beyond that, such as Cumbria, Shropshire and Wales, and that information was available to assist with monitoring these placements. Weekly meetings took place to monitor all the children in external placements, and their plans were reviewed to see how they could be brought back to Kirklees. Complex plans were in place for each child and those children in unregulated placements were monitored weekly. Officers were constantly looking at different ways to bring the child back in area, such as any changes in circumstances which might mean the child could be placed with family or friends. Children placed out of area were a priority for the service, although a small number were purposely placed out of area, for example if they were placed near to a family member who lived in a different part of the UK. Relationships with private children's homes in Kirklees which were currently housing children from other areas, were being built to try to utilise the places for local children.

Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning and Early Support, highlighted the following key areas:

### **Compliance with issuing Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) within 20 weeks -**

- In September 2024, the service was maintaining 4745 EHCPs, compared to September 2023 at 4046, an increase of almost 700, demonstrating the additional demand.

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- The 20 week compliance was being closely monitored and there had been a decrease in compliance since August 2024. The reason for this reduction in compliance was a focus on issuing the EHCPs which had taken longer, and making progress on clearing the backlog in order to get back on track.
- In September 2024, 110 EHCPs had been issued, 26% within 20 weeks.
- Cumulative compliance, measured by the SEN2 return to the Department for Education which measured performance, was up on this time last year, and though not at national levels, the trajectory upwards was steady. A further update would be provided early in 2025.

The Panel were informed that government changes to funding and reporting on Whole Family Working under the Strengthening Families Programme meant that funding was now guaranteed, and although returns were still a requirement, there was an opportunity to review the data systems to enhance the work and demonstrate the impact it had on families.

### **Attendance, Exclusions and Suspensions in September -**

- Attendance in Kirklees was 94.7% overall, with 95.2% in Primary and 92.8% in Secondary, which was in line with National average figures.
- This success could be attributed to several initiatives including Attendance Matters workshops and Headteacher Forums.
- Suspensions and permanent exclusions were higher than expected but it had been a positive start to the year, as numbers were significantly down from the same period last year.
- A range of strategies had been put in place to support schools with advice and support.

In answer to a question about good practice regarding attendance strategies in schools, Ms Sanders advised that whole family working and tackling emotionally based school avoidance through confidence building and alternative provision were part of the strategy, along with schools working together to share ideas at an Inclusion Multi-Agency Panel. Feedback from parents had been really positive in some cases where children had been successfully helped to return to school. Jo-Anne Sanders suggested that case studies could be brought to another meeting so that schools could present their approaches in their own words.

In response to a question from the Panel about the possibility of teaching mental health strategies at school to enable structures to be in place to help young people deal with their anxieties and emotions, Jo-Anne Sanders advised that schools had a huge range of strategies in place which were supported by educational psychologists and mental health in schools' teams. The Panel agreed to consider a future update on the range of strategies currently being implemented and resources available within schools to provide mental health support to young people. The Panel also suggested that it may be useful for Panel Members to contribute their ideas to the National Curriculum and Assessment Review that was taking place nationally.

Councillor Kendrick advised the Panel that the Children's Service had recently hosted a Conference for Headteachers and SENCOs on health and wellbeing and good mental health in schools of both pupils and teachers and the feedback had

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been really positive. The Panel was informed that some Headteachers had taken away new ideas and initiatives to build on current practices.

In answer to a question on the expected timescale for catching up with issuing the outstanding EHCPs so that the service could focus on meeting the 20-week statutory timescales consistently, the Panel were advised that all the outstanding cases had been allocated and 90% had now been finalised. Jo-Anne Sanders was confident that the completion of EHCPs within timescales would be back on track by the end of the year and that work would include the improvement of the timeliness of completion of annual reviews. Jo-Anne Sanders advised that a further update on Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Overview of volume process – quality and compliance would be considered by the Panel in February 2025.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the verbal updates on performance data be noted and Officers be thanked for their presentations.
- (2) The Panel agreed to consider a future update on the range of strategies currently being implemented and resources available within schools to provide mental health support to young people.
- (3) That Panel Members could contribute their ideas on supporting the mental health of young people in schools to the National Curriculum and Assessment Review that was taking place nationally.
- (4) That a further update on Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Overview of volume process – quality and compliance would be considered by the Panel in February 2025.

### **9 Pre-decision scrutiny - Cabinet decisions on the horizon**

The Panel was informed that an Annual report on School Funding would be submitted to Cabinet in January 2025. Jo-Anne Sanders advised that in February 2025 an annual report would be submitted to Cabinet on the determination of school admission arrangements and policies for community and voluntary controlled schools. The Panel was informed that both Cabinet reports would be shared with the Scrutiny Panel Members for information.

No items of pre-decision scrutiny on Cabinet decisions were discussed.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Annual reports being submitted to Cabinet in February 2025 on School Funding and Admission arrangements be shared with the Panel for information.

### **10 Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board**

The Panel discussed the Kirklees Parenting Board meeting, held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024, which had been a take-over event organised and led by Care Leavers, as part of Care Leavers' Month. Cllr Itrat Ali, Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel, and Cllr Viv Kendrick, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, attended and provided a summary of the event, which they described as interactive, inspirational and

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enjoyable. The meeting was attended by providers of children's services and representatives from the healthcare, education and housing, as well as cabinet members.

Care Leavers presented at the event and showed videos that had they had produced about their experiences. The young people also facilitated small group discussions, inviting delegates to provide solutions to challenges faced by Care Leavers. It was hoped that two of the young people would join Kirklees Parenting Board as members in future meetings of the Board to represent the voice of the Care Leaver.

Items on the agenda included:

- Homes for children
- Health and wellbeing
- Voice, influence and participation
- Learning

The event was successful in bringing together Care Leavers with those who provided a variety of their services, and it was hoped that the event would be repeated next year.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the updates from the Kirklees Parenting Board be noted.

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### **Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 2024/25**

The Panel noted that there were further visits planned over the next few months.

The Panel received an update from Councillor Rylah on a visit to the Care Leavers' Achievement Awards on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at Huddersfield Town Hall which was a celebratory event held for Care Leavers. The evening was inspirational, with speeches from the Mayor, Councillor Viv Kendrick (Cabinet Member for Children) and contributions from some of the young people. The atmosphere was warm and supportive throughout, particularly as the students came on stage to receive their awards. The awards ceremony was followed by a buffet, a magician and an unplanned performance of Kurdish dancing.

Councillor Kendrick raised a concern about young carers and the impact on them of caring responsibilities on their lives. The Panel agreed that this matter could be considered in a future Work Programme.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the progress on the Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 2024-25 and the updates on recent visits be noted.
- (2) That the issue relating to young carers and the impact on them of caring responsibilities, be considered in a future work programme.

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<b>KIRKLEES COUNCIL</b>			
<b>COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC</b>			
<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>			
Childrens Scrutiny Panel			
<b>Name of Councillor</b>			
<b>Item in which you have an interest</b>	<b>Type of interest (eg a disclosable pecuniary interest or an "Other Interest")</b>	<b>Does the nature of the interest require you to withdraw from the meeting while the item in which you have an interest is under consideration? [Y/N]</b>	<b>Brief description of your interest</b>

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

## NOTES

### Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your disclosable pecuniary interests under the new national rules. Any reference to spouse or civil partner includes any person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or as if they were your civil partner.

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.

Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority -

- under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
- which has not been fully discharged.

Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.

Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) - the landlord is your council or authority; and the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.

Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -

(a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and

(b) either -

the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

**REPORT TITLE: Kirklees SACRE Annual Report 2023 -2024**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> February 2024</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	<b>Cllr A Pinnock</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>No</b>

**Purpose of Report**

Since 1988 local authorities have had a duty to establish a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). The SACRE advises the Local Authority on matters relating to collective worship in all schools in the borough and on Religious Education (RE) given in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. The SACRE monitors the effectiveness and appropriateness of the agreed syllabus, which is formally reviewed every five years. SACRE is made up of four committees including representatives from the Church of England, Councillors, teachers and faith representatives

In brief, these are the statutory duties of SACRE:

1. To monitor RE provision and produce an annual report for the secretary of state.
2. To monitor and support collective worship.
3. To agree determinations from collective worship.
4. To produce an Agreed Syllabus for RE in community schools, and to revise this every five years.
5. To support religious education in schools through training and resources

A report must be produced for each academic year and published no later than 31 December. This is a retrospective report looking at the last academic year. The report is sent to the Secretary of State and other public bodies e.g. NASACRE.

**Recommendations**

The report is for information. Scrutiny support is welcomed moving forward on the specific elements of the work.

The following advice is given by SACRE to the local authority:

- To review the membership of SACRE to ensure it reflects the breadth and diversity of the borough in terms of faiths and beliefs and school structures.
- To investigate the provision of quality teaching of RE at Key Stage Four for the non-examined students.
- To provide opportunities for SACRE to work with other key areas of the Local Authority including the Communities team in order to support community cohesion.
- To continue to reflect on the funding of SACRE to ensure it remains in line with national recommendations and good practice.

- To request that Scrutiny Panel offer feedback which will be incorporated into planning in 2025.

**Reasons for Recommendations**

- Analysis of school website research and discussions with subject leaders in schools.
- Analysis of finance provided to SACRE
- Analysis of Census information

**Resource Implications:**

DFE recommend that Local Authorities should allocate approximately 2% of the Central School Services Block for the statutory work of SACRE. This includes the support for RE and Collective Worship in schools.

**Date signed off by Executive Director & name**

Tom Brailsford ( 24/01/2025)

**Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?**

Not applicable

**Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?**

Not applicable

**Electoral wards affected: All**

**Ward councillors consulted: Members of SACRE**

**Public or private: Public**

**Has GDPR been considered?**

**1. Executive Summary**

The **Kirklees SACRE Annual Report 2023-2024** highlights the significant efforts and achievements in promoting high-quality Religious Education (RE) and collective worship within the borough. The report emphasises the importance of RE in fostering understanding and respect for young people of Kirklees. Throughout the year, SACRE revised and launched the "Believing and Belonging" syllabus in collaboration with other West Yorkshire SACREs, ensuring a comprehensive curriculum based on the Big Ideas in RE.

The report also details the ongoing support and professional development provided to teachers, including network meetings, courses, and webinars. Additionally, SACRE introduced an Inclusive Collective Worship Award and continued to monitor and support schools in maintaining effective collective worship programmes.

The active collaboration of Kirklees SACRE members with various local and national organisations, such as NASACRE and local faith groups, to enhance RE and collective worship is highlighted, alongside initiatives like promoting visits to places of worship,

developing faith trails, and producing educational films about places of worship. The report concludes with recommendations to the local authority.

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

The **Kirklees SACRE Annual Report 2023-2024** is offered for information purposes. Please see Appendix (1)

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### **3.1 Council Plan**

The work of SACRE fully supports the Council plan. The shared outcomes, Aspire and Achieve, and Safe and Cohesive, are particularly aligned with the work of SACRE. Alignment is also seen with the approaches detailed in the inclusive communities framework.

### **3.2 Financial Implications**

National recommendations suggest that 2% of the Central School Services Block (CSSB) should be allocated to SACRE. In 2024 – 2025 the council reviewed the allocation to SACRE. The new amount was used as a benchmark for the recent tender process to commission services of an external advisor to support the functions of SACRE including the school improvement aspect for RE. The current allocation covers fees expected for the contract for these services for the next 3 (+1) years.

Should the amount of the CSSB change in value, there may be the necessity to review the funding allocated to SACRE in advance of the next procurement exercise. Thus the recommendation to continue reflecting on the value of funds allocated to SACRE.

### **3.3 Legal Implications**

The work of SACRE supports our legislative requirements. Empowered by the 1988 Education Reform Act to produce an agreed syllabus and to advise the Local Authority on RE and collective worship.

SACRE is a legal/ statutory body that all councils in England have to have. It is comprised of elected members (4 delegates for Kirklees), representatives from teachers and Head Teachers in the authority, the diocese of Leeds (C of E) and other faiths and denominations.

### **3.4 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**

System engagement with the offer of support for RE improvement services is not achieved. Partners do not prioritise the improvements within the subject area, which means work not undertaken and outputs / outcomes not achieved.

Addressing inequalities is at the very heart of the work of SACRE and is a core ethic. Integrated Impact Assessments can be undertaken on specific elements of the SACRE work to ensure opportunities are in view and there are no accidental adverse implications (this was particularly the case when considering the new Agreed Syllabus).

#### **4. Consultation**

The creation of the new Agreed Syllabus had co-production and engagement with stakeholders from Kirklees schools and settings as well as regional collaboration. Co-production was a core value and approach. Faith, community and school partners have been integral to creating and reviewing the new 5 year Agreed Syllabus.

#### **5. Engagement**

Engagement with our Schools is crucial, and to support this, a launch event and training session took place to introduce RE leaders to Launch the new Agreed Syllabus, training audits and networks are provided for schools to engage with peers and share best practice.

SACRE members collaborate and share knowledge with constituent groups. This learning and knowledge feeds into the frequent calendared meetings and outcomes shared with key stakeholders as appropriate.

#### **6. Options**

##### **6.1 Options considered**

National and local collaboration is considered and taken into account by the SACRE advisor when compiling the annual report. The report is agreed and signed of by the SACRE members, including the cross section of elected members.

##### **6.2 Reasons for recommended option**

The report is for information and Scrutiny support is welcomed moving forward on specific elements of the work.

#### **7. Next steps and timelines**

Scrutiny feedback received and incorporated into planning for 2025.

#### **8. Contact officer (s)**

Emma Brayford - Senior Learning Partner [Emma.brayford@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:Emma.brayford@kirklees.gov.uk)  
SACRE advisor Ian Ross [ian@penninelearning.com](mailto:ian@penninelearning.com)

#### **9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Not applicable

#### **10. Appendices**

Appendix (1) - The **Kirklees SACRE Annual Report 2023-2024**

#### **11. Service Director responsible**

Jo-Anne Sanders Service Director – Learning and Early Support. [Jo-Anne.Sanders@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:Jo-Anne.Sanders@kirklees.gov.uk)

Appendix



**Standing Advisory Council on Religious  
Education  
(SACRE)**

**Annual Report 2023-24**

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## **Section One: Introduction and the Work of SACRE**

### **Words from the Chair of Kirklees SACRE**

I am glad to present Kirklees SACRE's annual report with confidence in the difference that we make through our partnership with Pennine Learning and the support of Kirklees in the delivery of high quality R.E. in our schools.

We seem to live at a time when the world seems to be becoming more polarised and events in our own nation have demonstrated that our communities are vulnerable to fear and suspicion which can be manipulated by others. The value of creatively engaging children with difference and diversity in a positive way that demonstrates respect, strengthens their understanding, and engages their imagination is immense.

We are always encouraged by the many examples of excellent learning going on. These are recognised through our R.E. awards to schools to celebrate their achievement. R.E network days and other resources we offer support schools in teaching R.E. and in their provision of collective worship.

SACRE continues to monitor the provision of RE in schools within the borough. While the picture is uneven we continue to be proactive in encouraging best practice and championing the value of teaching R.E. at a time when the need for understanding and appreciation of faith and belief in a world in which people easily polarise has never been more urgent.

We moved to complete the careful work that has been going on to complete our revision of the locally agreed syllabus in partnership with other SACRE's in West Yorkshire. This required a special meeting of the SACRE at Dewsbury Town Hall. This was followed by a very well attended Launch event at the Hudawi Centre in Huddersfield where the new syllabus was presented to the representatives of the local authority.

We believe our new syllabus builds on the many strengths of the previous one and that together with the schemes of work its focus on big ideas that can be explored through different faith traditions offers a great resource for schools. Listening to the feedback of teachers and other RE professionals was an essential part of the review and we are indebted to everyone who has contributed to it.

SACRE has met four times this year. We seek to move about the borough which has such a great variety of different neighbourhoods with in from the very urban to small villages and because we also recognise that travelling can be challenge, especially in winter we have also met online.

I want to thank Ian Ross, our professional R.E, advisor without whom we could not do our work, Anna Twist our clerk, Hannah McKerchar our vice chair and all the members of Scare for their contributions and attendance. We continue to be mindful of the need for a good representation from people within education, the council and different boroughs at our meetings and to actively seek new members. Not every local authority steps up to embrace the opportunity RE presents by funding the work of their Scare and I would like to express our thanks to Kirklees and the council officers for funding and engaging with the work of Sacre.

We commend our annual report to you.

Mark Janes  
Chair Of Kirklees SACRE 2023-2024.

## Overview

This annual report is prepared by Kirklees SACRE. SACRE as a body is required to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship. This report provides a picture of the support given for Religious Education and Collective Worship during 2023-24. The report is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education.

For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship in Kirklees, contact Ian Ross at [ian@penninelearning.com](mailto:ian@penninelearning.com)

For information on SACRE please contact the clerk, Anna Twist on [annatwist@yahoo.com](mailto:annatwist@yahoo.com)

## Dates and content of meetings

There were four meetings of Kirklees SACRE during the year 2023-24, mostly held face to face. Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available on-line. These meetings were held on Thurs 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (syllabus and Provision monitoring), Wed 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (agreeing the annual report), Tues 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (LASC), Wed 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (AGM and links with the LA).

Mark Janes was re-appointed chair of SACRE in June 2023 and was ably supported by Hannah McKerchar as Vice Chair. SACRE membership has increased this last year, but SACRE is conscious that diversity in representation is needed including the range of faiths and beliefs in the area as well as working with CEOs of Multi Academy Trusts.

As well as considering the general position of RE and collective worship in the borough, SACRE discussed the following issues at its meetings during the year:

- The Local Agreed syllabus – which was revised and launched in April 2024.
- Revision of guidance on sensitivity to faith in schools.
- Clarification of funding for Kirklees SACRE responsibilities and activities.
- Review of secondary provision for RE, including time allocation.
- Progress on the two sets of films funded by Westhill endowment trust.
- Faith and education project to encourage engagement between faith communities and schools.
- Improving representation on SACRE from those groups currently under-represented.
- Completion of SACRE self-evaluation.
- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) – items of interest or action, including information from NASACRE conference on the future of SACREs.
- Future joint meetings of chairs and vice chairs across West Yorkshire (WYSACRE).

## **Priorities and actions for 2023 – 24**

### **Continue to revise Local Agreed Syllabus including providing foundation and focus units of work.**

The local agreed syllabus – Believing and Belonging in West Yorkshire 24 – 29 was reviewed. This review included working with SACREs from Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale and Leeds. A working party made up from representatives in the four local authority areas met at various times in the year to discuss models and teaching content.

The syllabus is based on the Big Ideas in RE from Exeter University. The Big Ideas have been adapted into six pathways of progression. This is compliant with the new non-statutory guidance from The RE Council called the National Content Standard.

The syllabus is accompanied by core units of work for each phase linked to the six pathways of progression. There are also focus units in each phase to support the digging deeper into a particular faith or belief. The Local Agreed Syllabus Conference was held on 12<sup>th</sup> March and launch and training event for up to 100 teachers and headteachers took place on 18<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Introduce a new Inclusive Collective Worship Award to schools and visit 10 schools across the borough.**

Work has started on the advice and support for collective worship including a suggested calendar of faith festivals and themed weeks. A thought for the week list has been prepared to support secondary schools. The Inclusive Collective Worship Award will be produced in the academic year 24-25 and will be piloted on self-selecting schools.

### **Continue working with the School Improvement Partners to identify schools for support and professional conversations**

During the year regular half termly meetings have been set up between the Ian Ross (The professional advisor to SACRE) and the Senior Learning Partners of Kirklees. This is to identify schools that might need support and to evaluate impact. We are very pleased to announce that Honley JIN School, Crossley Fields Primary and Netherton Infant School were successful in completing the Kirklees SACRE RE Award and have been presented with certificates in the RE Network.

### **Self-evaluation**

During the year, Kirklees SACRE completed a process of self-evaluation based on the NASACRE template. Arising from this the following areas future development were identified and will be built into the development plan for the next two years.

## **SACRE**

- Continue striving to ensure full representation of religions and world views on SACRE. Enhance the attendance of the established church reps through close communication with the diocese.
- Seek ways of capturing pupil voice in order to plan for activities to enhance RE in the borough.
- Actively seek people from the Academy sector to join SACRE.

## **Religious Education**

- Continue to look at the network packages to see how we may attract more delegates, maybe through offering networks at a reduced cost.
- Continue conversations with the local authority to identify schools needing additional support.
- Consider how we can engage with senior leadership in schools through our newsletter and maybe associate learning partners.

## **Collective Worship**

- Provide CPD for SACRE members and begin a review and support process.
- Create a collective worship award similar to the RE award to enable schools to audit an action plan their provision.
- Continue to monitor and support the school in Kirklees with a determination.

## **Community Cohesion**

- Review and reflect on census information on faith. Work with the local authority to identify information about diversity and ethnicity in different local areas.
- Develop new links with the Communities team and Kirklees Interfaith groups to ensure SACRE is fully engaged with wider borough issues.

Further details of the self-evaluation or the development plan can be obtained via the clerk to SACRE.

## **Meetings for 2023-24**

SACRE meetings and themes for 2024-2025 have been provisionally arranged for these dates 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (Work Plan and data analysis), 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 (agreeing the annual report), 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (Collective Worship Monitoring), 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 ( AGM and links with the LA). For more information contact the clerk, [annatwist@yahoo.com](mailto:annatwist@yahoo.com)

## **Priorities for 2024 - 25**

- Continue to embed the new Local Agreed Syllabus.
- Introduce a new Inclusive Collective Worship Award to schools and visit 10 schools across the borough.
- Continue working with the Kirklees Learning Service to identify schools for support and professional conversations
- Continue developing links with Kirklees Interfaith Councils to plan for joint projects e.g. school visits.
- Identify ways of supporting subject leader networks through SACRE funding

## **Section Two: Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education**

### **The Local Agreed Syllabus**

The Local Agreed Syllabus, 'Believing and Belonging', is the statutory curriculum for all maintained schools in the borough. This syllabus is now shared with Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale and Leeds. Other academies and free schools must teach RE according to the requirements of their trust deed or funding agreement. Although SACREs and local authorities do not have any responsibility or authority for their curriculum, it welcomes use of these resources by all local schools. Results from the recent SACRE survey of all schools in Kirklees demonstrated that the great majority of academies have adopted the local agreed syllabus.

The Syllabus was agreed by a Local Agreed Syllabus Conference in March 2024 and a series of launch and training events took place over the summer term in each local authority area. This syllabus is based on the work of the Big Ideas team from Exeter University and follows six pathways or key concepts which are progressively taught in all years from EYFS to KS5. In addition to the syllabus a series of core and focus units of work have been developed. These are detailed schemes of work to enable teachers to teach the subject well in schools. Each phase of school will teach six core units of work over two or three years and will also be able to choose focus units to dig deeper into a particular faith/ belief.

### **Standards and Monitoring**

#### **Analysis of school website research**

Our analysis of secondary school website research overall shows a positive experience at KS3 with schools using and adapting from the local agreed syllabus. It appears however that some schools do not offer a comprehensive programme of Religious Education at KS4 for those students who do not take an examined route. Some schools combine core RE with other subjects such as citizenship and PSHE. This means that students are not receiving their full entitlement to the RE curriculum. As a SACRE we will be writing to all schools to remind them of the statutory nature of RE from age 5 to 18 and also of the benefits of a deep and meaningful RE to other aspects of personal development.

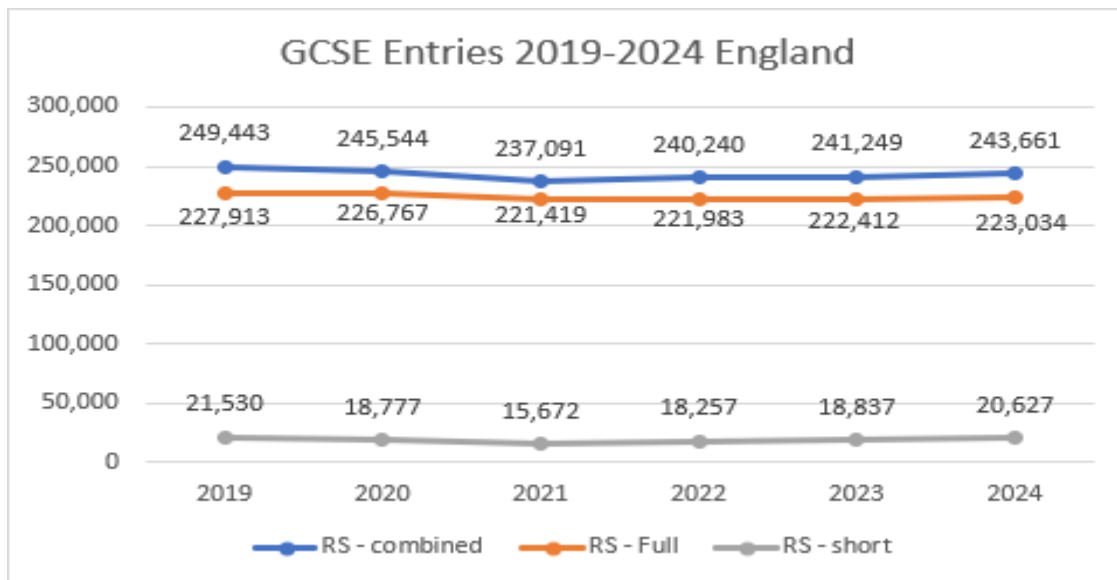
#### **Ofsted Reports Analysis**

We have begun a review of the recent Ofsted reports to identify schools that may need some additional support or encouragement to apply for an RE Award. One school has already been highlighted as needing support in engagement with a variety of faiths to enhance the curriculum.

### Examination results

GCSE and A Level results for 2024 were not available again at a local level when this report was published. This has meant that SACRE could not fulfil one of its core duties to monitor the effectiveness of RE in the borough.

National figures for GCSE entry remain steady, with a slight increase in both full course and short course uptake. When data has been released by the DfE we will be analysing this to inform our work in schools.



### RE Quality Mark

Kirklees schools are offered the opportunity for a review of their religious education with criteria based on the bronze REQM. It is hoped this can be a gateway to entry to the national quality mark. We are immensely proud of Honley JIN, Crossley Fields Primary and Netherton Infants School who achieved the SACRE RE Award in 2023 -2024.



## Professional development and support for schools

### General support

During the year this professional support continued through Pennine Learning, a small local company specialising in RE and community cohesion. The team at Pennine Learning provide eighty days support per year in total, though this is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others. They also support SACREs and RE in Leeds and Calderdale, enabling appropriate collaboration and partnership.

Through the Kirklees Learning Service and the RE consultants, support has been available to schools, and used by teachers, in several ways, including:

- Development of the syllabus and its schemes of work, including prompt response to queries or difficulties.
- Consultancy over specific or general RE issues, including advice about withdrawal from RE.
- Availability by phone, email or virtual meetings.
- Support for schools wishing to develop and improve RE following Ofsted inspections.

### Training

This year courses have included a termly primary RE network meeting, a day course for new RE coordinators. The primary RE Network consistently attracts up to 40 delegates each session.

The secondary RE network is organised in partnership with Calderdale and Leeds and is open to teachers from all three local authorities.

A successful series of twilight webinars on subject knowledge of world faiths took place over the academic year and included guests from faith communities. These were held in cooperation with partner local authorities. In the coming year a full range of CPD and consultancy will be available through the Kirklees Strategic Improvement Plan.

### RE Reviews and SACRE RE Award



The review and award continue to be available on line and face to face. A small number of schools have worked with a consultant to review their RE provision using the award framework. A 'Deep Dive' in Religious Education is also offered to schools. This half-day session focuses on a review of curriculum provision, looking at its scope, rigour and sequencing. These opportunities are promoted via RE networks and our half termly newsletter.

## **Other information**

A range of guidance continues to be available to Kirklees schools on a wide range of related areas, including:

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship
- Celebrating Diversity
- Engaging with faith communities
- Sensitivity to Faith in Schools (Sharing the Journey)

In addition, a half termly newsletter and index of resources is available to all schools, together with a directory of possible visits and visitors.

## **Section Three: Statutory Responsibilities: Collective Worship**

### **Standards and Monitoring of Collective Worship**

Guidance is offered to schools and Ofsted reports are scrutinised in order to keep up to date with current issues and concerns. It has been difficult for schools to maintain an effective programme of collective worship during the pandemic and one of SACRE's key priorities in the coming year will be to remind, facilitate and support schools. This will include offering an award for schools offering inclusive collective worship.

### **Complaints and determinations**

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship. There is one determination to vary statutory requirements in a maintained school in Kirklees and this has been reviewed this year. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rest with the Schools Funding Agency.

### **Professional development and support for schools**

Through the consultant, SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request. It has been noted that some SACRE members are well-placed to support collective worship in schools and opportunities for discussion about this will be included to support collective worship reviews in 24-25. A half-day course on planning for collective worship/ inclusive assemblies will be offered in the academic year to aid schools in developing an effective and inspiring programme. It is hoped that SACRE members will become more involved in practical support and monitoring. These questions may be helpful to SACRE members in reflecting on the value and effectiveness of collective worship in school:

1. Collective: How does the assembly celebrate and promote a sense of community within the whole school (or group)?
2. Educational: Is there a clear aim and focus, with appropriate learning? Does it engage and interest pupils and staff?
3. Spiritual: How does the assembly nurture pupils' awareness of their beliefs and values - and those of others (including non-religious beliefs)? How does it develop a sense of the meaning, purpose and value in their lives?
4. Reflective: Is there space and opportunity for thoughtful reflection, in the assembly or as a follow up? If prayers are used do these allow for different approaches and responses?
5. Inclusive: How does the assembly programme develop understanding of different perspectives and cultures? How does it promote values of tolerance, diversity and equality?

6. Responsive: How did pupils respond and participate?

### **Other information**

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal is available to schools; consultants are available if further support is needed. SACRE recognises parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced RE as part of their entitlement to a broad curriculum. Guidance is also provided to schools in fulfilling statutory obligations over collective worship and promoting good SMSC development.

## **Section Four: Links with other organisations**

SACRE has active links with the following organisations:

- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)
- West Yorkshire SACREs (WYSACRE)
- The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)
- Local faith organisations and interfaith groups
- Kirklees Learning Services
- RE Today Services
- National RE Hubs
- And other local organisations and charities such as Equilibria

## Section Five: Other areas of involvement

### Welcoming Schools

Visits to local places of worship and links with faith communities continue to be promoted to fulfil our obligation to promote fundamental values of respect and tolerance. As in-person visits have resumed following the pandemic, we want to broaden pupils' experience and perspectives of the faith communities in Kirklees. A directory of faith visits and visitors is regularly updated. It includes individuals from faith communities who are willing to come into school and bring some direct engagement and an opportunity for dialogue. It also includes some general information about places and organisations. We have worked with the communities' team and the Kirklees Interfaith Councils to support school visits and visitors in Kirklees.

It is anticipated that 'virtual' sessions will continue to be offered and promoted alongside in-person visits and events.



Free training is offered to faith communities to inform them of the requirements of the Kirklees RE Syllabus, and to support them in hosting visits from schools. Training was offered in-person at venues in Leeds and Kirklees. Some SACRE members have participated in training and this project continues to build up worthwhile links between schools and faith communities. Kirklees SACRE have prioritised working more closely with Kirklees Interfaith Council to support publicity and participation in training events.

An audit tool and consultancy support are available for promoting tolerance and understanding of different faiths in schools. This has been promoted via the Pennine Learning website and in RE networks.

As part of the Education and Faith project several faith trails have been set up in Huddersfield and Dewsbury. Three schools have trialled these before it is rolled out to other schools. A series of online interfaith conferences and resources have been developed over the last few years. A recent interfaith conference on Autumn Festivals helped approximately 2400 pupils engage with people from a Jewish, Sikh, Christian and Druid background. Pupils took part in craft activities and generated questions for the faith representatives.

### Westhill Project

Leeds SACRE had been awarded a Westhill grant to support Religious Education in the local area. Alongside some additional funding from Calderdale and Kirklees SACREs, this grant funded the production of two professionally-produced films to introduce young people to a

synagogue and a gurdwara in Leeds. Interviews with representatives from the two faith communities have been filmed and edited along with footage of worship and activity in the places of worship themselves. The films are offered to schools, alongside supporting materials and the option of a live session online or in person with representatives of the faith community.

As a SACRE we are hoping to expand the range of videos and interviews of lived experience through applying for different grants e.g. Culham St Gabriels. Our next set of videos may include Hindu Dharma and different traditions in Christianity.

### **Faith sensitivities**

During the previous year Kirklees SACRE has worked with partners in Leeds, Calderdale, Oldham and Tameside to produce advice on sensitivity to issues relating to faith in schools. This is available to schools as practical information and support to school leaders and is called 'Sharing the Journey.' This has been re issued to all schools in the borough to ensure continuity in approach to areas such as religious dress, fasting and prayer.

## Section Six: Kirklees SACRE arrangements

Kirklees MBC funds the operation of SACRE by contracting its consultants, providing a clerk and supporting its work through links with senior education officers.

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

Group A	Faith and belief communities except for the Church of England
Group B	Anglican representatives
Group C	Teachers and schools
Group D	Kirklees MBC

SACRE needs to ensure there continues to be consistent attendance and needs more teacher representatives. Contacts with partners, such as HE providers, should be developed. It is worth exploring whether a more structured link with MATs is feasible and beneficial. Training is provided by NASACRE and offered to SACRE members including an induction pack.

Membership and attendance for 2023-4 was as follows:



Name	Representing	March 23	June 23	Oct 23	Dec 23	March 24	June 24	Oct 24
Mark Janes	Chair / Baptist	P	P	A	P	P	A	A
Hannah Mc Kerchar	Vice Chair / LA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Anna Twist	Clerk	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
Suzanne Bridges	Methodist	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Mashuda Shaikh	Islam	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Abdul Majeed	Islam	A	A	P	A	A	A	A
Yousaf Baig	Islam						P	P
Prashant Kumar	Hindu	P	P	P	P	P	A	A
Kuljindar Shokar	Sikhi	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
Ed Marks	Jewish							
Rupert Madely	C of E	A	P	A	A	A	A	
Alex Burbidge	C of E							
Karen Atkinson	Church of England	P	P	A	A	P	A	A
Amanda Ogilvie-Berry	C of E	P	A	A	A	A	A	A
Rafaqat Mohammed	Secondary Teachers						P	P
Janice Leam	Teaching Unions	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Emma Salter	Huddersfield University	P	A	P	P	A	A	
Geoff Billing	Primary Head							
Councillor Andrew Marchington	LA	A	p	A	A	A	A	A
Councillor Darren O' Donovan	LA	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Councillor Joshua Sheard	LA		P	A	P	A	P	A
Emma Brayford				P	A	P	P	P
Fiona Denham				P	A	A	A	A

## **Section Seven: Advice to the Local authority**

The following advice is given by SACRE to the local authority:

1. To review the funding of SACRE to ensure it is in line with national recommendations and good practice.
2. To review the membership of SACRE to ensure it reflects the breadth and diversity of the borough in terms of faiths and beliefs.
3. To ensure SACRE's annual report is considered carefully by the Scrutiny Panel of the Council and any of its content noted including how the work of SACRE can support community cohesion.
4. To investigate the provision of RE for non-examined students at KS4 in all schools.

No appendices are attached to this report; all the relevant information is contained within the main body. However, any further information can be requested via the clerk.



**REPORT TITLE: Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Overview**

<b>Meeting:</b>	Children’s Scrutiny Panel
<b>Date:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	Cllr Amanda Pinnock & Cllr Viv Kendrick
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	No N/A
<p><b>Purpose of Report</b> To provide insight into national and local challenges relating to Education Health and Care Plans, progress made and next steps. This is key to supporting and making a difference for and with our children, young people and families in Kirklees.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report is noted.</li> <li>• Scrutiny support is requested moving forward to help increase system awareness, understanding and ownership.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reasons for Recommendations</b> The ‘Big Plan’ our SEND Transformation programme is complex, extensive and has a range of projects at various stages of maturity to be delivered by 2030. Quality and compliance is a key project within that work and has EHCPs as a critical focus working with partners across the system to make a difference for our children and families. Scrutiny support moving forward would provide added value.</p>	
<p><b>Resource Implications:</b> Capacity of officers / partners.</p>	
<b>Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> &amp; name</b>	Jo-Anne Sanders on behalf of Tom Brailsford 23/01/25
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	Shared for info
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?</b>	Shared for info

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:** Portfolio Holders and Cabinet

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** Yes

## 1. Executive Summary

Kirklees is passionate about making a difference for and with our children, young people and their families with additional needs and has an inclusive ambition which is set out in our 'Big Plan'. There are lots of challenges across the system and gripped with partners, we do recognise and understand the difficulties families are facing.

In September 2023 we invested in an improvement partner and working alongside the Head of Service and partners a transparent forensic review of the system was undertaken. Actions were implemented and although this has moved a long way, we know there is much more to do.

The numerous national and local challenges have confirmed that a whole system change is needed to create and implement solutions; recognising this is not just about the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Assessment and Commissioning Team (SENDACT) and requires a wider system approach. This approach is captured within the 'Big Plan' which is our SEND strategy, and was coproduced with children, young people and our partners including PCAN (Parents of children with additional needs), health and education providers.

Within the 'Big Plan' Quality and Compliance is an essential area of work as we know we are in a challenging position with increased requests for Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) and compliance has suffered. This is not where we want to be and recognise there is still lots to do to support our children and young people to have the right support to achieve their aspirations.

A key aspect of Quality and Compliance is an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). This is a legal document that outlines the extra support a child or young person with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) requires to thrive in education.

In Kirklees it is not the starting point. Kirklees is ambitious for local children and families and has recently changed its way of working with partners to understand individual needs and respond to them as quickly as possible without the need for an EHCP. Cluster working and Early Years / Reception transition funding are key examples of this approach and are fundamental to our 'Big Plan' [SEND - The Big Plan! | How we plan for SEND | Kirklees SEND Local Offer \(kirkleeslocaloffer.org.uk\)](https://kirkleeslocaloffer.org.uk)

EHCPs are a key provision of the Children and Families Act 2014, which reformed support for children and young people with SEND. They are guided by the SEND Code of Practice, which sets out the legal framework for assessing, planning, and delivering support to ensure that children and young people (aged 0-25) receive the necessary education, health, and social care to meet their individual needs.

Where an EHCP is required, it helps education and health providers, and local councils to work together to provide this support.

Support for children and young people with SEND is a national issue for every Local Authority with demand, complexity and increasing costs providing major challenges. Many Authorities, including Kirklees, have historically, and continue to experience significant annual overspends on their High Needs Block, which is part of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

National reports have confirmed 'the system is broken', but this has not stopped Kirklees from undertaking a variety of actions to improve outcomes and make a difference for and with our communities.

It should be noted that to achieve the changes required, high profile and a whole system approach is required and relies on each partner playing their part. To support this, we have strong system governance in place which includes quarterly monitoring to the Councils Executive Team and monthly monitoring to the Children's Quality Assurance Panel and SEND Programme Board. This is supported by operational projects, task and finish groups along with engagement from our Department for Education advisers through a variety of mechanisms on an ongoing basis.

Co-production with our Parent and Carer Network (PCAN), Health via Locala and the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO), children's social care with the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) and adult social care, has been fundamental to the approach to strategy creation and delivery which has been based on feedback from children, families and education providers.

A forensic review has been undertaken of the operations and significant investment has been made which included additional resource in to SENDACT and Educational Psychology which is now having a positive impact on the EHCP process.

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

### **What is an EHCP**

An Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) is a document that outlines the extra support a child or young person with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) requires to thrive in education.

Although it's a legal document, in Kirklees it is not the starting point. Kirklees is ambitious for local children and families and has recently changed its way of working with partners to understand individual needs and respond to them as quickly as possible without the need for an EHCP. Cluster working (where schools come together with other schools, Education Psychologists, Specialist Outreach, SENDACT and Early Support) and Early Years / Reception transition funding are key examples of this approach and are fundamental to our 'Big Plan' [SEND - The Big Plan! | How we plan for SEND | Kirklees SEND Local Offer \(kirkleeslocaloffer.org.uk\)](http://kirkleeslocaloffer.org.uk)

Where an EHCP is required, it helps education providers, health providers, and local councils work together to provide this support. It is designed for those up to age 25 if they have complex needs that impact their learning.

An EHCP covers three main areas:-

- a. Identifies Needs: Details what challenges the child faces in education, health, and development.
- b. Sets Goals: Specifies what outcomes or progress is expected, like improving communication or accessing mainstream education.
- c. Describes Support: Lists the specific help the child will get, such as extra teaching support, therapies (e.g., speech and language), or special equipment.

### **What is the national picture**

Support for children and young people with SEND is a national issue for every Local Authority with demand, complexity and increasing costs providing major challenges.

A recent national audit report confirmed ‘the system is broken’. The new government have confirmed they are looking into it and have now confirmed an initial £1b investment for next year as a recognition of immediate need.

Nationally, the number of children and young people with EHCPs has risen by 11% annually, with over 500,000 plans now in place as of 2024 and a record-high number of applications for EHC needs assessments. Nationally there has also been an 80% rise in tribunals.

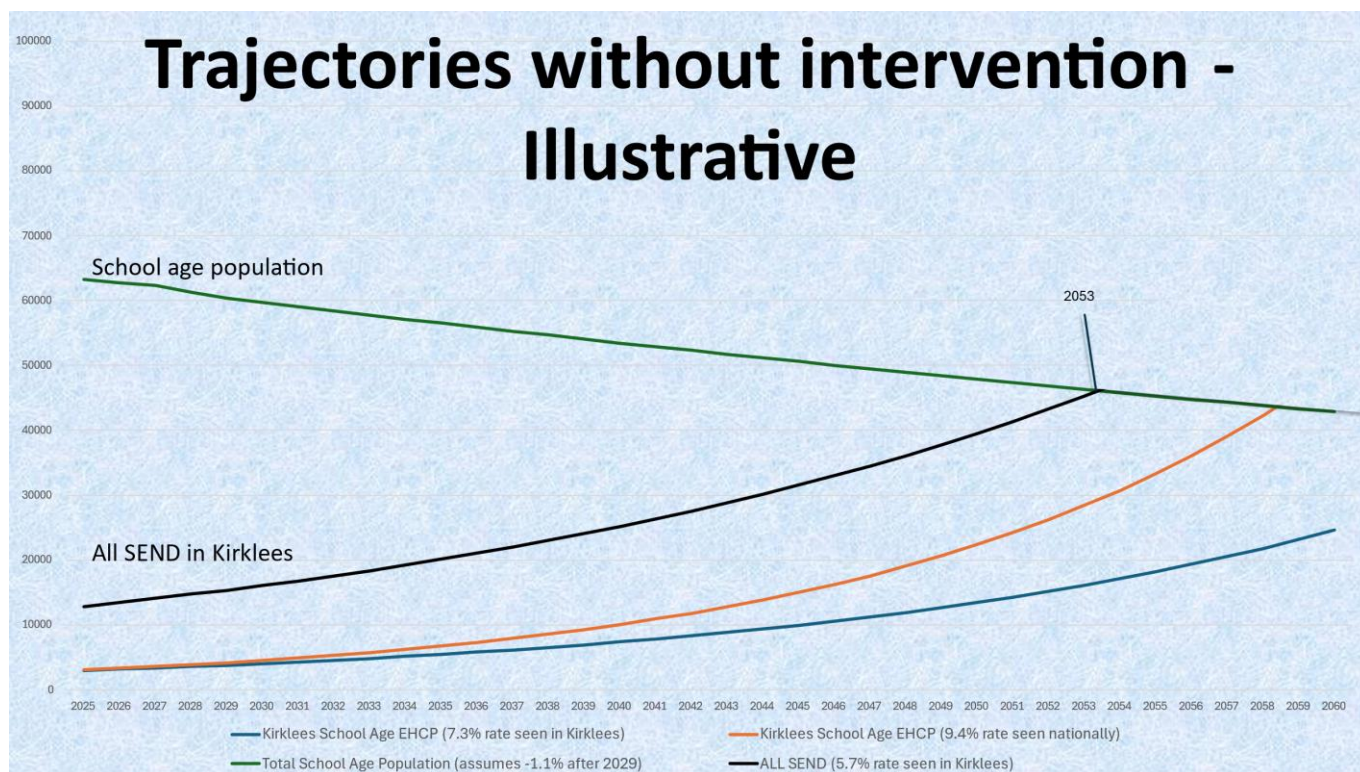
Demand is being driven by a combination of factors including:-

- Increased identification of SEND, partly due to improved diagnostic tools.
- Rising awareness among parents of the subject and their rights to request assessments.
- Continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and developmental delays.

The system requires contribution and support from partners; Health services such as speech and language; education providers; as well as Social Care; and Education Psychology, all of which experience significant challenges with volumes.

### What does it mean for Kirklees – people

The following illustrative graph confirms the projected size of challenge in Kirklees and nationally should the instances of SEND continue to increase on its current trajectory.



### What does it mean for Kirklees – the finances

Like many other Local Authorities, Kirklees has major challenges relating to demand, complexity and increasing costs. This has meant a significant annual overspend in 23/24 of £14.8m on the

High Needs Block and this continues to rise. The projected in year deficit for 24/25 currently stands at £20.5m. The cumulative deficit in 23/24 was £43.7m.

It is noted that the deficit is not only as a result of rising EHCP numbers but other factors such as complexity of need and cost of living increases.

Quality and compliance features as part of Kirklees Safety Valve agreement with the Department for Education, updated in 2023, which can be seen in full at Appendix 1 and includes :-

- 'Continue to review assessment and decision-making processes to ensure decisions are made transparently, in a timely manner and in partnership with children, young people and families. This will include recruiting additional educational psychologists and the implementation of a range of holistic assessments tools engaging professionals and families and consolidating improvements and timeliness in our EHCP assessments and reviews. Kirklees as a local area, will increase and improve the timeliness and quality of responses to needs of children and young people with SEND'.

## **Work undertaken in Kirklees**

### System / Partnership working

There is an absolute recognition that a whole system approach is required to address the significant challenges faced. The SEND transformation programme's strategy to achieve this is set out in 'The Big Plan' and Quality and Compliance (Q&C) is a key project and relies on each partner playing their part to ensure 'we are getting it right'.

To support this, a focussed Quality & Compliance project board with key cross system partners was established in October 2023 and is supported by operational projects and task / finish groups. Co-production with our Parent Carer Forum (Parents of Children with an Additional Need - PCAN) and Health has been fundamental to the approach to strategy creation and delivery which has been based on feedback from children, families, schools and Health.

The Quality & Compliance Board has driven improvements through task and finish groups which has included quality assurance of plans, implementing the transfer to a better IT system, new decision-making panels and system models of working. All of this has contributed to a coordinated approach to improving compliance.

A core principle has been to not purely focus on volumes, but to ensure quality that meets the needs of children and their families.

In addition, a new structure was implemented in the SENDACT in September 2024 following significant investment into the team. This is now realising some improvements. This included recruiting Team Managers, with the process supported by PCAN, to lead on focused areas of work i.e. placements and tribunals, as well as enabling the team to be able to work in place-based arrangements.

The next phase will be to focus on annual reviews, which is a requirement of the SEND Code of practice where every child that has an EHCP must receive a review as a minimum every 12 months.

Kirklees has also engaged with a technical expert and Department of Education advisers through a variety of meetings and working sessions on an ongoing basis to learn from best

practice and inform action. This challenge and support has enabled sustainable practise improvement.

### Volumes and impact

At December 2024, there are 4812 children and young people with an EHCP in Kirklees. We have inclusive schools meaning the many of our learners (28%) are accessing and having their needs are met in a mainstream school.

Our performance in quarter 3 2024/25 in respect of finalising Education, Health and Care Plans within the 20-week timescale shows a decline, however, the number of plans that have been issued in this period has increased. This is because there has been significant effort undertaken to finalise plans that have been outside the 20-week timeline alongside working with new assessments. Therefore, a substantial number of plans have been finalised and cleared the backlog. Moving forwards, we anticipate this will stabilise and support overall improvement in statutory compliance. The transition to a new case management system has taken place in Q3 2024/25 and is already supporting the service to operate more effectively. More work is ongoing to embed the new system and take advantage of all of its functions which we anticipate will take a further 3-6 months to realise.

From a position of over 600 EHCP assessments in the system, these have been reduced to a working profile of 224 as at the end of November 2024. It is anticipated that this volume will lead to increased pressures throughout the system as both new and outstanding requests are addressed. A parallel approach to historic and new requests for the development of EHCPs has taken place to support timely responses.

As at the end of October 24, we issued 128 plans which was the highest number in a single month in 2024, and numbers of assessments over 30 weeks have been reduced to 33 from over 100 with those over 52 weeks continuing to fall from the July peak of 184 to less than 5. This has been a substantial improvement, and cumulative 20 week compliance for 2024 is now up to 23% from 8% in 2023. It should be noted that the significant work this year on plans that have been outside the 20 weeks will positively impact when the new calendar year compliance reporting commences from January 2025.

### Supporting work

To enable the positive progress outlined above, a range of activity has taken place, including, but not limited to :-

- a. Strategic change of functions to create dedicated teams around key areas to provide a targeted response e.g. placements and tribunals.
- b. Processes overhauled / streamlined e.g. multi-disciplinary decision-making panels created to strengthen informed decision making and improve joint understanding / ownership.
- c. Restructure of staff – provided significant investment of additional resources, plus overhauled and streamlined processes.
- d. Quality Assurance Framework drafted based on best practice to provide additional rigour.
- e. Weekly performance clinic implemented to drive improvements.
- f. Previous IT system did not provide casework functionality and didn't facilitate information sharing with partners and parents. New IT system purchased and



- implemented to provide partner transparency for partners / parents and increased grip through improved management oversight of cases.
- g. A learning development pathway for staff has been initiated to ensure staff, including new team members, are supported appropriately.

### **3. Implications for the Council**

#### **3.1 Council Plan**

The work described fully supports, and is featured in, the Council plan.

#### **3.2 Financial Implications**

Please see above.

Kirklees has recognised the pressures involved in EHCPs and invested additional resources into the team, as well as supporting additional locum capacity in educational psychology team and for a new case management system.

In 2023/24 Kirklees Council's High Need in year deficit was £14.8m with a cumulative deficit position of £43.7m. The projected in year deficit for 2024/25 is £20.5m and illustrates that the pressures in this area continue to be significant. Kirklees is not on its own in being in this position, nationally there is a deficit of approximately £4bn across all Local Authorities and this is projected to continue to increase. £1bn will be injected into the system from 2025/26 by the Government alongside a suggestion of additional financial support and reforms to the system in future years.

In 2021/22 Kirklees entered into a Safety Valve agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). As part of this, £33.5m of funding would be paid over a 5 year period to help remove our cumulative deficit. We also had access to Capital Funding and received £8.2m from this process. In 2023/24 the Safety Valve agreement was extended from 2026/27 to 2029/30 due to the challenges being faced to reduce the cumulative deficit. Monitoring of our performance against the plan takes place on a quarterly basis with the DfE.

#### **3.3 Legal Implications**

The work supports our legislative requirements, including timeliness of response.

#### **3.8 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**

Key risks include :-

- a. Sufficiency of SEND provision. Failure to meet the needs of the SEND and pre-SEND community, due to increases in demand and complexity of need, insufficient capacity within services / partnership and a lack of existing local provision leading to missing statutory deadlines and associated financial and reputational consequences.
- b. Safety valve commitments not delivered leading to negative impact on Service users, non-receipt of significant finances and reputational damage.
- c. System ownership and engagement within Services / partners is not achieved. Partners do not prioritise the project which means work not undertaken and outputs / outcomes not achieved.

Addressing inequalities is at the very heart of the programme and is a core ethic. Integrated Impact Assessments have been undertaken on specific elements of the programme to ensure opportunities are in view and there are no accidental adverse implications.

#### **4. Consultation / Engagement**

The SEND programme has co-production and engagement as a core value and approach. Young people, Parent and Carer Forum (PCAN), Health and Schools have been integral to creating and implementing strategic approaches. For example, young people / partners including PCAN have coproduced our 'Big Plan' of which Quality and compliance – 'are we getting it right' is a key component.

Strategy and plans have been created in response to feedback received. For example, people in Kirklees have told us a timely, appropriate response is key. To further address this, other elements of the SEND programme focus on identifying need and providing support at the earliest opportunity without the need for an EHCP.

#### **5. Options**

##### **5.1 Options considered**

The SEND programme constantly scans the national picture for innovation and opportunities. It is involved in a range of groups, including but not limited to Local Government Association (LGA) Local Authorities Safety Valve group which involves Directors and Section 151 officers; Children's Services Directors group; A Safety Valve group of circa 20 Local Authorities instigated by Kirklees that reaches wider than the region.

This intelligence is further supported by the DfE via the recently completed Written Statement of Action quarterly meetings and additional direct engagement.

It is noted the intelligence from the above sources, and the DfE via the Safety Valve agreement, has confirmed there are currently no areas of innovation that Kirklees has not considered or is not already implementing. However, Kirklees will still continue to search for innovation opportunities to make a difference for the people of Kirklees.

It would have been possible to increase compliance / further speed up response times but this would have been at the cost of reducing the quality of plans. This approach was both unpalatable and self-defeating as children and families would not be receiving the appropriate support and their longer-term needs would be likely to increase.

Leadership and connectivity from a political, strategic and operational viewpoint across the system is critical to the success of the programme. Scrutiny is a vital part of this, particularly as we move forward.

##### **5.2 Reasons for recommended option**

The SEND programme, and in particular the quality and compliance work, is complex, extensive and has a range of projects at various stages of maturity.

The recommendation in the report is noted and Scrutiny support is requested moving forward to help increase system awareness, understanding and ownership.

## **6. Next steps and timelines**

Scrutiny feedback received and incorporated into planning.

### Challenges moving forward / further next steps

The seismic challenge faced means it will take time to embed the new approaches and the system changes needed. We will continue to seek out emerging innovation and best practice from across the country and beyond.

Dealing with the significant volume of requests in the system has been positive. There is an interim impact for partners as their advice is required before decisions / plans can be finalised. This means it will still take some time to achieve a 'steady state'.

EHCPs require an annual review and there are significant resource implications to dealing with the volume currently in the system. A review of the approach to reviews is imminent and has been timed to commence after the initial focus on requests / assessments.

Quality of plans continues to be of key importance and to support this, a new IT package has been purchased and will be implemented to enable further quality assurance.

## **7. Contact officer**

Jo-Anne Sanders Service Director – Learning and Early Support  
[Jo-Anne.Sanders@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:Jo-Anne.Sanders@kirklees.gov.uk)

## **8. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

[SEND - The Big Plan! | How we plan for SEND | Kirklees SEND Local Offer \(kirkleeslocaloffer.org.uk\)](#)

## **9. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Safety Valve Agreement  
Appendix 2 – SEND programme governance

## **10. Service Director responsible**

Jo-Anne Sanders Service Director – Learning and Early Support.  
[Jo-Anne.Sanders@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:Jo-Anne.Sanders@kirklees.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1 – Updated Safety Valve agreement



Department  
for Education

### Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve' Agreement: Kirklees

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Kirklees Council and covers the financial years from 2021-22 to 2029-30.
2. The authority undertakes to reach a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account by the end of 2026-27 and in each subsequent year. The authority undertakes to control and reduce the cumulative deficit as follows, not including any contribution made by the department through this agreement:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at year end<sup>1</sup> £m</b>
<b>2021-22</b>	£35.8m
<b>2022-23</b>	£46.4m
<b>2023-24</b>	£56.1m
<b>2024-25</b>	£63.3m
<b>2025-26</b>	£63.6m
<b>2026-27</b>	£52.1m
<b>2027-28</b>	£48.0m
<b>2028-29</b>	£40.1m
<b>2029-30</b>	£33.0m

<sup>1</sup> This profile includes contributions that the council will make from its own resources to reduce the DSG deficit.

3. The authority agrees to implement the DSG management plan that it has set out. This includes action to:
- 3.1. Ensure inclusive co-production and engagement is and will be central in approach to understand children's, young people's and family needs and how these are best met by a range of settings, services, local schools and at home;
  - 3.2. Implement joint commissioning and sufficiency strategies, re-balancing the range of placements, services and provision locally. These will include rebuilding and creating additional SEMH and Complex ASD special school places and increasing additionally resourced provision, to ensure a sufficient mix of flexible services and local placements for children and young people. Kirklees will have sufficient local education places that meet the needs of their population. This includes re-building 2 schools that will create an additional 100+ places.
  - 3.3. Ensure that children, young people and families have the right help and support, at the earliest possible opportunity, at a time that is right for them. This includes supporting children with SEND in mainstream schools by continuing to develop and implement the graduated approach, outreach support model and inclusion strategies, Kirklees will work with their schools in clusters that will further develop the skills, expertise and capacity of the workforce;
  - 3.4. Ensure that children and young people are being prepared for adulthood throughout their life course, promoting a focus on independence and transition as early as possible in a child's and family's journey;
  - 3.5. Continue to review assessment and decision-making processes to ensure decisions are made transparently, in a timely manner and in partnership with children young people and families. This will include recruiting additional educational psychologists and the implementation of a range of holistic assessments tools engaging professionals and families and consolidating improvements and timeliness in our EHCP assessments and reviews. Kirklees as a local area, will increase and improve the timeliness and quality of responses to needs of children and young people with SEND.
  - 3.6. Develop and implement inclusion strategies as part of our approach to secure and develop Alternative Provision for children across all key stages and the creation of a new AP free school.

4. The authority also agrees to ongoing monitoring of its performance in fulfilling this agreement.  
The authority will:
- 4.1. Report tri-annually (as a minimum) in writing to the Department (Funding Policy Unit) on its progress towards implementing the plan as per the conditions set out in paragraphs 2 and 3;
- 4.2. The monitoring reports should include progress against the conditions of grant and a financial dashboard detailing various metrics relating to demand and cost. DfE will provide a template for this;
- 4.3. Inform the Department (Funding Policy Unit) of any unforeseen difficulties or impacts of carrying out the agreement, or any significant risks to reaching the agreed financial position as soon as they arise;
- 4.4. Meet with the Department at any time when the Department deems it necessary to discuss progress towards the agreement.
5. The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional **£13.5 million** of DSG before the end of the financial year 2021-22. In subsequent financial years, subject to compliance with the conditions set out in paragraph 3, the Department will pay DSG sums as follows. This funding will be provided in instalments and subject to continued satisfactory progress. Subject to full compliance, Kirklees should therefore eliminate their cumulative deficit no later than 2029-30.

Year	The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £m of DSG by year end
2021-22	£13.5m
2022-23	£4.0m
2023-24	£2.2m
2024-25	£2.3m
2025-26	£2.3m
2026-27	£2.3m
2027-28	£2.3m

<b>2028-29</b>	£2.3m
<b>2029-30</b>	£2.3m

6. This agreement is subject to review at any time, for example as a result of the following events:

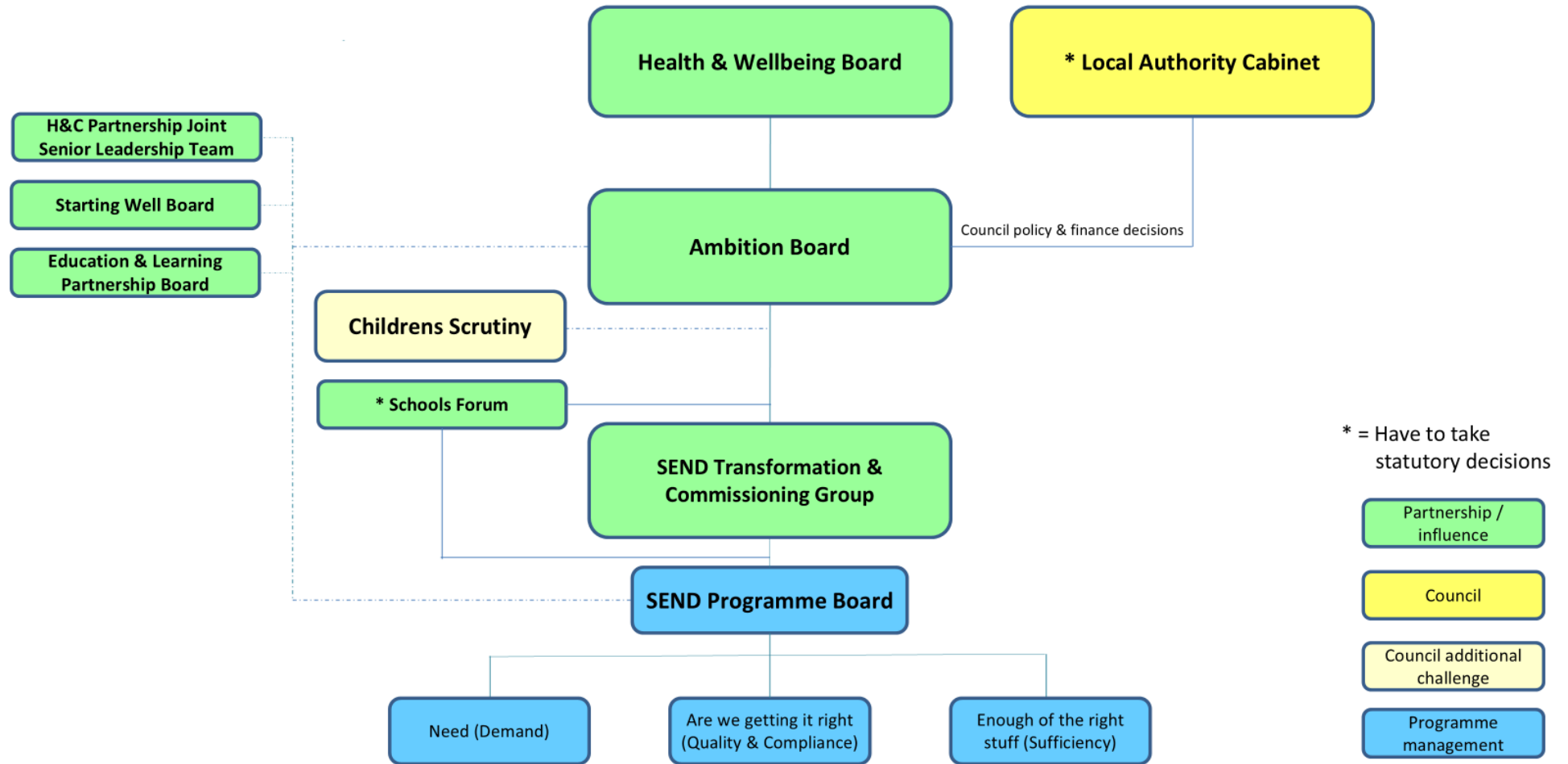
6.1 Higher or lower DSG formula funding levels for the authority in future financial years than those the authority has assumed;

6.2 Significant changes to national SEND policy, for example as a result of the government SEND Review, which impact on elements of the plan;

6.3 Insufficient progress being made towards the authority reaching and sustaining an in-year balance on its DSG account as set out in the plan.

The review process will include an assessment of the impact of the change in circumstances.

# SEND Programme Governance







**REPORT TITLE: Review of Residential Children’s Homes and Fostering Provision**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	<b>Cllr Kendrick, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>No</b>
<p><b>Purpose of Report</b></p> <p>To provide assurance and information on our Residential Children’s Homes and Fostering Services.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report is provided for information</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Resource Implications:</b></p> <p>The arrangements for providing accommodation and care for children looked after by the local authority represents a significant proportion of the children's services budget and the resource is of the council. Ensuring that there is a corporate approach to maintaining and delivering sufficient capacity to meet the needs of children who require care outside their families is essential.</p>	
<p><b>Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> &amp; name</b></p> <p><b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b></p> <p><b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?</b></p>	<p><b>Tom Brailsford 22.1.25</b></p> <p><b>Not applicable</b></p> <p><b>Not applicable</b></p>

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:** Information provided at full council

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?**

## **1. Executive Summary**

This report is provided to give information and assurance in respect of the provision of internally delivered care arrangements for children looked after by the local authority. The report sets out the work delivered through our fostering and children's residential services which strive to continually improve the local authorities 'in house' capacity to provide homes for children in our care. With regards to our children's residential services, the report highlights our ongoing improvement journey to ensure that our homes inspected by our external regulator to provide good and outstanding care are on track.

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

The report is presented to scrutiny for assurance and information and no decision is sought.

## **Residential**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.0 We are ambitious for our children and young people and want our children in care and care leavers to be happy, healthy, and successful. We are committed to providing children and young people with high quality parenting, care and the right support, to enable them to aspire, achieve and live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives. Ensuring that our children have the right home and care to meet their needs at the right time is a core priority for our children's services and it is also essential that we have the right mix of care settings including small group living children's homes where needed.
- 1.1 Between 2016 and 2020 the number of children looked after rose 14% in England. Needs were also shifting, with placements required for a greater number of older children and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, as well as those with more complex needs. In Kirklees we have seen a small reduction in the total number of children looked after over the last 10 years. However, we have seen a rise in the number of residential placements needed for older children with more complex needs.
- 1.2 Our Residential Children's homes services are supported by continuous service improvement plans that includes our focus on designing and delivering a modern residential children's estate, that meets the needs of our children and young people who are identified to best benefit from small group living.
- 1.3 Over the past two years our children's residential services have re-opened a previously closed home in the Dewsbury area and opened a new home offering care and support in the valleys area, to extend our capacity and support the choice of geographical location. Whilst we have worked to expand, we have also maintained our focus on our existing provision working together with partners including our facilities management teams, health services and the police to improve our existing residential estate.

### **2. Staffing**

- 2.0 A core principle of our homes arrangements for bringing children together in group living is ensuring that our homes' statement of purpose and functions are delivered through careful matching of the needs of the children living in our homes, to the skills of our team, together with consideration of the relationships between those who will live together in our home. We are working with our Emotional Wellbeing Service to develop and train our workforce on our model of care.
- 2.1 We have also invested in our residential services infrastructure to ensure that we have adequate leadership and business and administrative support resources across our homes and have designed this into the new establishment model to support our growing estate.

### 3. Ofsted Judgements and Regulatory Visits

- 3.0 As regulated services, children's residential homes are registered with Ofsted and subject to inspections as set out within the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF). All SCCIF inspections follow the 4-point scale (outstanding, good, requires improvement to be good and inadequate) to make judgements on the overall experiences and progress of children. Full information on the inspection framework is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif-childrens-homes/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif-childrens-homes#timeframe>.
- 3.1 In addition to an annual inspection, children's homes are also subject to a monthly visit from an independent specialist who will set out a report to the home and manager and submit the report to Ofsted sharing their monthly assessment of the homes performance and compliance considered against the regulation for operating a children's home. Ofsted publish all reports on their website though are careful not to identify the location or names of homes so as not to risk the safeguarding of children living in those homes and communities.
- 3.2 Alongside a judgement rating for the home Ofsted may set out **Compliance Notices**, where they assess that a service is not complying with a requirement, **Requirements** to improve to meet regulation and **Recommendations**. Compliance notices are time bound and will be subject to short term re-inspection. With regards to requirements and recommendations these will usually be subject to the evaluation at the homes next inspection.
- 3.3 At the time of writing this report we anticipate two full inspections before the end of March 2025 and two monitoring visits for the two homes where the judgements at the last inspection were that the homes Required Improvements to be Good. Each home maintains a home improvement plan by the home manager which is considered any identified areas for improvement from the last inspection along with the monthly feedback from our independent regulatory visit to the homes re-opening we will receive

a new inspection and judgement. Of our six registered homes the current Ofsted judgements are as set out below.

Ofsted Unique Ref. Number	DATE/Judgement 2021/2022	DATE/Judgement 2022/2023	DATE/Judgement 2023/2024	Date/Judgement 2024/25
SC034441	<b>Outstanding</b> 11th & 12th May 2021	<b>Outstanding</b> 15th & 16th March 2023	<b>Outstanding</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	<b>Inspection Due before end of March</b>
SC033387	<b>Good</b> 18th & 19th Oct.	<b>Inadequate</b> 18th & 19th Oct. 2022  Requires Improvement 22nd & 23rd Feb 2023	<b>Good</b> 17th & 18th May	<b>Good</b> 25 <sup>th</sup> Sept. 2024
SC033326	<b>Requires Improvement to be Good</b> 13th & 14th Sept 2021	<b>Good</b> 30th & 31st August 2022	<b>Inadequate</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	<b>Requires Improvement to be Good</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
SC356963	<b>Requires Improvement to be Good</b> 9th & 10th August 2021	<b>Requires Improvement to be Good</b> 14th & 15th June	<b>Inadequate</b> 16th & 17th May  <b>Requires Improvement to be Good</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2023	<b>Requires Improvement to be Good</b>  23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2024
SC033367	<b>Good</b> 27th & 28th September 2021	<b>Inadequate</b> 18th & 19th July 2022	<b>Requires Improvement to be Good</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	<b>Good</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
2788278	N/A	N/N	N/A	<b>First Inspection due before end of March</b>

3.4 Our ambition is to ensure that all our children’s homes are rated to be Good or Outstanding within the next inspection cycle and our work with facilities management and the revision of our staffing structures and staff training are central to achieving that aim.

#### **4. The balance of internally provided and externally commissioned homes.**

- 4.0 At the time of writing Kirklees has 617 young people who are looked after by the Local Authority. There are currently 34 young people living in externally commissioned resident children homes arrangements and 16 young people living in our internal children's home estate out of a total capacity of 22. Whilst we have 6 vacancies, we are currently working to identify a positive match for two children in need to our vacancies at the same time as working with our estates management to plan for the full refurbishment of one of our homes. This which will mean that the home will be out of commission for approximately 10 weeks.
- 4.1 Our residential and social work teams are working together to ensure that our home which was purpose built in the 1990's, is vacated and made available for a full refurbishment plan that was set out as part of our strategy to improve the quality of our homes. The first of our homes to receive a full renovation was the sister home in Dewsbury, which since recommission last year is providing a home for three young people whilst seeking to match a fourth. Ensuring that the service is able to maximise capacity at the same time as supporting our children to live in a modern and homely environment requires careful coordination and negotiation with our colleagues in Home and Neighbourhoods who remain committed to support our collective corporate parenting responsibilities.

#### **5. Fostering**

- 5.0 Over the last 10 years in Kirklees in-house foster carer numbers have reduced by 25% In April 2014 there were 208 children living with internal foster carers, compared to 157 in April 2024. Nationally the number of foster carers has fallen to a 10 year low falling from 43,405 to 42,615 in the year to March 2024. Over the same 10-year period payments to foster carers have increased from an average of £335 per week to £447 per week. The average Independent Foster Agency fee we paid in April 2024 is £996 per week.
- 5.1 Our priorities are to increase the number of internal foster carers and maximise their capacity to provide homes for our children, and ensure more children live with our internal Foster Carers than with independent fostering agencies.
- 5.2 We know that nationally sufficiency is an issue. There are not enough foster carers in Kirklees to meet the needs of our children and we require further work to grow and improve our internal residential estate to maximise capacity. In relation to the demographic of our children in care, they are predominantly over the age of 12. Our shortage of appropriately motivated and available foster carers and internal homes that are able to meet their needs results in an increased reliance on the costly private sector. Foster carers may choose to foster for Kirklees, or any of our neighbouring authorities, or go with an independent fostering agency (who often have higher fees than the local authority). Due to this there is significant competition to ensure prospective and current

carers foster with Kirklees. We need to ensure we remain competitive, and the place of choice for carers to foster.

- 5.3 We recognise there is more to do to ensure we increase our number of internal foster carers. We have a target to recruit 20 new foster carers in 2024/25 and we are proud that we are on track to meet this target. Despite pressures in the fostering service we have been successful in recruiting new foster carers- the main reason for this is through word of mouth rather than an advertising campaign. We have a recruitment and marketing plan and continue to seek multiple ways to promote fostering so we can attract new carers. We recognise there is more work to do to ensure we have a full council and partnership approach to this recruitment.
- 5.4 Whilst recruitment is strong we need to continue to ensure we retain foster carers. We review all foster carers who leave fostering. The main reason for this is positive. We have kinship carers who have obtained a special guardianship order for the child/ren they are caring for. Therefore, they no longer provide a fostering service for other children.
- 5.5 We have a sufficiency strategy and service plans in place to address our need for more foster carers. To strengthen this, we have recently acquired project manager support to review, refresh and drive this strategy forward with a focus on an invest to save model- aiming to reduce our spend whilst addressing our sufficiency needs for our children looked after and care leavers.
- 5.6 The fostering service reports regularly to a number of forums to track and monitor progress of plans and milestones- this includes to the Senior Leadership Team and to the Kirklees Parenting board. We have undertaken a number of improvements to grow and invest in fostering. The revised sufficiency strategy will set clear milestones for 2025. Some highlights include:
- Whilst a new fostering skills payment policy was approved in June, a further review is required to ensure we are competitive- in particular our need is for same day placements and older children/sibling groups.
  - The service is working on a proposal to develop a fostering offer when emergency homes are required- to avoid the use of unregulated arrangements.
  - We have updated our Supported Lodgings Policy and now require a recruitment campaign in this area- this is an alternative to fostering that offers homes to young people age 16+.
  - We are proud that we currently have 3 fostering mockingbird hubs. This is a model based around a hub home carer who builds strong relationships with other foster carers in the constellation, empowering families to support each other and overcome problems before they escalate or lead to placement breakdown. We aim to increase our mockingbird hubs- with a plan for a 4<sup>th</sup> hub by April 2025- there is a plan in place to skill up a current foster carer household to take on this role.

- Work is being undertaken to strengthen our approach to recruiting new foster carers with the support from our partnerships and the whole council.

### **3. Implications for the Council**

The provision of homes for children in the care of the local authority is understood to be one of the most important things the council delivers. Ensuring that our homes and foster carers are effectively supported and supervised, and that there are enough carers and homes available to meet the needs of our children is a key priority for our children's services.

#### **3.1 Council Plan**

Our arrangements for providing carers and children's residential homes draws on the core values set out within the Kirklees Council plan consistent with our council vision Unshared outcomes to ensure that our children are well, have the best start and are able to grow to be successful and independent.

#### **3.2 Financial Implications**

The local authority has a responsibility to provide homes for children in its care and achieves this through a mixed economy of commissioned and internally provided accommodation. The national context with regards to providing for children looked after by local authorities is recognised as challenging as the demand for children's residential and fostering arrangements is outstripped by demand. For Kirklees we continue to prioritise working with families at the earliest opportunity so that we can support them to stay together with help and support from our children's services. This means that we continue to have a lower than average number of children requiring alternative care arranged by the local authority. Whilst we continue to maintain a lower rate of children coming into care for those that do require accommodation this represents a significant proportion of children's services spending. We are therefore committed to ensuring that whilst providing high quality and stable homes for our children we consider best value and maintain our own provision.

#### **3.3 Legal Implications**

Failure to provide suitable and adequate homes for our children can result in legal challenge as well as reputational damage to the authority.

#### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

Not Applicable

#### **3.5 Other (eg Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**

Not Applicable

### **4. Consultation**

Not Applicable

### **5. Engagement**

Not applicable

6. **Options**  
Not applicable
7. **Next steps and timelines**  
To continue to recruit foster carers and maximise the use of our internal provision.
8. **Contact officer**  
Joel Hanna Head of Service children looked After and Residential services  
Anna Gledhill Head of Service Fostering services.
9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**
10. **Appendices**  
Not applicable
11. **Service Director responsible**  
Vicky Metherringham Service Director (Children and Families)



**CHILDREN’S SCRUTINY PANEL – WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

**MEMBERS:** Cllr Itrat Ali, Cllr Richard Smith, Cllr Jane Rylah, Cllr Ashleigh Robinson, Cllr Hannah McKerchar, Cllr Tanisha Bramwell

**SUPPORT:** Helen Kilroy (Assistant Democracy Manager), Claire Gardiner (Democracy Officer)

Agenda item/area of focus	Lead Officer	Areas of Scrutiny carried forward from 24-25	Comments
<p><b>Standard items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-decision scrutiny (decisions by Cabinet)</li> <li>• Performance Information (Children’s Service) – Informal meeting</li> <li>• Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board</li> <li>• Ambition Board Minutes</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet Members/Senior Officers (Children’s Service)</p> <p>Presented by Service Directors (produced by Lucy Tiffany)</p> <p>Panel Members who attend Kirklees Parenting Board</p> <p>Senior Officers and Cabinet Members</p>	<p>Panel will check at each meeting with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers from Children’s Service if there are any potential areas of pre-decision scrutiny they need to consider at future meetings.</p> <p>The Panel will continue to monitor the performance of the Learning Early Support Service and Child Protection &amp; Family Support (written report in informal session and verbal update on key issues in public meeting). Panel will be asked for questions prior to the Panel meeting so that these can be shared with Senior Officers and Cabinet Members in advance of the Informal meeting.</p> <p>Members of the Panel who attend the Kirklees Parenting Board will feedback on key issues to the Scrutiny Panel as appropriate.</p> <p>The Panel will receive for information the minutes from the Ambition Board meetings which are held quarterly.</p>	<p>Every meeting</p> <p>Every meeting</p> <p>Every meeting</p> <p>Quarterly</p>
<p><b>Review of the Improvement Journey – Ofsted Inspection</b></p>	<p>Tom Brailsford/Vicky Metherringham</p>	<p>The Panel will continue to review the Improvement Journey of Children’s Services and receive regular updates following Ofsted Inspections.</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>

		<p>The Panel will visit Children’s Social Care Teams, Children with Disabilities Team and the Front Door during the 2024/25 municipal year.</p> <p><b>Training on Corporate Parenting</b> The Panel received a training presentation on Corporate Parenting on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and will consider regular updates on issues considered by the Kirklees Parenting Board at each Panel meeting.</p> <p><b>Visit to No 11 and No 12 hubs</b> The Panel will visit No 11 and No 12 hubs and observe the services on offer and being accessed by young people – to be arranged.</p> <p><b>Care Leavers Month – October 2024</b> The Panel were invited to events that took place during Care Leavers Month (October 2024) and details were shared with Members of the Panel.</p> <p><b>Visit to Care Leavers Achievement Awards on 30.10.24</b> Members of the Panel attended the Care Leavers Achievement Awards Event at Huddersfield Town Hall, it was a celebratory event held for Care Leavers. The evening was inspirational, with speeches from the Mayor, Councillor Viv Kendrick (Cabinet Member for Children) and very bravely from some of the young people. The atmosphere in the room was supportive throughout, particularly as the students came on stage to receive their awards. The awards ceremony was followed by a buffet, a magician and an unplanned performance of Kurdish dancing.</p> <p><b>Visit to the Takeover Event – Care Leavers Forum 24.10.24</b> The Chair of the Panel attended the Takeover event on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 which was facilitated by the Care Leavers Forum, supported by the Our Voice Team and Children’s Rights Team. There was attendance across the board from all different providers of children’s services and representatives from the Integrated Care System (ICS) healthcare, housing</p>	<p>30.10.24</p> <p>24.10.2024</p>
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		<p>as well as Cabinet Members. The meeting was very interactive and following the introductions there was an ice breaker, the presentations and group exercises facilitated by the care leavers. A great amount of work had gone into preparing the event. Three videos of the care leavers were shared outlining their journey, the challenges they faced and the support they received.</p> <p>The agenda included young people and Kirklees Parenting Board member discussion on the topics of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Things to do</li> <li>• Homes for children</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Voice, influence and participation</li> <li>• Learning</li> </ul> <p>The session ended with a quiz, and a recital of a poem written by one of the care leavers.</p> <p><b>Panel meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b></p> <p>The Panel considered the outcome and recommendations of the Children’s Services Ofsted Inspection report, which was published on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and highlighted the key areas of improvement for the Service. The Ofsted Inspection covered all areas of the Children’s Service but focussed on children in need, children in care and care leavers. The Panel agreed that the Ofsted report was very positive and that it was encouraging to see the significant improvements that had been made since the last Ofsted report in 2019. The Panel asked that their thanks and congratulations be passed onto the Teams within Children’s Services for their hard work and commitment to improving the delivery of services and support to children and young people in Kirklees.</p>	<p>11.10.24</p>
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		<p><b>Visit to Children in care Team on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b></p> <p>Members of the Panel met with the Children in Care and Care Leavers Team on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and the following key points were discussed –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teams were dealing with children with very complex needs.</li> <li>• Managers were supportive and approachable, provided the right level of support and were available to talk to when difficult decisions had to be made regarding children.</li> <li>• Partnership working was key to helping to manage the risk to vulnerable children and the team worked closely with the virtual school, health colleagues, housing and the police.</li> <li>• The voice of the child was a basic rule of thumb in everything that they did and that they were in tune with the children in their care, seeking the voice of the child was always the starting point.</li> <li>• Sufficiency of placements within Kirklees was an issue. Looked after children had links within the area and Social Workers did not want to move them away from what they know and their networks which could cause significant disruption to child’s schooling, family time and mental health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Some young people were ready to leave care at the age of 18 but some still needed support. The criteria once an adult did not provide a specific pathway for the young person’s ongoing support, but conversations were taking place to rectify this.</li> <li>• The team agreed to invite the Panel to future events and gave an open invitation for Panel Members to do work shadowing alongside Social Workers.</li> </ul>	<p>12.12.24</p>
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<p><b>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation Plan and Sufficiency of SEND and mainstream capacity</b></p>	<p>Jo-Anne Sanders Michelle Lister/Paul Calendine</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the SEND Transformation Plan and will focus on the following areas –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Safety Valve</b> - Oversight of the Government Safety Valve Agreement and the current profile of spend across the High Needs Blocks</li> <li>• <b>Quality and Compliance</b> - Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) Overview of volume processes – quality and compliance (including Annual Reviews)</li> <li>• <b>Graduated Approach – Mainstream Schools organised in Clusters</b> - New initiative of schools working in clusters</li> <li>• <b>Specialist places (Sufficiency)</b> - Special Schools – overview of provision and two new school rebuilds</li> </ul> <p>To support this scrutiny, the Panel will do the following –</p> <p><b>Visit to SEND Transformation and Commissioning Group on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024</b></p> <p>The Panel attended and observed the SEND Transformation and Commissioning Group on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 to gain a better understanding of the SEND transformation work. A presentation was carried out sharing reflections, impacts and progress on the programme and clusters and explained the “why, approach and roles”. Break out groups were asked to discuss challenges to SEND, areas of strength, hopes and worries for cluster model.</p> <p><b>Visit to an Education and Learning Partnership Board (ELPB) meeting –</b> date to be arranged</p>	<p>3.10.24</p> <p>To be arranged</p>
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		<p><b>Panel meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024</b>                  The Panel considered a report providing an insight into the Council’s ‘Safety Valve’ agreement with the Department for Education in relation to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Panel gave their support for the report and asked that officers consider and take on board any questions and comments raised by the Panel in future reports.</p> <p><b>Panel meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>                  The Panel will consider a consider a report on the Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) giving an overview of volume process, quality and compliance, including Annual Reviews.</p> <p><b>Panel meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b>                  The Panel will consider a report on the new initiatives in schools that are working in clusters.</p> <p><b>Panel meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025</b>                  The Panel will consider a report on Special Schools giving an overview of provision and 2 new school rebuilds – Joseph Norton and Woodley.</p> <p>The Panel will consider sufficiency across Learning places and focus on the following areas –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decline of the cohort of children in primary schools in Kirklees</li> <li>- Needs and capacity around the teacher workforce</li> <li>- Opportunities for extensions to entitlements for wrap around care and childcare</li> </ul> <p>To support this work, the Panel will take advantage of opportunities throughout the 24/25 municipal year to observe partnership meetings when these issues were discussed including –</p>	<p>22.11.24</p> <p>17.1.25</p> <p>14.3.25</p> <p>28.4.25</p>
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		<p><b>A Visit to the Places Access and Inclusion Committee of the Education and Learning Partnership Board (ELPB)</b> The Panel will visit the Places, Access and Inclusion Meeting of the ELPB to observe the discussions around needs and capacity relating to the teacher workforce – date to be arranged.</p> <p><b>Panel meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025</b> The Panel will consider a report on the decline of the cohort of children in primary schools in Kirklees.</p>	28.4.25
<p><b>Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA)</b></p>	<p>Pam Allen/Vicky Metheringham/Jo-Anne Sanders/Ian Mottershaw and Sara Miles</p> <p>Patrick Boosey (NHS)</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the multi-agency partnership arrangements as part of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) and consider the changes which have been implemented.</p> <p><b>Visit to Kirklees Safeguarding Partnership Board (KSPB) on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b> The Panel will visit the Kirklees Safeguarding Partnership Board meeting as part of their scrutiny on the working together action plan and achieving outcomes for the children across Kirklees.</p> <p><b>Panel Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b> The Panel will consider the changes implemented in the Working Together Action Plan and the multi-agency partnership arrangements. Julie Sykes, the Independent Scrutineer of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children’s Partnerships (KSCP) had been invited to attend the Panel meeting in March for this discussion.</p> <p><b>Visit to Starting Well Board on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025</b> The Panel will visit the Starting Well Board on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025 as part of their scrutiny on achieving outcomes for children across Kirklees.</p>	<p>10.2.25</p> <p>14.3.25</p> <p>9.5.25</p>

<p><b>Quality Assurance – impact of auditing the Children’s Service</b></p>	<p>Vicky Metherringham/Robert Fordyce</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the Quality Assurance impact of auditing the Children’s Service and what difference it was making to children’s lives.</p> <p>The Panel will be invited to observe appropriate forums on Quality Assurance, including the Practice Learning days and Quality Learning Events taking place within the Children’s Service.</p> <p><b>Panel Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>                  The Panel considered the Annual Report on Quality Assurance. The report provided an overview of audit and learning processes for the last 12 months for consideration and discussion. It was noted that Members of the Panel would attend some of the forthcoming Practice Learning Days with Teams across the Children’s Service and report back with updates to future Panel Meetings.</p> <p><b>Visits to Practice Learning Day (PLD) for Care Leavers on 29.11.24</b>                  Members of the Panel attended the Practice Learning Day for Care Leavers on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024. During the day, a presentation was given by Lauren James, the specialist from the Adult Pathway Team. An overview of “My Housing Plan” was provided and the Panel Members present had the opportunity to observe the valuable peer review process. Discussion took place around the themes of preparing for adulthood, front door entry and access to health and adult social care. The Panel felt that the Care Leavers input into their own planning pathways was positive. Issues regarding the complexity of the recruitment processes for Personal Assistants in Kirklees were raised.</p> <p>Key issues discussed at the meeting included the challenges faced by Personal Assistants and were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and engagement at visits, and with adult social care teams (the joint working process)</li> </ul>	<p>11.10.24</p> <p>29.11.24</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear defining of the role of the Personal Assistant for children with additional needs</li> <li>• Shared lives/young people starting out and the adult social care review to include this group and communication with this group</li> <li>• Drug users and related services</li> <li>• Parents understanding the child’s needs and capacity</li> <li>• Making the young person's voice heard (not just the carer’s)</li> <li>• Having the time to build relationships when caseload was high</li> <li>• The amount of people involved in care and their differing roles, making sure everyone keeps up with new information eg Mental Health Act</li> <li>• Access to Care First - adult social workers appeared to be unsure of the role of the Personal Assistant</li> <li>• Care plans in adult services were too big and need to be comprehensive</li> <li>• Autism, more training was needed around mental health or disability</li> </ul> <p>Overall, it was a great opportunity to engage with the group and deepen the understanding of the service they provided.</p> <p><b>Visit to Practice Learning Day (PLD) for Youth Engagement Team on 10.01.25</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Panel attended this meeting with the Youth Engagement Team, which consisted of 15 youth engagement officers, 3 team leaders and a coordination manager. There was introduction about the service, the work they undertake and some of the challenges they faced. Key information from the meeting was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance updates were held weekly by the team, and data and outcomes were captured. Quality assurance meetings were held every 2 weeks.</li> </ul>	<p>10.01.25</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team worked with multi-agency teams including police, schools, health, and council officers as well as youth clubs, volunteer groups and child vulnerability teams. The team also worked with charities, in particular post-18 charitable organisations, and housing.</li> </ul> <p>The team faced challenges in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of resources and services available for young people locally, especially sports and recreation.</li> <li>• Assisting young people with specialist needs and the health services to address those needs.</li> <li>• Resources for those children who struggled with education and the need for specialist skills-based learning for them.</li> <li>• The gap for children once they reached 18 and the service could no longer support them, there was a need for something to bridge the gap so the support could continue. Charities were often relied upon to take on the work.</li> <li>• The voice of the young person was a focus, to ensure it was heard, especially in the language used with young people and their families.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Educational Outcomes</b></p>	<p>Jo-Anne Sanders/Emma Brayford (key lead)</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the educational outcomes of children and young people in Kirklees.</p> <p><b>Informal Panel Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b></p> <p>The Panel considered an overview of the statutory outcomes achieved (attainment and progress) by learners who took assessments in Kirklees during the academic year 2023-2024. The report covered outcomes at the end of the Foundation Stage, Phonics (Year 1), Key Stage 2 (Year 6), Key Stage 4 (GCSE) and Key Stage 5 (Post-16). The results and national comparisons provided in this report were subject to validation and the report aimed to offer preliminary insights into the educational outcomes in</p>	<p>11.10.24</p>

		<p>Kirklees, pending the release of the comprehensive Kirklees Annual Educational Outcomes report.</p> <p><b>Elective Home Education</b> The Panel received data provided by Jo-Anne Sanders in September 2024 on Elective Home Education (EHE), which had been shared with Ofsted during the inspection.</p> <p>The Panel will also meet with Strategic Leads early in 2025 when narrative was available for further consideration and scrutiny by the Panel.</p>	<p>Jan/Feb 25 – to be arranged</p>
<p><b>Partnership Arrangements</b></p>	<p>Vicky Metheringham/Jo-Anne Sanders/Pam Allen</p>	<p>The Panel will continue to scrutinise partnerships and boards during the 2024/25 municipal year, for example, Kirklees Parenting Board and Health and Wellbeing Board, visits to internal teams and partners and the Panel can look at how data was collected and used to improve outcomes. The Panel can be represented at meetings, events and visits to internal teams and external providers and agree to focus on the following areas:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection</li> <li>• Partnership working</li> <li>• Is the voice of the young person being heard? (as below)</li> <li>• Good practice</li> <li>• Delivery of quality service</li> </ul> <p>The Panel have been invited to attend the Home-Start Kirklees Annual General Meeting and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 where there will be a showcase of work from families, volunteers and staff.</p>	

<p><b>Voice of the Young Person</b></p>	<p>Tom Brailsford/Service Directors (Children’s Service)</p>	<p>The Panel will keep a watching brief on all areas of scrutiny by the Panel and explore whether the voice of the child was being heard, whether they are empowered to speak up and ensure that lessons have and are being learned.</p>	
<p><b>Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)</b></p>	<p>Jo-Anne Sanders/Mark Janes (Chair of SACRE)</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the work of the Kirklees Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) which includes partnership working with other regional local authorities.</p> <p><b>Panel meeting 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b> The Panel will consider the Annual Report from the Kirklees Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).</p>	<p>4<sup>th</sup> February 2025</p>
<p><b>Health Provision for Children and Young People</b></p>	<p>Jane McDonnell (Head of Health Protection in Public Health)</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the health provision for Children and Young People in Kirklees with a particular focus on dental care, babies and immunisations.</p> <p><b>Joint Informal meeting of the Children’s Scrutiny Panel and the Health and Adult Social Care Panel - 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025) – Children’s Immunisations</b> The Panel attended a Joint Informal meeting of the Children’s Scrutiny Panel and the Health and Adult Social Care Panel on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and received an update giving the latest children’s and young people’s and adults vaccinations uptake data for Kirklees and an overview of the collaborative working with partners to maximise uptake of all vaccinations; including communications and engagement work. A number of areas were focussed on by the Panel Members and questions were asked in connection with the following areas –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistics of the number of healthy children admitted to hospital with Influenza before the vaccine programme was introduced and the number of pregnant women admitted with Pneumonia before the vaccine programme was introduced.</li> </ul>	<p>16<sup>th</sup> January 2025</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Locala funded for the school vaccination programme</li> <li>• Payment made to Locala for vaccines</li> <li>• Partnerships between Kirklees and the community hub co-ordinators</li> <li>• Could any child advocate for themselves as to whether they have a vaccine or not or if below 18 does the parent have the final say</li> <li>• Resources available to Members on vaccinations to share within communities and help to spread the message</li> </ul> <p><b>Joint discussion at Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on 9.4.25 - Dentistry</b> The Panel has been invited to attend the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 for a joint discussion on Dentistry. Representatives from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) will give a report on access to dentistry for Adults and Children.</p> <p><b>Joint discussion at Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 – Healthy Child Programme</b> The Panel has been invited to attend the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 for a joint discussion on the Healthy Child Programme as part of pre-decision scrutiny before the report is considered by Cabinet.</p> <p><b>Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Vaccination Programme</b> The Panel will have a Joint meeting with the Health and Adult Social Care Panel in 2025/26 to discuss the Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccination programme, aimed at adults over 75 and babies/pregnant women when data will be available for consideration.</p>	<p>9<sup>th</sup> April 2025</p> <p>26<sup>th</sup> February 2025</p> <p>2025/26 municipal year</p>
<p><b>Emotional Wellbeing Provision for children in Kirklees and Mental Health Schools</b></p>	<p>Jo-Anne Sanders/Pam Allen Stewart Horn</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the experience verses the provision of service and seek feedback from service users on their perception on using the service. The Panel will also consider the fluctuation in the waiting times and trends for children’s emotional health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>To be confirmed- March/April 25</p>

<p><b>- Keep in mind</b></p>		<p><b>Emotional Wellbeing Provision in Kirklees – “Keep in Mind”</b>                  The Panel will consider an update on the implementation of the new “Keep in Mind” Service, which was launched in April 2024. The Panel will particularly focus on how the service is working in practice and this may include a visit to the service or attendance at appropriate meetings to understand how it is being implemented.</p> <p><b>Panel meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 – Performance updates</b>                  Panel Members discussed the teaching of mental health strategies for young people in schools and agreed to consider a future update on the range of strategies currently being implemented and resources available within schools to provide mental health support to young people.</p> <p>Panel Members agreed that they could contribute their ideas on supporting the mental health of young people in schools to the National Curriculum and Assessment Review that was taking place nationally.</p>	
<p><b>Review of the Provision of Short Breaks and Respite Care for Parents and Carers</b></p>	<p>Jo-Anne Sanders/Pam Allen/Vicky Metherringham/Stewart Horn</p>	<p>The Panel will consider the review of the provision of short breaks and respite care for parents and carers in Kirklees.</p>	<p>To be confirmed - March/April 25</p>
<p><b>Review of Children’s Residential Homes and Foster Care Placements</b></p>	<p>Vicky Metherringham/Pam Allen/Anna Gledhill/Joel Hanna</p>	<p>The Panel will consider an update on the Review of Children’s Residential Homes and Foster Care Placements in Kirklees to ensure that children were living in the right home and environment.</p> <p><b>Panel meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>                  The Panel will consider an update on the Review of Children’s Residential Homes and foster care placements in Kirklees.</p>	<p>4<sup>th</sup> February 2025</p>

		<p><b>Visit to Kirklees Fostering Network 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>  Members of the Panel attended a visit to meet with carers at the Kirklees Fostering Network meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and key issues discussed at the meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Collection – performance data available at the Kirklees Parenting board did not correspond with the paper.</li> <li>• Shortage of Foster Carers – numbers had halved, they cited the economic climate and families being put into poverty.</li> <li>• Older children needing foster care, and asylum-seeking children using the service.</li> <li>• Partnership working</li> <li>• Challenges of attending PPS meetings when children cannot attend with them.</li> <li>• Voice of the Young Person and how it was acted on.</li> <li>• Cllr Kendrick held in high esteem as a source of support.</li> <li>• Discrepancies between what the Personal Assistants do and the support that needs to start at 15 rather than 16.</li> <li>• The rewarding nature of Foster Care and the support between the Foster Carers and their families.</li> </ul> <p><b>Visit to Mocking Bird and Special Guardianship Orders carers and representatives</b>  The Panel will meet with appropriate representatives from the Mocking Bird Support Meeting (date to be arranged). Members of the Panel attended the Special Guardianship Order Support Group meeting and Christmas party on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024.</p> <p><b>Visit to drop-in session to celebrate National Kinship Week on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>  The Panel were also invited to attend an informal drop-in session on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October to celebrate National Kinship Week. The Connected Persons Support Team hosted the session, staff from the</p>	<p>9<sup>th</sup> October 2024</p>
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		<p>Connected Persons assessment team attended along with some of our carers from the constitution. The drop in session had been organised to improve knowledge of the Connected Persons Team (CSP). Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carers were invited, along with colleagues from other services. Feedback from the carers about the team was positive. SGO carers supported the move towards using different language, reporting how it was dehumanising to be referred to in meetings and on paper as “the Carer”. There was also a recurring theme of the discrepancy between financial support given to SGOs and Foster Carers. It was recognised by the Panel that the financial discrepancy was less than in other local authorities, but the Panel asked whether other ways of supporting these families could be looked at.</p> <p><b>Visit to Home-Start AGM on 26.9.24</b></p> <p>Members of the Panel attended the Home-Start AGM on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Home-Start were celebrating 25 years, and the meeting showcased the value of the service Home-Start provide to its service users. Background was provided into the service and the families they helped, and long service awards were presented to volunteers. A volunteer presented on the work that they do and an update on the social media platform was also given. Three service users explained how Home-Start had helped them and their children. Testimonials from service users stated that they regarded Home-Start as their second family and would not be where they were without them. Some said that Home-Start provided a lifeline for their family. The staff and volunteers were working hard to ensure the service would continue to provide and improve its offer in the future.</p>	<p>26.9.4</p>
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**Lead Member Briefings**

(Bi-monthly LM Briefings with Cabinet Members for Learning and Children's; and Strategic Director/Service Directors in Children's Services during 24/25) –  
Actions from these meetings will be included within the Panel's Work Programme where appropriate

**Manchester Road – Asylum Seekers**

The Lead Member will review any impact on Children's Service of the housing of asylum seekers on Manchester Road.

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## Children's Scrutiny Panel

### Agenda Plan 2024/25

Date of Meeting	Issues for Consideration	Officer Contact
<p><b>24th July 2024</b></p> <p><b>Workshop - Informal Meeting</b></p>	<p>(with Panel, Officers and Cabinet Members)</p> <p>To consider potential areas of focus for the Panel during 2024/25 municipal year which will include the Council's key priorities for the children's service.</p>	<p>Helen Kilroy</p>
<p><b>30<sup>th</sup> August 2024</b></p> <p><b>Informal meeting 9.30am-10.30am</b></p> <p><b>Public meeting 10.30am</b></p> <p><b>Hybrid meeting</b></p> <p><b>Council Chamber HTH</b></p> <p>Report deadline: 16.8.24</p> <p>(Apols: V Metheringham)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Informal items:-</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ambition Board Minutes – 18.3.24 and 24.6.24</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Performance Report</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public Items:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Minutes of meeting on 26.3.24</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Performance Highlights (verbal)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pre-decision Scrutiny – Cabinet decisions on the horizon</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 24/25</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">W Harris to provide</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J Sanders/A Gledhill/J Hanna to present</p> <p style="text-align: center;">H Kilroy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J Sanders/A Gledhill/J Hanna to present</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Senior Officers/Cabinet Members</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Panel Members</p> <p style="text-align: center;">H Kilroy</p>

Date of Meeting	Issues for Consideration	Officer Contact
<p><b>11<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b></p> <p><b>Informal meeting 9.30am-10.30am</b></p> <p><b>Public meeting 10.30am</b></p> <p><b>Hybrid meeting Council Chamber HTH</b></p> <p>Report deadline: 27.9.24</p>	<p><b>Informal items:-</b></p> <p>Ambition Board Minutes – 16.9.24</p> <p>Performance Report</p> <p>2023-24 Kirklees Annual Education Quality and Standards Report</p> <p><b>Public Items:</b></p> <p>Quality Assurance Annual Report</p> <p>Ofsted Inspection of Children’s Services – outcome and recommendations</p> <p>Performance Highlights (verbal)</p> <p>Pre-decision Scrutiny – Cabinet decisions on the horizon</p> <p>Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board</p> <p>Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 24/25</p>	<p>W Harris to provide</p> <p>Service Directors to present</p> <p>Jo-Anne Sanders/Emma Brayford</p> <p>V Metheringham/R Fordyce</p> <p>V Metheringham</p> <p>J Sanders/V Metheringham to present</p> <p>Senior Officers/Cabinet Members</p> <p>Panel Members</p> <p>H Kilroy</p>
<p><b>22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024</b></p> <p><b>Informal meeting 9.30am-10.30am</b></p> <p><b>Public meeting 10.30am</b></p> <p><b>Hybrid meeting Council Chamber HTH</b></p> <p>Report deadline:</p>	<p><b>Informal items:-</b></p> <p>Performance Report</p> <p><b>Public Items:</b></p> <p>SEND – Oversight of the Government Safety Valve Agreement and current profile of spend across High Needs Block</p>	<p>J Sanders/V Metheringham to present</p> <p>J Sanders</p>

Date of Meeting	Issues for Consideration	Officer Contact
8.11.24	<p>Performance Highlights (verbal)</p> <p>Pre-decision Scrutiny – Cabinet decisions on the horizon</p> <p>Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board</p> <p>Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 24/25</p>	<p>J Sanders/V Metheringham</p> <p>Senior Officers/Cabinet Members</p> <p>Panel Members</p> <p>H Kilroy</p>
<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b></p> <p><b>Informal meeting</b> 9.30am-10.30am</p> <p><b>Public meeting</b> 10.30am</p> <p><b>Hybrid meeting</b> <b>Council Chamber HTH</b></p> <p>Report deadline: 23.1.25</p>	<p><b>Informal items:-</b></p> <p>Ambition Board Minutes – 19.12.24</p> <p>Performance Report</p> <p><b>Public Items:</b></p> <p>Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report</p> <p>Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Overview of volume process – quality and compliance</p> <p>Review of Children’s Residential Homes and Foster Care Placements</p> <p>Performance Highlights (verbal)</p> <p>Pre-decision Scrutiny – Cabinet decisions on the horizon</p> <p>Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board</p> <p>Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 24/25</p>	<p>W Harris to provide</p> <p>J Sanders/V Metheringham</p> <p>J Sanders/Michelle Lister/Paul Calendine</p> <p>J Sanders/E Brayford/Pennine Learning</p> <p>V Metheringham/A Gledhill/ J Hanna</p> <p>J Sanders/V Metheringham</p> <p>Senior Officers/Cabinet Members</p> <p>Panel Members</p> <p>H Kilroy</p>

Date of Meeting	Issues for Consideration	Officer Contact
<p><b>14<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b></p> <p><b>10am-11am Informal meeting 11am-12.30pm Public meeting</b></p> <p><b>Hybrid Meeting Council Chamber, HTH</b></p> <p>Report deadline: 27.2.25</p>	<p><b>Informal items:-</b></p> <p>Performance Report</p> <p><b>Public Items:</b></p> <p>Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) Action Plan</p> <p>New initiatives of schools working in clusters</p> <p>Performance Highlights (verbal)</p> <p>Pre-decision Scrutiny – Cabinet decisions on the horizon</p> <p>Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board</p> <p>Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 24/25</p>	<p>J Sanders/V Metheringham to present</p> <p>V Metheringham/I Mottershaw/ S Miles/Julie Sykes</p> <p>J Sanders/M Lister/Jayne Whitton/A Wisniewski</p> <p>J Sanders/V Metheringham to present</p> <p>Senior Officers/Cabinet Members</p> <p>Panel Members</p> <p>H Kilroy</p>
<p><b>28<sup>th</sup> April 2025</b></p> <p><b>10.30 am – 11 am Pre-meeting 11am – 1pm Public Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Hybrid Meeting Council Chamber, HTH</b></p> <p>Report deadline: 16.4.25</p>	<p><b>Pre-meeting items:-</b></p> <p>Panel Preparation for Public Meeting</p> <p><b>Public items:</b></p> <p>Special Schools – overview of provision and 2 new school rebuilds – Joseph Norton and Woodley</p> <p>Decline of the cohort of children in primary schools in Kirklees</p> <p>Pre-decision Scrutiny – Cabinet decisions on the horizon</p>	<p>Panel Members</p> <p>M Wilby/S Horn/J Sanders</p> <p>M Wilby/J Sanders</p> <p>Senior Officers/Cabinet Members</p>

Date of Meeting	Issues for Consideration	Officer Contact
	<p data-bbox="495 188 1657 225">Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board</p> <p data-bbox="757 264 1395 336">Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 24/25 (progress and items to roll forward to 25/26)</p>	<p data-bbox="1821 188 2047 220">Panel Members</p> <p data-bbox="1877 264 1991 296">H Kilroy</p>

**Future items for consideration in work programme –**

- The impact of caring responsibilities on young carers

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