

**CHILDREN’S SCRUTINY PANEL – WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26**

**MEMBERS:** Cllr Itrat Ali, Cllr Richard Smith, Cllr Aafaq Butt, Cllr Ashleigh Robinson, Cllr Hannah McKerchar, Cllr Tanisha Bramwell

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

<b>THEME/ISSUE</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>APPROACH/AREAS OF FOCUS</b>	<b>OUTCOMES/ACTIONS</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p><b><u>Standard items</u></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 Paul Caladine)</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 Children.</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 the minutes of the quarterly Ambition Board meetings for information.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Each meeting of the Panel</p> <p>Updates will be provided at Panel meetings when a meeting of the Board has taken place (meetings take place quarterly).</p> <p>Ongoing and when available</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Every meeting</p> <p>When available</p> <p>When available</p>
<p><b>Review of the Improvement Journey (Children’s Services)</b></p>	<p>Tom Brailsford/Vicky Metheringham</p>	<p>The Panel will continue to review the Improvement Journey of the Children’s Service, have an oversight of the Ofsted improvement plan, attend appropriate</p>	<p><b>Oversight of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and planned Re-design of the Leaving Care Service – Panel meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025</b></p>	<p>Panel on 17.10.25</p>

	<p>YJS – Ian Mottershaw/ Teresa Racz Leaving Care Service – Joel Hanna Children’s Social Care Reforms – V Metherringham CQC and Ofsted Inspection – V Metherringham</p>	<p>meetings and undertake observation to see the key elements of the new arrangements on working together to safeguard children with a particular focus on the effective implementation of the service and good practice.</p> <p>The Children’s Service were looking to undertake a redesign of leaving care to make it more robust and the Panel will invite the Head of Corporate Parenting to Scrutiny to provide updates on progress.</p> <p>The Panel will visit the Leaving Care Service and monitor the work taking place to develop this area of practice.</p> <p>The Panel will scrutinise the following areas -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and planned Re-design of the Leaving Care Service which will include a visit to the Team</li> <li>• Multi-agency developments around the Children’s Social Care Reforms, the leaving care service and Front Door</li> <li>• Updates of future Ofsted Inspections</li> <li>• Visits to the Leaving Care Service, Front Door Team and North service Area Children’s Social Care Team (Dewsbury and Batley) to continue to review the</li> </ul>	<p>The Panel will consider a report giving an oversight of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and planned Re-design of the Leaving Care Service which will include a visit to the Team.</p> <p><b>Multi-agency developments around the Children’s Social Care Reforms – Panel meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026</b> The Panel will consider a report on the multi-agency developments around the Children’s Social Care Reforms.</p> <p><b>Visit to activities organised by the Youth Justice Service (YJS) for young people</b> The Panel have been invited to attend some of the activities being co-ordinated by the YJS Team with young people and will take place from May 2025 until December 2026. Activities are planned by staff who will take the lead and include activities such as playing pool, baking and playing games.</p> <p><b>Our Children’s Voice Team – Informal Panel meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b> The Panel will consider an update from the Our Children’s Voice Team on the key aspects of their work and hear about the work undertaken on “What it feels like to be excluded as a child”.</p>	<p>Panel on 6.2.26</p> <p>Various dates</p> <p>Panel on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025</p>
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		<p>Improvement Journey of Children’s Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Panel will visit some of the activities that the youth justice service coordinate with young people and the team.</li> <li>• The Our Children’s Voice Team will visit the Panel to discuss the work undertaken on ‘What it feels like to be excluded as a child.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Oversight of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and planned Re-design of the Leaving Care Service – Panel meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b></p> <p>The Panel will consider a report on the Oversight of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and planned Re-design of the Leaving Care Service, which will include a visit to the Leaving Care Service Team in March 2026.</p>	<p>Panel on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025</p> <p>Visit to Leaving Care Service – March 2026</p>
<p><b>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation Plan</b></p>	<p>Jo-Anne Sanders</p> <p>Clusters – Jayne Whitton</p> <p>Sufficiency Strategy – S Horn</p> <p>DfE White Paper – J Sanders</p> <p>EHCPs – Jenny Sneideris/ Michelle Lister</p> <p>Ofsted &amp; CQC Inspection – Jo Sanders</p> <p>Adulthood PFA Board – Adrian Wisniewski/Donna Auty</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>• Visits to mainstream schools to observe the practice of the new initiatives of schools working in clusters</li> <li>• SEND Sufficiency Strategy for Kirklees (2025-2028)</li> <li>• Visit to the SEND Transformation Programme Event on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025</li> <li>• Visit to Satellite provision for the two new special schools and Alternative Resource Provisions</li> <li>• Overview of SEND Tribunals and EHCP Compliance and timescales and the Complaints Process - which will include observation of the decision-making process for EHCPs, a look at the volume processes/quality and compliance (including Annual Reviews) and the multi-agency approach that is being</li> </ul>	<p><b>Visit on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to the Places Access and Inclusion Committee of the Education (PAIC)</b></p> <p>The Panel visited the Places, Access and Inclusion Meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to observe the discussions around needs and capacity relating to the teacher workforce. Some of the issues discussed were around –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additionally Resourced Provision and support for New Mill Junior and Infant to develop 2 site provision within rural areas;</li> <li>- Analysis of sufficiency data and reducing PANs for Primary schools;</li> <li>- The Local Plan and the impact of new development on school sufficiency in certain areas;</li> <li>- Review of the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) which had see 14 schools join a task and finish group;</li> </ul>	<p>Visit on 10.6.25</p>

		<p>implemented to ensure fairness and transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEND Ofsted and CQC Inspection of Kirklees Local Area Partnership’s provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision</li> <li>• DfE White Paper on proposals on SEND Changes (April 26 implementation)</li> <li>• Preparation to Adulthood (PFA) which will include a visit to the PFA Board (date to be confirmed)</li> <li>• Visits to the half yearly SEND Event (date to be confirmed), Parent Carer Forum (to be arranged) and Local Offer Live on 23.10.25</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity for the Committee was a risk, there were now equal levels of permanent exclusions and electively home educated cases and a pressure with the current secondary place bulge as although FAP could override PAN, some schools were already oversubscribed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Visit to Cluster meeting at Holmfirth High School on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b></p> <p>The Panel visited the cluster meeting at Holmfirth High School and fed back on the following key issues –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respectful relationships had been built through the year.</li> <li>- Shared training followed up with ideas on how to implement what they had learned.</li> <li>- Clusters had enabled consideration of all-staff training within settings as well as specialist training for staff from multiple settings.</li> <li>- Important to ensure the EHCP Team would accept whole school evidence for the Decision Panels not only specialist assessments.</li> <li>- It was seen as a priority that EHCP Leaders should attend cluster meetings.</li> <li>- Feedback from SENDCO’s was often that they were not clear why refusals</li> </ul>	<p>Visit on 25.6.25</p>
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			<p>had been given and could not get hold of an officer to discuss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was a wellbeing element to being able to share cases.</li> <li>- Schools were dealing with incontinence problems and concerns were raised as to what was the most appropriate course to source funding for required adaptations.</li> <li>- The benefit of having the secondary SENDCO was acknowledged by all.</li> </ul> <p><b>Visit to Cluster meeting at Birkby Junior School on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b></p> <p>The Panel fed back that it a very collaborative approach was implemented in the meeting, and it was apparent why this cluster has been highlighted as a leading cluster in the north. Individual cases were discussed, and colleagues were supportive of each other with suggestions and signposting to services and resources. Budget was an issue with the need for more finance and often lack of money to provide the resource required for each individual child.</p>	<p>Visit on 26.6.25</p>
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			<p><b>Visit to the SEND Transformation Programme Event on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b></p> <p>The Panel visited the SEND Transformation Programme Event which had been organised to celebrate and share key aspects of the SEND Transformation Programme and also connect with staff about how the service can improve communication. Key points fed back from Panel Members were as follows –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Services who attended seemed to value the chance to network and feel informed on progress.</li> <li>- Good collaborative atmosphere for teams to come together to gain a deeper understanding of each other’s roles and there were useful conversations between sessions.</li> <li>- Good to hear the progress on the 2 new build special schools at Woodley and Joseph Norton.</li> <li>- Progress made on compliance with issuing EHCPs within statutory timescales.</li> <li>- A suggestion was made that some of the training needs of officers and professionals could be met with bitesize options, eg short YouTube videos or TikTok’s;</li> <li>- A table discussion highlighted the need for communication styles tailored to</li> </ul>	<p>Visit on 27.6.25</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions were made by consensus and with discussion</li> <li>• Consideration was given to the family situation, risks such as adoption disruption and to parental and school recommendations and preferred outcomes</li> <li>• If the answer was a decision not to issue, there were still support and outreach recommendations made</li> </ul> <p>3. <u>Specialist Placement Panel on 4<sup>th</sup> July</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cases considered with decision to issue but where there are conflicts or complexities</li> <li>• Cases that involve placement out of area or private providers are sent to the Service Director for approval and to give strategic oversight</li> <li>• Panel members know the young person and discuss character and preferences as part of decision making</li> <li>• Demand is greater than supply in terms of specialist places, sufficiency concerns were discussed</li> <li>• Panel discussed independent reports, some parents have expressed concerns that these are automatically dismissed</li> <li>• The Panel take an overview of lessons learnt in terms of mainstream</li> </ul>	<p>Visit on 4.7.25</p>
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			<p>inclusion so they are not just considering on a case by case basis</p> <p><b>Visit on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to Education and Learning Partnership Board (ELPB) meeting</b></p> <p>The Panel attended the ELPB meeting and observed the discussions as part of their scrutiny focus on the SEND Transformation Plan. Key points discussed were –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust response on the need for an Accessibility Strategy</li> <li>• A forum had been formed for feedback on ways of working and questions were being asked early when planning engagement</li> <li>• Discussed EHCP Quality Assurance (QA) Framework - newer EHCPs were showing better quality and the QA process had highlighted gaps in health and social care advice</li> <li>• There was a monthly review with multi-agency membership that examined a sample of cases</li> <li>• The Service was considering how to build Quality Assurance into Annual Reviews and staff training to raise awareness</li> <li>• Good collaboration with external partners such as Bradford Research School on the Our Kirklees Futures</li> </ul>	<p>Visit on 16.7.25</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years Development Board was relaunching and would include school readiness considerations</li> <li>• Survey on Fair Access Protocol had been undertaken and only 22 out of 170 schools responded, further work was taking place to try and understand why schools did not engage and how to reach a wider cohort</li> </ul> <p><b>Centre for Governance and Scrutiny SEND online event on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2025</b> The Panel will attend an online event organised by the CfGS designed for LAs and stakeholders, the event will tackle the complexities of SEND Scrutiny from legal frameworks and funding models to the real world impact on children and young people and families.</p> <p><b>CQC and Ofsted SEND Inspection report – draft action plan – Informal Panel meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2025</b> The Panel will consider a presentation giving an update on the draft action plan regarding the SEND Inspection Report which was published in August 2025.</p>	<p>Visit on 28.9.25</p> <p>Panel on 29.8.25</p>
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			<p><b>SEND Sufficiency Strategy for Kirklees (2025-2028) - Panel Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2025 -</b>                  The Panel will consider a report on the SEND Sufficiency Strategy for Kirklees (2025-28).</p> <p><b>SEND Ofsted and CQC Inspection of Kirklees – Panel meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025</b>                  The Panel will consider a report on the SEND Ofsted and CQC Inspection of Kirklees Local Area Partnership’s provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision, including the Post-Inspection Action Plan.</p> <p><b>Visit to Local Offer Live on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025</b>                  The Panel will drop in to the Local Offer Live event on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025 which will be led by PCAN and will be a marketplace with stalls and workshops.</p> <p><b>Visit to Satellite provision sites for the two new special schools and Alternative Resource Provisions – to be arranged</b>                  The Panel will visit the satellite provision sites which are being put in place for youngsters whilst the two new special schools are built. Visits to be arranged in</p>	<p>Panel on 29.8.25</p> <p>Panel on 17.10.25</p> <p>Visit on 23.10.25</p> <p>Visit to be arranged</p>
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			<p>the autumn term of 2025 at the following sites – Children’s Centre at Crosland Moor, Overthorpe and New Mill.</p> <p><b>SEND Tribunals and EHCP Compliance and timescales and an overview of complaints process – Panel meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025</b>          The Panel will consider a report on SEND Tribunals and EHCP compliance and timescales and include an overview of the complaints process.</p> <p><b>DfE White Paper on SEND changes - Panel Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025</b>          The Panel will consider an update on the DfE White paper due to be published in the autumn 2025, regarding the proposals for SEND reforms.</p> <p><b>Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) – Panel Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026</b>          The Panel will consider a report on the Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) and will visit the PFA Board.</p> <p><b>Visit to the Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) Board – date to be arranged</b>          The Panel will visit the PFA Board to observe the arrangements for preparing for adulthood.</p>	<p>Panel on 11.12.25</p> <p>Panel on 11.12.25</p> <p>Panel on 6.2.26</p> <p>Visit to be arranged</p>
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<p><b>Educational Outcomes and Elective Home Education (EHE)</b></p>	<p>Jo-Anne Sanders/Emma Brayford (key lead)</p> <p>EHE – Christina Marsay and Louise Hallas</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the educational outcomes of children and young people in Kirklees in the following areas –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elective Home Education – to include a visit to meet with Strategic Leads and the Team</li> <li>• Educational Attainment Outcomes -pre-decision scrutiny before considered by Cabinet in 25/26.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Visit on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025 to meet with Elective Home Education (EHE) Strategic Leads and the Team</b></p> <p>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. The Panel will meet with Strategic EHE Leads and the rest of the Team in September 2025 to continue the scrutiny in this area.</p> <p><b>Educational Attainment Outcomes – Informal Panel meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025</b></p> <p>The Panel will consider unvalidated data on the latest attainment outcomes as part of pre-decision scrutiny before the matter is considered by Cabinet.</p>	<p>Visit on 9.9.25</p> <p>Panel on 17.10.25</p>
<p><b>Partnership Arrangements</b></p>	<p>Vicky Metherringham/Jo-Anne Sanders</p>	<p>The Panel will continue to scrutinise partnerships and boards during the 2025/26 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> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the voice of the young person being heard? (as below)</li> <li>• Good practice</li> <li>• Delivery of quality service</li> </ul>		
<b>Voice of the Young Person</b>	Tom Brailsford/Service Directors (Children's Service)	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.	Ongoing	Ongoing
<b>Health Provision for Children and Young People</b>	Emily Parry-Harries from Public Health Stewart Horn/Jackie Beaver to co-ordinate	The Panel will scrutinise the health provision for Children and Young People in Kirklees with a particular focus on the following – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emotional Wellbeing Provision for children in Kirklees and Mental Health in schools</b> - to scrutinise the provision of service and seek feedback from service users and consider fluctuation in waiting lists and trends for children's emotional health and wellbeing to include an update on the implementation of the Keeping Kirklees in Mind service.</li> </ul>		Tbc
<b>Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)</b>	Jo-Anne Sanders/Emma Brayford/Mark Janes (Chair of SACRE <a href="mailto:rmijanes@aol.com">rmijanes@aol.com</a> ) and Emma Salter, Pennine Learning (PL), Education Consultant and Jake Womack, PL Director	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 and consider the Annual Report in February each year.	<b>Annual Report on Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) – Panel meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026</b> The Panel will consider SACRE's Annual Report.	Panel on 6.2.26

Updated 21.8.2025