

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)

THEME/ISSUE	Lead Officer	APPROACH/AREAS OF FOCUS	OUTCOMES/ACTIONS	Timescale
<u>Standard items</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-decision scrutiny (decisions by Cabinet) • Performance Information (Children's Service) – Informal meeting • Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board • Ambition Board Minutes 	<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>
Review of the Improvement Journey (Children and Families)	Tom Brailsford/Vicky Metheringham	The Panel will continue to review the Improvement Journey of the Children's Service, have an oversight of the Ofsted improvement plan, attend appropriate	Multi-agency developments around the Children's Social Care Reforms – Panel meeting on 6th February 2026	Panel on 6.2.26

	<p>YJS – Ian Mottershaw/ Teresa Racz Leaving Care Service – Joel Hanna Children’s Social Care Reforms – V Metheringham CQC and Ofsted Inspection – V Metheringham</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"> • Oversight of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and planned Re-design of the Leaving Care Service which will include a visit to the Team • Multi-agency developments around the Children’s Social Care Reforms, the leaving care service and Front Door • Updates of future Ofsted Inspections • The Panel will visit Children’s Social Care Teams to continue their review of the improvement journey of the Children’s Service 	<p>The Panel will consider a verbal report on the multi-agency developments around the Children’s Social Care Reforms.</p> <p>Care Leavers Month 2025 The Panel were invited to attend the Care Leavers Month events which took place during November 2025 to celebrate the achievements of care leavers and raised awareness of challenges that some might face. The national theme for Care Leavers Month was “Rising as me: overcoming challenges, transforming, and finding your identify”.</p> <p>Visit to activities organised by the Youth Justice Service (YJS) for young people 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>Our Children’s Voice Team – Panel meeting on 19th March 2026 The Panel will consider an update from the Our Children’s Voice Team on the key aspects of their work and hear about the</p>	<p>Various dates in Nov 25</p> <p>Various dates</p> <p>Panel on 19th March 2026</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Joint Targeted Area Inspection of multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment – the Panel will consider information on the inspection – timescales to be confirmed • Visits to – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leaving Care Service - Front Door Social Care Team - North service Area Children’s Social Care Team (Dewsbury and Batley) - Activities that the youth justice service coordinate with young people and the team 	<p>work undertaken on “What it feels like to be excluded as a child”.</p> <p>Visit to Families First Partnership Programme staff and partner engagement session on 3rd February 2026 The Panel will attend and observe the partnership event which is a national initiative by the DfE and forms part of the Kirklees Families Together initiative.</p> <p>Visit to Children’s Social Care Conference on 17th March 2026 The Panel will attend and observe the Conference which will take place on International Social Worker Day. A number of speakers will present on the day, including a young person who will share her experiences of having a social worker as a child in Kirklees and the long-lasting impact this has had on her childhood.</p> <p>Oversight of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and planned Re-design of the Leaving Care Service – Panel meeting on 19th March 2026 The Panel will consider a report on the Oversight of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and planned Re-design of the Leaving Care</p>	<p>Visit on 3.2.26</p> <p>Visit on 17.3.26</p> <p>Panel on 19th March 2026</p> <p>Visit to Leaving Care</p>
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			Service, which will include a visit to the Leaving Care Service Team in 2026.	Service – to be arranged
<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation Plan</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 & CQC Inspection – Jo Sanders</p> <p>Adulthood PFA Board – Adrian Wisniewski/Donna Auty</p> <p>PCAN - Carol</p> <p>Thomas/Johanna Hull and Dawn Pitt</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the SEND Transformation Plan and will focus on the following areas –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND Sufficiency Strategy for Kirklees (2025-2028) • Overview of SEND Tribunals and EHCP Compliance and timescales and the Complaints Process - which will include – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - observation of the decision-making process for EHCP; - a look at the volume processes/quality and compliance (including Annual Reviews) and the multi-agency approach - observation at the EHCP Quality Assurance Multi-Agency meetings - data on complaints/mediation/tribunals against the number of EHCPs - In order to raise the awareness of Panel Members an anonymised EHCP would be shared with the Panel/Vision 360/Self Evaluation and SEN2 publication data • SEND Ofsted and CQC Inspection of Kirklees Local Area Partnership’s provision for children and young people with special educational needs and 	<p>Visit on 10th June 2025 to the Places Access and Inclusion Committee of the Education (PAIC)</p> <p>The Panel visited the Places, Access and Inclusion Meeting on the 10th 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"> - Additionally Resourced Provision and support for New Mill Junior and Infant to develop 2 site provision within rural areas; - Analysis of sufficiency data and reducing PANs for Primary schools; - The Local Plan and the impact of new development on school sufficiency in certain areas; - Review of the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) which had see 14 schools join a task and finish group; - 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, 	<p>Visit on 10.6.25</p>

		<p>disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision – Local Authority Action Plan (to include information on the Liquid Logic Parent Portal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE White Paper on proposals on SEND Changes (April 26 implementation) • Preparation to Adulthood (PFA) which will include a visit to the PFA Board (date to be confirmed) • Visits to – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEND Transformation Programme Event on 26th June 2025 - Satellite provision for the two new special schools and Alternative Resource Provisions at Woodley Moor, Overthorpe and New Mill sites - Mainstream schools to observe the practice of the new initiatives of schools working in clusters - Half yearly SEND Event (date to be confirmed) - PCAN (Parent Carer Forum) - Local Offer Live on 23.10.25 - EHCP Quality Assurance Multi-Agency meetings (dates to be confirmed) 	<p>some schools were already oversubscribed.</p> <p>Visit to Cluster meeting at Holmfirth High School on 25th June 2025</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"> - Respectful relationships had been built through the year. - Shared training followed up with ideas on how to implement what they had learned. - Clusters had enabled consideration of all-staff training within settings as well as specialist training for staff from multiple settings. - Important to ensure the EHCP Team would accept whole school evidence for the Decision Panels not only specialist assessments. - It was seen as a priority that EHCP Leaders should attend cluster meetings. - Feedback from SENDCO's was often that they were not clear why refusals had been given and could not get hold of an officer to discuss. - There was a wellbeing element to being able to share cases. - Schools were dealing with incontinence problems and concerns 	<p>Visit on 25.6.25</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services who attended seemed to value the chance to network and feel informed on progress. - 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. - Good to hear the progress on the 2 new build special schools at Woodley and Joseph Norton. - Progress made on compliance with issuing EHCPs within statutory timescales. - 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; - A table discussion highlighted the need for communication styles tailored to the young people and better ways to engage. <p>Visits to observe the Decision-Making process for EHCPs</p> <p>The Panel observed the decision-making process for EHCPs which took place in 3 stages –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Decision to assess Panel on 22nd May</u> 	<p>Visit on 22.5.25</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multi-disciplinary approach worked well although not all services had been able to attend on the day; • a wide focus for discussion, not only on education but considering factors such as social service or CAMHS involvement • The panel had access to cross-boundary working such as the ability to access medical records from South Yorkshire. • Key Learning Partners can intervene if settings do not take the expected actions, and the Specialist Outreach team can look at the whole school picture as well as on an individual level. <p>2. <u>Decision to issue Panel on 19th June</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An example of positive multi-disciplinary working where everyone's voice was invited and valued; • Decisions were made by consensus and with discussion • Consideration was given to the family situation, risks such as adoption disruption and to parental and school recommendations and preferred outcomes 	<p>Visit on 19.6.25</p>
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			<p>scrutiny focus on the SEND Transformation Plan. Key points discussed were –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust response on the need for an Accessibility Strategy • A forum had been formed for feedback on ways of working and questions were being asked early when planning engagement • 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 • There was a monthly review with multi-agency membership that examined a sample of cases • The Service was considering how to build Quality Assurance into Annual Reviews and staff training to raise awareness • Good collaboration with external partners such as Bradford Research School on the Our Kirklees Futures • Early Years Development Board was relaunching and would include school readiness considerations • 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 	
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			<p>why schools did not engage and how to reach a wider cohort</p> <p>Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) SEND online event on 28th August 2025</p> <p>The Panel attended an online event organised by the CfGS designed for Local Authorities and stakeholders, the event considered the complexities of SEND Scrutiny from legal frameworks and funding models to the real-world impact on children and young people and families. A number of presentations were given by LA Officers, a representative of the National Network of Parent Carers Forum and Councillors involved in scrutiny of SEND.</p> <p>CQC and Ofsted SEND Inspection report – draft action plan – Informal Panel meeting on 29th August 2025</p> <p>The Panel considered a presentation giving an update on the draft action plan regarding the SEND Inspection Report which was published in August 2025.</p> <p>SEND Sufficiency Strategy for Kirklees (2025-2028) - Panel Meeting on 29th August 2025 -</p> <p>The Panel considered and supported the Kirklees SEND Sufficiency for Kirklees</p>	<p>Visit on 28.8.25</p> <p>Panel on 29.8.25</p> <p>Panel on 29.8.25</p>
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			<p>2025-28 and noted the actions undertaken to address some of the issues raised in the report. The Panel agreed to consider future reports when available on the SEND Sufficiency Strategy giving an update on progress and future plans, including an update on the work of the SEND Sufficiency Group.</p> <p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation Plan – Informal meeting on 16th September 2025 The Panel met to consider whether the agreed areas of focus needed to be widened and agreed further areas for consideration which have been discussed with Officers.</p> <p>SEND Ofsted and CQC Inspection of Kirklees – Local Authority Action Plan – Panel meeting on 17th October 2025 The Panel considered a report and presentation on the outcome of the Kirklees Local Area Partnership Inspection of SEND and Alternative Provision undertaken in June 2025 by Ofsted and CQC, and the post inspection Action Plan, which was presented by Ian Bennett, ICB Kirklees Place Director of Nursing and Quality.</p>	<p>Panel on 16.9.25</p> <p>Panel on 17.10.25</p>
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			<p>Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) – Panel Meeting on 6th February 2026 The Panel will consider a report on the Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) and will visit the PFA Board in February 2026.</p> <p>Visit to the Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) Board – 24th February 2026 The Panel will visit the PFA Board to observe the arrangements for preparing for adulthood.</p>	<p>Panel on 6.2.26</p> <p>Visit on 24.2.26</p>
<p>Educational Outcomes and Elective Home Education (EHE)</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"> • Elective Home Education – to include a visit to meet with Strategic Leads and the Team • Educational Attainment Outcomes -pre-decision scrutiny before considered by Cabinet in 25/26. 	<p>Visit to meet with Elective Home Education (EHE) Strategic Leads and the Team – 9th September 2025 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 met with Strategic EHE Leads in September 2025 and discussed a number of key areas relating to home educating, some of which are listed below -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why parents decided to home educate - Engagement between schools and families took place when possible before a decision was made to home educate 	<p>Visit on 9.9.25</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Workload in the team was a challenge but measures were being taken to put systems in place to assist- No current legal requirement for a parent to inform the Local Authority that they were going to home educate, but safeguarding procedures were in place and if a child was not on a school roll the team would liaise with School Admissions- Home schooling became common during the pandemic but parents seemed now more wary, the team worked with families to support them to get children back into school rather than use formal processes if appropriate- Some parents say they could teach a primary aged child but not secondary- Parents were encouraged to talk to the team before making a decision to home educate- Good working relationships were in place with Front Door and intelligence was shared- The team worked hard to build relationships with schools and families- The Panel suggested that feedback could be sought from parents when their children returned to school	
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			<p>Educational Attainment Outcomes – Informal Panel meeting on 17th October 2025</p> <p>The Panel considered an overview of the statutory outcomes achieved by learners in Kirklees during the academic year 2024-2025. 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 Panel noted that the results and national comparisons provided in this report were subject to validation and reflective of the data available in September 2025.</p>	Panel on 17.10.25
Partnership Arrangements	Vicky Metherringham/Jo-Anne Sanders	<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"> • Data collection • Partnership working • Is the voice of the young person being heard? (as below) • Good practice • Delivery of quality service 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Panel will visit the Families First Partnership Programme</p>	Ongoing

<p>Voice of the Young Person</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>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Health Provision for Children and Young People</p>	<p>Emily Parry-Harries from Public Health Stewart Horn/Jackie Beaver to co-ordinate</p>	<p>The Panel will scrutinise the health provision for Children and Young People in Kirklees with a particular focus on the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional Wellbeing Provision for children in Kirklees and Mental Health in schools - 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. 		<p>Tbc</p>
<p>Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)</p>	<p>Jo-Anne Sanders/Emma Brayford/Mark Janes (Chair of SACRE rmijanes@aol.com) and Emma Salter, Pennine Learning (PL), Education Consultant and Jake Womack, PL Director</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 and consider the Annual Report in February each year.</p>	<p>Annual Report on Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) – Panel meeting on 6th February 2026 The Panel will consider SACRE’s Annual Report.</p>	<p>Panel on 6.2.26</p>