

Blackpool Council

29 January 2019

To: Councillors D Coleman, Collett, Mitchell, O'Hara, Owen, Rowson, D Scott, Mrs Scott, Stansfield and L Taylor

The above members are requested to attend the:

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 7 February 2019 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room A, Town Hall, Blackpool

A G E N D A

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

- (a) personal interest
- (b) prejudicial interest
- (c) disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI)

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Head of Democratic Governance in advance of the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2018 (Pages 1 - 6)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 15 November 2018 as a true and correct record.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

To consider any applications from members of the public to speak at the meeting.

4 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (Pages 7 - 12)

To consider the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions within the remit of the

Resilient Communities and Children's Scrutiny Committee taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

5 CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE REPORT OF RECENT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS (Pages 13 - 72)

The report provides an overview of the recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) Inspection Report of the Blackpool Youth Offending Service and the Ofsted Inspection Report of Blackpool Children's Social Care Services. This report outlines the judgements and recommendations made by both inspectorates and the improvement plans in place.

6 INCLUSION UPDATE (Pages 73 - 82)

To provide an update on the implementation of the Inclusion Plan and the impact it is having on numbers of exclusions.

7 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UPDATE (Pages 83 - 136)

To provide an update on Special Educational Needs (SEND) provision in Blackpool.

8 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN (Pages 137 - 150)

The Committee to consider the Workplan, together with any suggestions that Members may wish to make for scrutiny review and to note the feedback from the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Scrutiny input.

9 SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE SCRUTINY REPORT (Pages 151 - 156)

To report back to the Committee on the piece of work undertaken looking at the support provided to the Children's Services' workforce.

10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday, 20 June 2019, subject to confirmation at Annual Council.

Venue information:

First floor meeting room (lift available), accessible toilets (ground floor), no-smoking building.

Other information:

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager, Tel: 01253 477213, e-mail sharon.davis@blackpool.gov.uk

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

MINUTES OF RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING - THURSDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2018

Present:

Councillor Stansfield (in the Chair)

Councillors

Collett
Mitchell

O'Hara
Owen

D Scott
Mrs Scott

L Taylor

In Attendance:

Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services

Mr Paul Turner, Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion

Mr John Hawkin, Head of Leisure Services

Mr Tony Morrissey, Interim Head of Safeguarding and Principal Social Worker

Mr Mike Taplin, Head of Adult Learning

Ms Judith Mills, Consultant in Public Health

Mr Paul Threlfall, Business Development Manager, Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board

Mrs Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

Councillor Maria Kirkland, Cabinet Member for Third Sector Engagement and Leisure Services

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs Scott and Stansfield declared personal interests in relation to Item 9 'Children's Services Update Report', the nature of the interests that they were members of the Corporate Parent Panel.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the last meeting held on 13 September 2018, be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no requests by members of the public to speak on this occasion.

4 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Committee noted the Executive decisions taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan December 2018 – March 2019 and noted the decisions to be taken relating to the portfolio of the Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities).

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6 GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Mr John Hawkin, Head of Leisure Services advised that the development of a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy had been deemed necessary following the results of a mapping exercise that demonstrated that Blackpool had the lowest tree canopy cover in England, was intensely urban and that 5,000 people less than the national average used the outdoor environment each week.

He highlighted that evidence suggested that green and blue infrastructure reduced surface water and flooding and therefore seawater quality, encouraged people to play, walk and cycle, increased employee productivity and improved the mental health of adults and children.

The Committee noted that there were a number of identified key recommendations to build green and blue infrastructure and, that in order to be successful in making improvements, the creation of the Strategy must be incorporated into the Town Centre Strategy, the Leisure Quarter Masterplan and the Enterprise Zone Masterplan, as well as all other significant new developments. It was commented that in order to achieve this, the green and blue implications of all decisions taken must be considered.

Members raised concerns that some wards that were very low on green space had not been addressed within the Strategy. In response, Mrs Judith Mills, Consultant in Public Health advised that a series of consultation events were being held in order to identify specific areas requiring improved green infrastructure and in order to determine if the strategy was correctly balanced.

The proposal within the Strategy to work with individual businesses and public sector organisations was considered and it was suggested that the Council must ensure that other policies were not contravened in the bid to create an attractive setting. Members raised particular concerns regarding the potential use of takeaway food outlets and establishments selling alcohol to provide items such as tree skirts and planting boxes that would advertise their business.

Further concerns were raised regarding the maintenance costs relating to an increased number of green spaces and the need to ensure infrastructure was carefully managed. Despite the potential costs, which would need to be carefully considered, Members considered that there was a need to improve the offer of green spaces, particularly in areas such as the Promenade, which had been designed with a focus on sea defence.

The Committee commented that the Strategy was inspirational and the emphasis on partnership was important given the costs associated with creating and maintaining green spaces. It was noted that the Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee had resolved to establish a cross- Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group to consider the Strategy further and Members of the Resilient Communities and Children's Scrutiny Committee agreed that further input and development was required.

The Committee agreed:

- 1) To establish a Task and Finish Group in conjunction with the other Scrutiny Committees to feed into the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy in more detail.

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- 2) To appoint Councillors O'Hara, Owen and Mrs Scott to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Task and Finish Group.
- 3) To forward the following considerations to the Task and Finish Group:
 - a. That the Council must not contradict other policies including those on alcohol advertising and fast food advertising in the pursuit of achieving the aims set out in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.
 - b. That the Green and Blue Implications of decisions taken be considered and clearly set out within reports.

7 BLACKPOOL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

Mr Paul Threlfall, Business Development Manager, Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) presented the Annual Report of the Board to the Committee for consideration.

Members expressed concerns relating to the attendance statistics contained within the report noting that some partners had particularly low attendance rates. In response, Mr Threlfall advised that the statistics only reflected the attendance of the named representative and did not show that a deputy of an appropriate level from the organisation was often present. He added that non-attendance was challenged on an ongoing basis and the Independent Chair had targeted improved attendance over the year, citing schools as an example where attendance had significantly improved.

Upon consideration of the response provided by Mr Threlfall, Members considered that the attendance statistics in the annual report were not a true representation and it was requested that an alternative way to demonstrate attendance be considered for future reporting.

In response to further questions, Mr Threlfall advised that engagement with schools was good and that regular 'Twilight' meetings were held. He also reported that there were a number of areas that the Committee might wish to seek further assurance on during the next year, highlighting ongoing work around early help, child criminal exploitation, neglect and the response to children 'missing from home'.

The Committee went on to consider partnership working and the challenge offered to partner organisations through the BSCB. Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services advised that collective decision making was often necessary and that constant challenge of partners was required. She also highlighted that the remit of the Awaken Team would be extended to cover all forms of child exploitation and it was agreed that an update on the changes would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

Members noted that there had been a large number of Serious Case Reviews in 2017/2018 and requested further information relating to key themes. In response, Mr Threlfall advised that there had been a dramatic reduction in the number of reviews following the period covered in the annual report. He advised that there were no particular themes running through the reviews, however, noted that a number of reviews had related to babies. He added that a large amount of work had been undertaken to strengthen pre-birth processes.

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The key changes to the Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board brought about by the

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revised statutory guidance 'Working Together 2018' were noted. Mr Threlfall advised that the primary change was the move away from the Board being hosted solely by the Local Authority to a partnership which would be hosted by the local Clinical Commissioning Group, Lancashire Constabulary and the Local Authority together. It was noted that there was no reference to Scrutiny oversight within the guidance and that local arrangements would need to be considered in due course.

The Committee agreed to add consideration of the changes to Awaken to their next meeting.

8 EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered the educational outcomes of Blackpool schools for 2017/2018 and noted that the data provided in relation to absence and exclusion was constantly changing.

Members noted that the absence of pupils in secondary schools in Blackpool in 2017/2018 was significantly higher than the national average and queried if any improvements had been made. Mr Paul Turner, Head of Service for School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion advised that improvement was slow and that statistics for absence varied significantly across schools. He reported that schools were purchasing more support from the Council's Pupil Welfare Service and that the 'first day of term protocol' put in place to reduce transience across Blackpool's schools had had an impact.

In response to a question, Mr Turner advised that, although the reduction in fixed term exclusions from 2016/2017 to 2017/2018 had been small, there had been a significant reduction since the start of the 2018/2019 school year demonstrating that the work with schools on inclusion was having an impact. Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services added that schools had been challenged regarding the number of exclusions and partnership working had improved.

It was noted that there were concerns regarding the reading level of children at both key stages one and two and that a number of initiatives had been put in place to improve reading ability. Members noted the links of literacy to schools readiness, early help and also adult/parental literacy. Mr Mike Taplin, Head of Adult Learning advised that adult literacy was a priority and was a key feature of the support provided by his Team. The importance of the developing Early Years Strategy in increasing school readiness was noted and it was agreed that the Strategy be considered by the Committee at a future meeting, in addition to the related Special Educational Needs Strategy.

The Committee went on to consider Maths attainment and noted that achievement at primary schools was high. It had been recognised that the quality of teaching in secondary schools was not as high and that there were a number of schools who did not have dedicated Maths teachers. Another key area for development had been the transition between primary and secondary schools and it had been identified that secondary schools were not building on primary school learning in Year 7. Improved relationships between primary and secondary schools had resulted in a transition curriculum which was providing more challenging material for children in Year 7.

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Members also considered the increasing number of parents choosing to home educate their children. Mr Turner advised that the increase was indicative of a national trend and that a number of reasons for the increase had been identified including quality of teaching and schools and an increase in the enforcement around pupil unauthorised absence. It was noted that it was a parent's right to choose to home educate and that many parents took the role seriously. Members also queried potential courses of action should safeguarding issues arise and Mr Turner advised that if evidenced safeguarding concerns were raised then a School Attendance Order could be issued.

In response to questions, it was noted that although the performance of the one free school in Blackpool had been considered to be 'good' by Ofsted, the local authority might consider the standards at the school to be inadequate. Members raised significant concerns relating to the education of the children in the school and queried the role of the Scrutiny Committee in monitoring the individual performance of schools. Mr Turner advised that he had met with the school and the Regional Schools Commissioner, who was ultimately responsible for free schools and academies. The Committee was also advised that different legislation governed free schools and academies and noted that teachers at free schools and academies did not need to be qualified and might be paid significantly less money than teachers at maintained schools.

The Committee agreed to consider the Early Years Strategy development and the Special Educational Needs Strategy at a future meeting.

9 CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE REPORT

Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services presented the Children's Services Update Report noting that it focussed on care leavers, the change from the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) to the multi-agency triage hub (MATH) and also included the Corporate Parent Panel Annual Report.

Members raised concerns regarding the number of care leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the plans in place to reduce the number. Mrs Booth advised that Opportunity Area funding would be used to replicate Project Search for care leavers. She highlighted that the Council now employed a number of care leavers and that there were opportunities available. It was considered important to provide wrap around support to care leavers to help them to fulfil their roles and succeed in the position they had been appointed to.

It was reported that a workshop had been held with Members of the Resilient Communities and Children's Scrutiny Committee, as agreed at the last meeting, to create a Children's Services Dashboard. Mr Tony Morrissey, Interim Head of Safeguarding and Principal Social Worker advised that the dashboard would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration.

Members noted the value provided by attendance at Regulation 44 visits and thanked Mrs Booth and her Team for the opportunity to participate. Mrs Booth returned the thanks for Members' involvement, highlighting that the involvement of Members offered an additional check and balance to care homes and noted that the next step would be to involve young people in the visits.

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10 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

The Committee noted its workplan and agreed to incorporate the additional items identified during the course of the meeting into it.

11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date and time of the next meeting was noted as Thursday, 7 February 2019, commencing at 6.00pm.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.45 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Tel: 01253 477213
E-mail: sharon.davis@blackpool.gov.uk

Report to:	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2019

EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions within the remit of the Resilient Communities and Children's Scrutiny Committee taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 Members will have the opportunity to question the Cabinet Secretary or the relevant Cabinet Member in relation to the decisions taken.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure that the opportunity is given for all Executive and Cabinet Member decisions to be scrutinised and held to account.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Attached at the appendix to this report is a summary of the decisions taken, which have

been circulated to Members previously.

5.2 This report is presented to ensure Members are provided with a timely update on the decisions taken by the Executive and Cabinet Members. It provides a process where the Committee can raise questions and a response be provided.

5.3 Members are encouraged to seek updates on decisions and will have the opportunity to raise any issues.

6.0 Witnesses/representatives

6.1 The following Cabinet Members are responsible for the decisions taken in this report and have been invited to attend the meeting, however, Councillor Cain has had to give apologies due to other commitments on this occasion:

- Councillor Graham Cain, Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities)

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 4(a): Summary of Executive and Cabinet Member decisions taken.

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Human Resources considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Equalities considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Financial considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Risk management considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Ethical considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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APPENDIX 4(a)

DECISION / OUTCOME	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER	DATE	CABINET MEMBER
<p>STANLEY PARK GOLF COURSE The Cabinet Secretary agreed the recommendations as outlined above namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the forfeiture of the Mack Trading (International) Limited leases on Stanley Park Golf Course. 2. To note due to the forfeiture of the Mack Trading (International) Limited leases and that the Council has become the immediate landlord of the lease to Blackpool Golf Club House. 3. To delegate authority to the Director of Community and Environmental Services to take steps to secure the future of the Golf Course in the short term by reopening and operating the course and taking steps to maintain the golf course until the 31 March 2019. 4. That the Director of Communication and Regeneration, via the Growth and Prosperity team, carries out a consultation exercise with parties who have expressed an interest in the course, to establish whether there is a longer term sustainable solution for the course. 	<p>The previous leases on the golf course have been forfeited and reverted to the Council. The Council needs to take steps urgently to ensure that the course is protected as an asset and its continued use as golf course in the short term. In the longer term, given the failure of the previous operator who was a major player in the sector, it is considered beneficial to consult fully with a range of potential operators to ensure that any future plans remain sustainable in the longer term.</p>	<p>PH75/2018</p>	<p>9 Nov 2018</p>	<p>Councillor Graham Cain, Cabinet Member for Resilient Communities</p>

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Report to:	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2019

CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE REPORT OF RECENT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1.0 The report provides an overview of the recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) Inspection Report of the Blackpool Youth Offending Service and the Ofsted Inspection of Blackpool Children's Social Care Services report. This report outlines the judgements and recommendations made by both inspectorates and the improvement plans in place.

2.0 **Recommendation(s):**

To review the recommendations and improvement plans in place as a result of the recent HMIP Blackpool Youth Offending Service and Ofsted Children's Social Care Services inspection reports and ensure they are robust and fit for purpose.

2.1 **Reasons for recommendation(s):**

Contained within the inspection reports are recommended improvements due to the inadequate judgements.

2.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

2.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.0 **Council priority:**

3.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

4.0 **Background information**

Blackpool has been subject to two inspections since October 2018. The first was the HMIP inspection of Blackpool's Youth Offending Service, which took place in October

2018. The second was Ofsted's inspection of Blackpool's Children's Social Care Services, which took place in November/December 2018.

4.1 **Blackpool Youth Offending Team HMIP Inspection Report**

The overall Judgement of this inspection was inadequate. The full report was published on 18 December 2018. There are nine specific recommendations contained in the report. These being as follows:

4.2 **The Youth Offending Team (YOT) Manager should:**

1. Commission training to develop the staffs skills and knowledge in key areas practice.
2. Re-establish the staff's sense of pride in work of the YOT.
3. Introduce a process to ensure the timeliness and quality of AssetPlus assessments.
4. Develop a range of suitable interventions for work with children and young people

4.3 **The Director of Children's Services (DCS) should:**

5. Fully analyse the needs and profile of the children and young people subject to YOT supervision and use this to commission appropriate services.
6. Ensure Board members are able to challenge each other and the YOT manager and advocate for the YOT in their own organisations
7. Together with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, review the out of court disposals processes and commissioned services to ensure informed decision making and good information sharing for out of court disposals.

4.4 **The Youth Justice Board should:**

8. Provide further guidance and advice on completing the integrated planning and pathways document in AssetPlus.
9. Review the national policy for caretaking arrangements for children placed out of their own local authority area.

Strategic responses to the above recommendations and how the Partnership Board and Service are going to address identified areas of practice, have been communicated with HMIP on the 14 January 2019 (attached at Appendix 5(a))

4.5 The plan is a partnership plan and is jointly owned by the Blackpool Youth Offending Board partners. In addition a new Executive Board has been established to drive the improvement in line with the expected pace of change from HMIP. The Executive Board will meet monthly and be chaired by an independent chair who will be a senior member of the Youth Justice Board.

4.6 The expectation of the HMIP recommendations is that there is a joint response to improvement from all statutory partners Police, Health, Probation, Education as well as the local authority with support from the Youth Justice Board. The function of the

Executive is to provide an ownership of actions to drive the required changes.

4.7 A detailed action plan of improvement is being finalised and is to be submitted to HMIP by the 15 February 2019.

4.8 **Blackpool Children's Social Care Ofsted Inspection Report**

4.9 Ofsted provide judgements against four areas. The table below outlines these areas and the judgements received.

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate

4.10 The full report was published on the 17 January 2019. It identified 12 key areas for improvement. These being as follows:

- The identification of and response to risk, particularly in relation to long-standing concerns of chronic neglect
- The response and recording of decisions in relation to contacts, thresholds and issues of consent at the front door to be clear and proportionate
- The quality of social work assessments and plans and the extent to which they reflect the child's history
- The response to children at risk of exploitation, and those young people who are homeless, and the extent to which their vulnerabilities are fully recognised and lead to responsive intervention to keep them safe
- The effectiveness of strategic partnerships to work together to improve outcomes and protect children
- Oversight of pre-proceedings work and placement-with-parent practice to address drift and delay
- The quality of decision-making, management oversight and recording of threshold decisions when children come into care
- Training needs of social workers to ensure that they are prepared for court proceedings
- The quality and impact of personal education plans for children in care, and the extent to which these children are effectively supported at all key stages
- A clearer and more consistent approach to agency decision-maker processes for approval and matching of foster carers and adopters

- The strategic and coordinated approach to providing support for care leavers to improve their outcomes, including education, employment and training
- The quality and impact of audit and performance management

A 12-week plan is being developed. This short term plan will set out how these 12 areas for improvement will be immediately addressed and ensure that the energies and resources of the authority are clearly focussed in the first three months post Inspection.

- 4.11 The plan will outline the response to each area for improvement and will have detailed outcomes with clear deadlines for actions to be completed.
- 4.12 The plan is owned by the Leader, DCS, Chief Executive and Lead Member for Children's Services who will assign the actions within it and monitor the delivery and impact. Robust monitoring will be ensured via weekly written progress updates on the plan being provided by relevant Heads of Service. Reports will also be submitted to the Improvement Board on a monthly basis
- 4.13 The membership of the improvement board will be refreshed and more senior partner members will be expected to agree a partnership commitment. Actions have already been taken which were formulated during and after the inspection following feedback on the findings. A resource review has been undertaken across services that have supported the development of the 12 week plan. This has led to the approval by Corporate Leadership Team of circa £1million of additional investment, to support the increased pace of change required to deliver the planned improvements.
- 4.14 Regular Quality Assurance Monitoring Reports will ensure Senior Leaders and Blackpool's Improvement Board have clear line of sight with regard to the quality of social work practice and management oversight, and whether this is timely and effectively improving children's outcomes.
- 4.15 **Intervention**

Ofsted

When a local authority children's services are judged inadequate, Ofsted carry out monitoring activity that includes an action planning visit, monitoring visits and a re-inspection. The lead inspector will inform the DCS of this at the feedback meeting for the inspection where the inadequate judgement is given.

Monitoring visits will focus on where improvement is needed the most. Inspectors will monitor and report on the local authority's progress since the inspection. Inspectors

will also check that performance in other areas has not declined since the inspection. If new concerns emerge, inspectors are likely to look at these on the monitoring visits.

Independent commissioner

Blackpool Ofsted judgement 2012 – inadequate.

Blackpool Ofsted judgement 2019 – inadequate.

This means that the local authority is deemed to be persistently failing.

The secretary of state will be appointing an independent commissioner. The presumption is that children’s services will be removed from local authority control unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. The independent commissioner will be seeking to determine the Council’s capacity and capability to improve itself and will recommend whether or not this evidence is sufficiently strong to suggest that long term sustainable improvement can be achieved should operational control remain with the council.

5.1 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

6.0 List of Appendices:

6.1 Appendix 5(a): Strategic response to recommendations of the inspection report submitted to HMIP on the 14 January 2019

Appendix 5(b): HMIP Inspection Report of Youth Offending Services

Appendix 5(c): Ofsted Inspection Report Children’s Social Care Services

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 There are no relevant issues to consider.

8.0 Human resources considerations:

8.1 There are no related issues.

9.0 Equalities considerations:

9.1 There are no related issues.

10.0 Financial considerations:

10.1 Financial considerations are to be noted that in the event of work not being completed the Youth Justice Board could withhold some or all of the current grant provided to service the YOT resources. Additional resource will be required in Children’s Services to improve pace of improvement.

11.0 Risk management considerations:

- 11.1 Risk issues for consideration are the potential inability of the partnership to be able to improve and implement the recommendations from HMIP in a sufficiently timely and effective manner.
There are risks related to a potential inability to recruit to the number of posts required

12.0 Ethical considerations:

- 12.1 No relevant issues.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

- 13.1 Both the Young Peoples Services Board and the Children's Services Improvement Board will oversee improvements.

14.0 Background papers:

- 14.1 None.

Youth Offending Service – Strategic and Partnership Plans to address recommendations from HMIP Inspection.

The service was inspected in October 2018 by HMIP and found to be inadequate. This plan is the Partnership and Board response to the recommendations made by the Inspectors, and seeks to ensure that there is sufficient pace and focus to the improvement journey from all partners, with support from the Youth Justice Board (YJB), to make significant and sustainable changes to outcomes for young people.

The timescales in the detailed operational delivery plan will be challenging, but it is crucial that the partnership prioritise the improvement work identified to make significant, swift and impactful change for young people. Accountability and ownership of the plan will be held at board level, and the Chief Officers from the Council, Health and Police Authorities will be required to commit to the deliverables in the plan. An Executive Board will be created to ensure that there is sufficient oversight of progress and effective, consistent challenge across the Partnership.

Impact will be measured for every action, and partners will need to promptly share key, current data that supports the understanding of the baseline position, and continue to share this data to evidence the scale and pace of impactful change. **Delivery** will be monitored through the tracking of the progress against actions. **Impact** will be measured through evidential quality improvement in practice and outcomes for children in performance data, recurrent audits and feedback from staff.

Strategic Summary

Recommendation One - Commission training to develop the staff's skills and knowledge in key areas of practice

The Youth Justice Board (YJB), Head of Service and Youth Offending Team (YOT) Manager will work together to engage the workforce and undertake a full skills audit and identify how and when skills and knowledge gaps will be addressed. Training to meet the identified gaps will be commissioned as a priority. Operational Managers will be prioritised for development training with the Youth Justice Board. The workforce development plan will encompass mentoring and modelling from other, well performing Local Authority YOT professionals as well as course based training. Staff will be encouraged to participate in the audit and in identifying development opportunities, and the plan will contain challenging but realistic timescales that will be monitored through the board.

Recommendation Two - Re-establish the staff's sense of pride in the work of the YOT

The board will need to ensure that the appointment and induction of the new YOT Manager is robust. To be successful in the role the new post holder will need to have the support and engagement of the partnership and have the capacity to, in conjunction with the Head of Service, lead staff through to a position of strength,

ownership and pride in the quality of their work and impact on outcomes for vulnerable young people and the victims of crime. Giving staff a voice at board level through the implementation of a shadow board will support the evidence base for the impact of change.

Recommendation Three - Introduce a process to ensure the timeliness and quality of Asset Plus assessments

The implementation of a YOT specific audit and quality assurance process that tracks key compliance measures and demonstrates the impact of actions on the quality of practice, evidence of management oversight and outcomes for young people will be completed within three months. Reports will be made to every board on agreed key performance outcomes and track improvements in compliance, quality and impact.

Recommendation Four - Develop a range of suitable interventions for work with children and young people

A model of delivery is being developed for an innovative and creative junior attendance centre. The YOT Partnership Service need to expand their knowledge, understanding and influence over the wide range of opportunities and support mechanisms available to positively impact on children and young people's lives across Blackpool and reduce the risk of first time entrants and reoffending. The YOT Manager will be supported by the Board to ensure that this is embedded within the partnership and the team increase their use of evidence based programmes and specific resources to meet identified need which is focussed on prevention and diversion.

Recommendation Five - Fully analyse the needs and profile of the children and young people and use this to commission appropriate services.

A full analysis is underway and this will inform, through the governance of the board, the identification and commissioning of appropriate services. This will be a dynamic process to ensure that as the cohort shifts, the response to accessing, and where necessary developing, new services also shifts in response. This information will support review of the resource commitment from Partners to the operational delivery undertaken by the Executive Board.

Recommendation Six - Ensure board members are able to challenge each other and the YOT manager and advocate for the YOT in their own organisations.

All board members will be inducted into the roles and responsibilities of the board and reflective work with partners undertaken to ensure that lessons are learned from the report and concerns from inspectors about the partnership arrangements. A new Terms of Reference will be developed for a more robust governance arrangement with sign off by the chief Executive of Blackpool Council and the chief constable of Lancashire Constabulary.

An Executive Board will be formed to drive and challenge the improvement journey. Sufficiently senior representatives will form the Executive Board including a commitment from an Assistant Chief Constable and Senior Accountable Person from the Clinical Commissioning group. The executive board will be chaired by a senior leader of the youth justice board.

Work will be undertaken with Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen Local Authorities to explore joint working and to evaluate the potential benefits to Blackpool young people of a Pan Lancashire approach to YOT Delivery.

Recommendation Seven - Together with the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, review the out of court disposals processes and commissioned services to ensure informed decision-making and good information-sharing for out of court cases.

There will be a partnership approach from the board to consider the options for agreeing, developing and implementing a robust and evidence based approach to delivering an effective out of court disposal process to impact positively of the needs of children and young people and a diversionary approach using a “children first” approach. Specific work to explore whether there is a different Police response in Blackpool to other neighbouring authorities governed by the same authority will be undertaken, and a review of the panels and processes in place to support consistent and effective decision making will be undertaken.

Recommendation Eight - Provide further guidance and advice on completing the integrated planning and pathways document in AssetPlus.

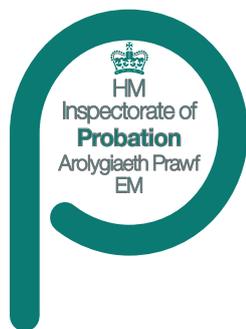
The YJB will develop further guidance.

The service will be required to commission additional training for staff on this recommendation.

Recommendation Nine – Review the national policy for caretaking arrangements for children placed out of their own local authority area

The YJB will discuss with DfE the matter of notification of children who are placed out of area.

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An inspection of youth offending services in

Blackpool

HM Inspectorate of Probation

DECEMBER 2018

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Tracy Green, supported by a team of inspectors, as well as staff from our operations and research teams. The Head of Youth Offending Team Inspections, responsible for this inspection programme, is Alan MacDonald. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

Please note that throughout the report the names in the practice examples have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

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Foreword

We have given Blackpool YOT an overall rating of 'Inadequate'. The inspection found there were a number of areas where practice is poor. Before the inspection, the YOT had been moved to the Blackpool Young People's Service, an integrated early help service. This move had been difficult and was not managed well. Staff have now reverted to specialist roles, supervised by experienced YOT managers, which they have welcomed.

During this period, the head of service left the YOT, and there has been no permanent replacement. This has had a detrimental effect on staff morale, and on the delivery of services. There is a lack of pride among the staff in the work of the YOT. The Management Board was not sufficiently challenging during this time, and accepted an overly optimistic assurance of the impact of the changes. There was also no challenge to the YOT's poor performance.

A manager from a neighbouring YOT now provides interim support for Blackpool YOT three days a week. Blackpool YOT also has an improvement plan. However, the plan is not robust and does not address all the underlying issues in the YOT.

Overall, the YOT lacks an understanding of the needs and issues of the children and young people it supervises, and there has been a lack of management oversight and scrutiny. The processes for out-of-court disposals are particularly complex, and there is no mechanism for identifying those children and young people who would benefit from earlier intervention.

There are elements of emerging good practice, and some good partnership arrangements in place, in particular in relation to education and probation. The new Board Chair has a good understanding of YOT practice and has begun to restructure the Management Board.

The recommendations in this report have been designed to assist Blackpool YOT to build on its strengths and focus on areas for improvement.



Dame Glenys Stacey
Chief Inspector of Probation

Overall findings

Overall, Blackpool YOT is rated as: **Inadequate**. This rating has been determined by inspecting the youth offending team in three domains of its work. The findings are described below.

	Organisational delivery
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Our key findings about organisational delivery were as follows:

- Arrangements for good partnership working are in place.
- The YOT is co-located with other children's services in a convenient town centre location.
- The Management Board did not scrutinise and challenge the YOT's work well enough. This has now been identified and addressed.
- The Board is now chaired by the Director of Children's Services, who has a good knowledge of YOT work.
- There have been a number of organisational changes affecting the staff group, which have not been managed well.
- There is no analysis of the needs and profile of children and young people subject to YOT supervision.
- Staff morale is low.

	Court disposals
---	------------------------

Our key findings about court disposals were as follows:

- Multi-agency risk management meetings are used well.
- Caseloads are manageable.
- Assessments of children and young people's diversity-related needs are good.
- Assessments of risk to others and safety and wellbeing require improvement.
- Assessments are not completed in a timely manner, and managers do not oversee the work well enough or countersign assessments in all cases.
- External controls (such as the use of curfews, exclusion requirements, or links with neighbourhood police teams) are not used well and there is insufficient contingency planning.
- There are not enough resources available for work with children and young people.



Out-of-court disposals

Our key findings about out-of-court-disposals were as follows:

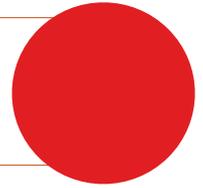
- There is a joint decision-making process between the YOT and police.
- The out-of-court disposal processes are complex. There is a lack of clear policies and procedures governing how out-of-court disposals are determined, and the range of police-led disposals is confusing.
- Child Action North West (CANW) is only commissioned to deliver reparation following a triage disposal, and there is a lack of feedback about the interventions provided by this service.
- The YOT does not have sufficient evidence to show that children and young people and their parents/carers understand the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal.

Service: Blackpool Youth Offending Team

Fieldwork started: October 2018

Overall rating

Inadequate



1. Organisational delivery

1.1	Governance and leadership	Inadequate	
1.2	Staff	Inadequate	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Requires improvement	
1.4	Information and facilities	Requires improvement	

2. Court disposals

2.1	Assessment	Requires improvement	
2.2	Planning	Inadequate	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Inadequate	
2.4	Reviewing	Inadequate	

3. Out-of-court disposals

3.1	Assessment	Inadequate	
3.2	Planning	Inadequate	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Inadequate	
3.4	Joint working	Inadequate	

Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings we have made nine recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of youth offending services in Blackpool. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth offending services, and better protect the public.

The Youth Offending Team Manager should:

1. commission training to develop the staff's skills and knowledge in key areas of practice
2. re-establish the staff's sense of pride in the work of the YOT
3. introduce a process to ensure the timeliness and quality of AssetPlus assessments
4. develop a range of suitable interventions for work with children and young people.

The Director of Children's Services should:

5. fully analyse the needs and profile of the children and young people subject to YOT supervision and use this to commission appropriate services
6. ensure Board members are able to challenge each other and the YOT manager and advocate for the YOT in their own organisations
7. together with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, review the out-of-court disposals processes and commissioned services to ensure informed decision-making and good information-sharing for out-of-court cases.

The Youth Justice Board should:

8. provide further guidance and advice on completing the integrated planning and pathways document in AssetPlus
9. review the national policy for caretaking arrangements for children placed out of their own local authority area.

Introduction

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) supervise 10–18-year-olds who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged – instead, they were dealt with out of court. HMI Probation inspects both these aspects of youth offending services.

YOTs are statutory partnerships, and they are multi-disciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. They are required to have staff from local authority social care and education, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services.¹ Most YOTs are based within local authorities; however, this can vary.

YOT work is governed and shaped by a range of legislation and guidance specific to the youth justice sector (such as the National Standards for Youth Justice) or else applicable across the criminal justice sector (for example Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements guidance). The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) provides some funding to YOTs. It also monitors their performance and issues guidance to them about how things are to be done.

Blackpool is a small unitary authority containing three of the most deprived wards in the country. The average household income is one-third of the national income. Blackpool is seven miles long and three miles wide. It has 13 privately run children's homes, which is a disproportionately large number for an authority of its size. It is estimated that caretaking cases from neighbouring authorities make up 20 per cent of Blackpool's cases.

Blackpool has a large amount of affordable private rented accommodation, which means it also has a transient population of children and young people living with their families. These two factors combined make it difficult to gather information from other areas and ensure that these children have access to mainstream services, often only for short periods of time, before they move again.

Before the inspection, Blackpool YOT had merged with a number of other children's services in Blackpool, including leaving care, substance misuse and Connexions. Case managers had become generic workers for a period of time. The YOT recognised that this model was not working, and recently moved back into its specialist YOT teams, known as 'pods', to deliver youth justice services. The cases that were inspected were from the period of generic working. Blackpool has been identified by the YJB as an authority in need of additional support because of its poor performance in the three national indicators.

The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We provide assurance on the effectiveness of work with adults and children who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable. We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight

¹ The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* set out the arrangements for local YOTs and partnership working.

good and poor practice, and use our data and information to encourage good-quality services. We are independent of government, and speak independently.

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

Organisations that are well led and well managed are more likely to achieve their aims. We inspect organisational delivery against four standards. These standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with people who have offended.²

² HMI Probation (March 2018). *Standards for inspecting probation services*.
<https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

Key facts

First time entrant rate² per 100,000

436

Blackpool YOT

301

Average for England and Wales

Reoffending³

Rate

50.7%

Blackpool YOT

41.9%

Average for England and Wales

Frequency per offender

2.39

Blackpool YOT

1.63

Average for England and Wales

Offences per 1,000 10-17 year olds

27.7

Blackpool YOT

13.8

Average for England and Wales

Caseload information⁴

Age	10-14	15-17
Blackpool	22%	78%
National average	24%	76%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic
Blackpool	93%	7%
National average	73%	24%

Gender	Male	Female
Blackpool	81%	19%
National average	83%	17%

Young people cautioned or sentenced

Cautioned	
Youth caution	59
Youth conditional caution	22
Sentenced	
Referral order	28
Youth rehabilitation order	56
Detention and training order	2
Section 90-91 detention	1

Population information⁵



Total population Blackpool (2017)	139,870	
Total youth population (2017)	12,079	(8.6%)
Total black and minority ethnic youth population (2011 census)	583	(4.4%)

² First-time entrants, October 2016 to September 2017, Youth Justice Board (YJB).

³ Proven reoffending statistics, July 2015 to June 2016, Ministry of Justice, (April 2018).

⁴ Youth Justice annual statistics: 2016 to 2017, YJB, (January 2018).

⁵ Population estimates for UK: Mid 2017, Office for National Statistics.

1. Organisational delivery



Organisations that are well led and well managed are more likely to achieve their aims. We inspect against four standards.

1.1 Governance and leadership	Inadequate
The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.	

The Chair of the Board has recently changed from the Chief Executive to the Director of Children’s Services. The new Chair identified that the Board had not sufficiently scrutinised or challenged the service, and has reconfigured members’ responsibilities. Board members have now taken on the role of champions of key areas of practice.

Board members did not receive an induction when they took up their role and did not understand what was expected of them as members of the Management Board. There were too many Board members. The Board had been distracted from its primary role of overseeing and supporting the YOT by the other services provided by Blackpool Young People’s Service (BYPS). Previous Board reports had contained comprehensive information about care leavers and substance misuse services, and considerably less about the YOT’s performance. This has now been identified and redressed.

Board members recognise that they had not been sufficiently engaged in the work of the YOT and are keen to fulfil their responsibilities more fully. The Chair of the Board has a good understanding of YOT business and is committed to improving the lives of the children and young people who are subject to YOT supervision. A full day’s workshop for Board members is planned for November to begin to address these deficiencies. The Board is well attended by all relevant partner agencies and some non-statutory members, such as courts and the lead member.

A new youth justice plan has been developed to address the specific issues that face Blackpool YOT. It has been set at one year in recognition of the amount of work that needs to be undertaken to address the previous shortfalls. This is aligned to an operational development plan; however, nearly two-thirds of staff were not aware of this strategic vision.

The operational development plan is comprehensive, but is not robust. No timescales are included, which means everything is ‘on track’ and there is no process for identifying when targets are not met. It also focuses primarily on achieving performance targets and does not address the cultural issues that are preventing the development of Blackpool YOT, such as low staff morale and poor communication. Nearly half of the staff reported that they do not understand the improvement plan well.

The YOT’s management structures changed considerably when it moved to BYPS. As part of the move, the YOT’s staff were managed by a range of people, not all of whom had a YOT background. The structure has very recently changed back to a YOT ‘pod’, a specialist team within BYPS with YOT operational managers. This is welcomed by staff. At the time of the inspection, there was no service manager, but there were plans to recruit to this post. There is an interim arrangement with a

neighbouring authority for a manager to attend three days a week as the YOT implements its improvement plan.

Staff felt there was a lack of information and communication from senior leaders.

1.2 Staff	Inadequate
Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.	

Staff report that caseloads are currently manageable; however, there has been a significant turnover of staff due to sickness and staff leaving. This has not been well planned for, and had affected the services provided to children and young people. There were frequent changes of case manager and gaps in the services provided. The high turnover has meant that staff are less able to deliver relationship-based practice to support desistance. Two young people who responded to our survey said that frequent changes of case manager had a negative impact on their experience of YOT supervision. The YOT has relied too much on sessional workers to deliver work with young people.

At the time of the inspection, the victim worker post had not been covered for 18 months. While there had been efforts to recruit to this post, these had been unsuccessful. This had left a significant gap in services for victims and there was no information on victims available for assessments. This is reflected in the victim work in domains two and three.

Only 41 per cent of staff felt they had the skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality services to young people. Staff seemed unaware of some of the issues that can affect a child or young person’s capacity to engage in interventions, such as adverse childhood experiences, attachment issues or vulnerability to county lines.

Staff reported a poor experience of supervision, with 43 per cent of staff rating their supervision as poor or very poor. This was because supervision was infrequent or did not meet the needs of the member of staff. Staff reported that they had no feedback on their performance, and there was little opportunity for reflective practice or sharing good practice. Only 6 per cent of staff found their last appraisal to be very valuable.

There was not enough management oversight of the cases involving court disposals and out-of-court disposals, and only the high-risk AssetPlus assessments were routinely countersigned by managers. This meant that most assessments were not sufficiently scrutinised or quality-assured.

Staff training was provided by Blackpool Council and BeSafe, and some workshops on data-recording on Childview had been delivered. Managers reported an occasion when Assessment, Intervention, Moving on (AIM) training had been provided but not all staff had attended as required. Staff have been given training on speech, language and communication needs and provided with information and support on young people’s rights to education. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of safeguarding and understood how to make safeguarding referrals.

There was a small team of volunteers who undertook referral order panels. They reported that they had received good training and support and understood their role well.

Overall, morale among some staff was low. Practitioners did not feel enabled to effect changes. Staff struggled to identify anything about their work or their workplace that they were proud of. When pushed, one member of staff said 'surviving'.

1.3 Partnerships and services	Requires improvement
A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children and young people.	

The YOT has access to a range of partnership services. These include access to 'Family Hubs', where there is a range of services on offer, and early help support for siblings of young people known to the YOT. There is access to good education support for children and young people, and a full-time education worker who has good links with the special educational needs and disability (SEND) department and access to an educational psychologist.

There is a health practitioner who undertakes initial health screening for all new cases and can signpost to appropriate health services. There are good transition arrangements in place for 18-year-old young people, with the YOT probation officer preparing cases for transfer, and then holding the cases if they become NPS cases.

The CRC has also resourced a worker who attends the YOT offices on a weekly basis to link in with the care leavers who are supervised by the CRC. Relationships with children's services are good. Staff have access to the relevant social care database, and there is evidence of good communication. Cases are escalated appropriately if required.

There is good information-sharing about high-risk cases through the multi-agency risk management meetings, which are attended by all relevant partner agencies.

However, there is no up-to-date analysis of the needs of the children and young people subject to YOT supervision and therefore it is not known if these arrangements meet the needs of the YOT young people.

The arrangements for out-of-court disposals are poor. The YOT does not have comprehensive policies and procedures in relation to out-of-court disposals. Key partner organisations are confused about the processes for out-of-court disposals. The YOT has access to CANW for triage cases. However, CANW does not give feedback on the outcomes of interventions to the YOT, and without an analysis of the profile of first-time entrants, the commissioners of the service cannot know if CANW is providing the right interventions to the right young people at the right time.

There is a joint decision-making panel for cases involving youth conditional cautions.

Information about daily arrests and voluntary interviews is shared regularly.

However, police intelligence is not routinely shared to assist with risk assessments of home visits. Where intelligence is shared, this is because individual case managers have requested it rather than because it is part of an established process. The YOT

shares information with the police about the children and young people it supervises through the police 101 phone service. The seconded YOT police officer had not received a full and comprehensive induction and was unclear about his role.

Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) can be particularly difficult for children and young people, with a third of cases having to wait three months for the start of treatment.

Feedback from the court was not positive. The court identified the process for out-of-court disposals as weak. It said children were charged to court unnecessarily, which led to delays in appropriate outcomes for children. The court also raised concerns about staff turnover and a lack of experienced YOT court staff, and said that this resulted in poor-quality information being provided. This applied particularly to verbal information provided to the court on progress on an intervention or previous engagement with the YOT. This led to the court making a large number of requests for pre-sentence reports, which are time-consuming for the YOT and sometimes unnecessary. The court commented that communication with the YOT had been poor, due to the high turnover of staff. The YOT has now recognised this, and established a small court team.

1.4 Information and facilities	Requires improvement
Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children and young people.	

The YOT does not have sufficient up-to-date policies and procedures. Those that are in place are not well understood by the majority of staff. There is no clear information for police staff and YOT practitioners on the range of out-of-court disposals available, and no policy on how to use them. This causes confusion and creates a risk that young people will not receive the correct out-of-court disposal. Opportunities for targeted intervention at the most appropriate time could be missed.

Staff have access to suitable IT equipment, including laptops and mobile phones. All information on cases is available on the case management system. Staff also have access to social care systems.

The YOT changed location last year and is now located in the town centre, close to local transport services. The premises are accessible and largely suitable for young people. They are shared with other services for young people, creating a 'one-stop shop' for young people in Blackpool. Staff can also access a range of other suitable venues across the Blackpool area, including 'Family Hub' centres and drop-in centres for looked after children.

The meeting room where referral order panels are held is in the YOT office. Reaching it involves walking through a staff area where confidential information might be seen. This does not follow national guidance on holding panels in community venues. Panel members are keen to use different venues. The room is also not suitable for people with limited mobility.

The core opening hours for the YOT office are 11am to 3pm. Appointments can be made outside of these times, but the front door will not be open. Staff believe this creates a risk that young people could say they have attended but could not get in.

Staff reported that the meeting rooms are not confidential, and conversations can be overheard in neighbouring rooms. They feel that this prevents them from carrying out some work with young people, especially work to address harmful sexual behaviour. There is no mechanism for getting feedback from children and young people, parents, or victims.

The YOT does not have a comprehensive range of resources to meet the needs of the children and young people it supervises, and the resources it has are not sufficiently accessible.

It has been identified by the YOT senior management team that the YOT lacks performance and management information. A member of the council will now enable the YOT to obtain this information. Managers and practitioners have welcomed this. Information from serious case reviews is shared across the Blackpool workforce.

Summary

Strengths:

- The Management Board Chair has recently changed to the Director of Children's Services, who has restructured the board members' roles.
- The Board members recognise that they have not focused on the quality of services the YOT is delivering or the YOT's performance, and are keen to address this by assigning champions to key areas.
- There are some good partnership arrangements in place, particularly with education and probation services.
- The YOT is co-located with other children's services and in a central location in Blackpool.

Areas for improvement:

- The process for out-of-court disposals is unclear. Decision-making is inconsistent and not routinely shared between agencies.
- The YOT does not fully analyse the needs and profile of the children and young people it supervises. This analysis could be used to commission and engage partnership services.
- Staff do not feel proud of their work with children and young people, or of Blackpool YOT.
- There is a general Blackpool council training programme, but nothing specifically designed for the YOT staff. Such a programme should include a mixture of skills and knowledge, including understanding the impact of adverse childhood experiences on young people's ability to engage in interventions.
- There is a lack of appropriate interventions available for staff to use with young people.

- The YOT does not have a communications strategy for keeping staff informed of its improvement plan, the work of the Board and the work of senior managers, and for providing positive feedback to staff.
- There is an absence of management oversight of cases.

2. Court disposals



Work with children and young people sentenced by the courts will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspections we look at a sample of cases. In each of those cases we inspect against four standards.

2.1 Assessment	Requires improvement
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

Overall, assessments required improvement. There were some areas where the assessments were good, but they were often completed too late or did not include important information. Case managers were good at identifying the diversity needs and reflecting these in assessments. Assessments also contained good-quality information on the child or young person's maturity, ability and motivation to change. There was also good analysis of offending behaviour.

Inspectors found pre-sentence reports to be of good quality.

Giving sufficient attention to the needs of the victim requires improvement in assessments. Some case officers had not done this because there was no victim worker available at the time. A number of assessments contained a mix of old and current information, and it was difficult to see which information was still relevant and correct. Many assessments were also completed too late, on some occasions by several weeks.

Assessments of the child or young person's safety and wellbeing required improvement. While some assessments did reference life experiences, such as experience of neglect, they did not then analyse the impact of these on the risks to safety and wellbeing. Only half of the assessments drew sufficiently on all available information.

The main gaps in the information related to mental health concerns. There was also a case where the self-assessment identified concerns about suicide, which were not adequately addressed in the assessment. Inspectors agreed with the safety and wellbeing classification in nearly 80 per cent of cases. Where they disagreed, it was because the assessment was too low. There were also examples where contradictory levels of safety and wellbeing were present in the same assessment.

There were some examples of good practice. An inspector noted:

"Good assessment of safety and wellbeing. This recognised her experience of the court case and the potential impact, especially around peer response. There was a good recognition of the mother's mental health and how that affected the young person, and an understanding of her peer relationship and past experience of a traumatic life experience. In addition, the young person's past experience of being bullied was recognised".

Self-assessments completed by the child or family were not integrated into the main assessment. This meant that the voice of the child was lost.

Risk of harm to others was assessed accurately in nearly 80 per cent of cases. Where inspectors disagreed with the assessment, it was because the classification was too low. This was mainly because risks within the family had not been accurately assessed, especially when the parent or carer was the direct, or indirect, victim.

2.2 Planning	Inadequate
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

Staff used the AssetPlus planning module and referral order contract for planning. Multi-agency risk management meetings were held for higher-risk cases. Planning was stronger in cases where there was a multi-agency response and clearer plans were in place. However, planning was inadequate overall, with just over 50 per cent of plans sufficiently focused on supporting the child or young person's desistance. The main reasons for this were that the plans lacked evidence that the child or young person had been meaningfully engaged, and did not identify their strengths. Planning was stronger in terms of recognising maturity and motivation to change.

Inspectors found that planning was proportionate to the court outcome in nearly two-thirds of cases. Where it was not proportionate, this was often because too many interventions had been planned and it was not always feasible to provide these within the timescales available. Inspectors also found planning in intensive supervision and support cases to be weaker, with the plans lacking focus and desired outcomes.

Planning did not focus on keeping the child or young person safe in the large majority of cases. There was a lack of contingency planning and insufficient use of external controls. Staff also missed opportunities to coordinate with other services that were involved with the young person in planning relating to safety and wellbeing. An inspector noted:

"There are a number of gaps in the planning process and there is a lack of contingency as to how to respond to a change in circumstances. This happened on a number of occasions where the young person's circumstances would change significantly. The response to this was reactive rather than part of a proactive planning process".

Planning to keep other people safe was also weak. There were insufficient contingency arrangements or external controls to protect other people. Where there were examples of good planning, this involved the multi-agency risk management processes. One case was referred to MAPPA as a result of the multi-agency risk management meeting.

One significant gap in planning to keep other people safe related to the safety of the actual or potential victim. Over two-thirds of plans did not address this. At the time of the inspection, the YOT did not have a victim worker. However, it is possible and appropriate for case managers to plan for the safety of victims without the specific input of the victim, although it is clearly preferable to consider the victim's voice.

Planning did not make good use of external controls for either the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person, or to keep other people safe.

2.3 Implementation and delivery	Inadequate
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	

Implementation and delivery of services were severely hampered by the high levels of sickness and staff turnover. This meant that a number of the cases had several case managers, with little handover between them. Cases were seen on a duty basis, and one case was not seen for over three months. This had a negative impact on the overall delivery of services, with services to support desistance being delivered in less than a third of cases. This was also identified as an issue in the young person's survey.

Staff made good use of the 'football project' as a means of seeing young people, but this was sometimes at the cost of targeted work on offending behaviour. Little reparation work was delivered.

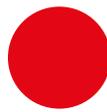
Where delivery of services was better, there had been a consistent case manager for the duration of the order. This was also noted by a young person in their response to the survey. An inspector noted:

“The young person and case manager's working relationship was a particular strength in this case, in which it could be seen that he initially did not make eye contact or say much. Within a few weeks, it was obvious he was engaging with several professionals and trusted the YOT worker”.

Enforcement action was not taken in over 40 per cent of cases where the case manager identified that it was needed. When breach action was taken, there was little evidence that the case manager had attempted to try alternative approaches, or that a compliance panel had considered the case, to try and re-engage the young person first. In one case, a custodial sentence had been recommended for the breach.

Implementation of services to keep the child or young person safe was also poor. Services were delivered well in less than a third of cases. There was a lack of coordination with mental health services. Case managers did not offer enough support to help young people who had lived, or still lived, in difficult home circumstances.

Delivery of services to support the safety of other people was also poor. Case managers did not do enough work to protect actual or potential victims, and services were not well coordinated overall. This was most evident where the victim or potential victim was a family member and the young person was still living in the family home.

2.4 Reviewing	Inadequate
Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

Young people’s circumstances can change rapidly, resulting in an increased or decreased likelihood of reoffending, risk of harm to others or risks to their safety and wellbeing. Case managers should review their plans when there is a change in the young person’s circumstances that could affect their behaviour. Young people subject to referral orders had to attend a review panel every three months, often resulting in a higher frequency of reviews in those cases.

In a number of cases, the initial assessment was so late that it effectively acted as a review. Overall, in nearly two-thirds of cases, reviews did not identify and respond to changes in factors linked to offending. Reviews were not completed where there was a significant change in circumstances, such as a period of homelessness or further offending. In over half of the cases, other agencies did not contribute enough to reviews to keep the young person safe.

In a third of cases, reviews did not identify and respond to changes related to risk of harm. In half of the cases, reviews were not informed by information from other agencies. An inspector noted:

"As the reviews did not take place in a timely manner, they were not responding to changes to the risk that F may pose to others. Furthermore, it is detailed on Childview records that he was arrested regarding an attempted murder in February 2018 and this information was not detailed in any reviews".

Reviews did not always lead to an updated intervention plan, and in some cases a review was completed but no information was updated and none of the plans were changed.

Summary

Strengths:

- Pre-sentence reports are of a good quality.
- Case managers are good at understanding the diversity needs of children and young people and reflecting these in assessments.
- Case managers make good use of multi-agency risk meetings where appropriate.
- Where there has been a consistent case manager, there is a positive working relationship with the young person.
- Caseloads are manageable.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessments are not completed and countersigned in a timely manner.
- Case managers do not understand and plan for the safety of the victim or consult the victim.
- Case managers do not demonstrate an understanding of the child or young person's lived experience and the impact this has had on their offending and ability to engage in interventions.
- External controls and contingency planning are not used well in the pathways and planning documentation.
- Breach action is taken without fully considering a change in approach or the use of compliance panels.
- The YOT does not have a comprehensive range of resources and interventions to meet the offending needs of the children and young people of Blackpool.

3. Out-of-court disposals



Work with children and young people receiving out-of-court disposals will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspections we look at a sample of cases. In each case we inspect against four standards.

In Blackpool, there is a complex range of out-of-court disposals for children and young people who are not first-time entrants to the justice system. These are delivered by the police. They are: RJ-Instant, RJ-Formal, Police Resolution and Triage. The evidential standard for these is that of reasonable suspicion. This contrasts with the more formal youth caution and youth conditional caution, where there has to be a realistic prospect of conviction. There was no requirement to consult with the YOT about these disposals, and no expectation that details of the disposals would be shared with the YOT. There was also no clear policy as to when each disposal should be used and how many times a young person could receive each one.

The police guidance was that triage should be used for all young people who enter police custody or attend a voluntary interview. However, it was not clear how many triage disposals a young person could receive. Anecdotally, more children and young people are being arrested in Blackpool than in similar areas.

Children and young people who received a triage disposal were referred by the police to CANW. This is a pan-Lancashire service that offers intervention for triage cases. This intervention is primarily a three-hour reparation placement. The YOT has a service level agreement in place with CANW, but this does not include a requirement for CANW to provide feedback on the individual cases it is working with.

Cases that were deemed suitable for a youth caution or youth conditional caution were referred to the weekly joint panel meeting, attended by the police and YOT. At the time the cases we inspected had gone to this panel, it was attended by a rota of BYPS managers. This has since been changed, and a YOT manager now attends on a regular basis. The cases in the inspection pre-date this change. The panel can make the full range of decisions with regard to disposal, including no further action or charge. Youth cautions and youth conditional cautions are administered by the seconded YOT police officer.

The number of out-of-court disposals was low, which meant that the cases we inspected went back as far as January 2018, and up to August 2018. This is a longer time span than would normally be the case.

3.1 Assessment	Inadequate
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

We inspected a range of cases, including triage, youth caution and youth conditional caution. At the time of the inspection, BYPS had a mixed caseload.

No formal assessments were completed on the triage cases, and AssetPlus assessments were completed on the other cases. Some assessments were completed by non-YOT staff, who reported that they had little or no training in completing a formal assessment. This was reflected in our findings: in a number of assessments, significant information was missing, such as the offence analysis, or the assessment had been opened but not completed. There was also insufficient management oversight of the out-of-court disposals, with no assessments being countersigned and a lack of quality assurance.

Overall, there was a sufficient assessment of the child or young person’s desistance in just over a third of cases. The main reason for insufficient assessments were that the assessments were late or incomplete. Case managers were better at identifying the diversity needs of the children and young people and reflecting these in assessments. However, there was a lack of evidence that the child or young person, and their parents/carers, had been involved in the assessment. When a self-assessment had been completed by the family, their views were not integrated into the assessment.

The safety and wellbeing of the child or young person were not fully analysed in nearly 80 per cent of cases. In one case, significant safety and wellbeing concerns had been documented on Mosaic, but these were not identified in the assessment. In another, there were obvious safety concerns, such as going missing and using drugs, but these were not identified in the assessment.

Assessments to keep other people safe were of sufficient quality in just over 20 per cent of the cases. This was because information about risk had not been included in the assessment, for example information about a young person having a knife, challenging behaviour at school, or the potential impact of driving offences.

As in assessment for post-court cases, the needs of the victims were not given sufficient attention.

3.2 Planning	Inadequate
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

The majority of planning was insufficient, and there were a number of different reasons for this. In some cases, planning and delivery were carried out by CANW, and there was no process for CANW to provide the YOT with information about this work. Therefore, when a case was referred to CANW, the YOT did not see the planning that was undertaken.

In other cases, where the YOT was responsible for planning, we found there were an excessive number of interventions in some plans, or plans were not sequenced or structured. For example, in one plan, 12 sessions on offence interventions were to be given for a three-month youth conditional caution. This is considered disproportionate for this type of disposal.

Planning did not promote the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person. The main reasons for this were a lack of engagement with other agencies and a lack of contingency planning. An inspector noted:

“There is no plan in this case. The young person has an allocated social worker; however, there are no contact records at all in this case, and no evidence of discussion having taken place with them (the young person) to inform and plan activity. The young person has been adopted and is now in a private fostering placement after his adoptive mother was unable to cope with his behaviour. He is associating with negative peers. There are concerns about substance use; however, there is no evidence of planning in relation to any of these relevant factors”.

Planning was better with regard to promoting the safety of other people, but this still required improvement. There was a lack of engagement with other agencies and a lack of contingency planning. However, planning to keep other people safe was good in youth conditional caution cases.

3.3 Implementation and delivery	Inadequate
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	

The delivery and implementation of services were inadequate. We saw evidence that some interventions were allowed to drift because of staff sickness and leave. Cases were not re-allocated, which resulted in young people either not being seen for periods of weeks or being seen by duty case managers, with few constructive interventions being delivered.

There is no feedback on the cases where CANW provided the intervention.

The required interventions were completed in only a third of cases. Some cases were closed without the work being completed, and in others the case manager did not actively engage with the young person to deliver the interventions.

There was no evidence of any work being delivered to promote the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person.

Services to support the safety of other people were better. Some interventions were delivered in relation to knife crime and drug awareness, but no work was carried out to protect actual or potential victims.

3.4 Joint working	Inadequate
Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	

The decision-making process for out-of-court disposals was complex. As previously mentioned, the police have a total of four disposals that they can administer without consulting the YOT. A possible, and likely, consequence of this is that police disposals are being administered without the YOT knowing about them. Information on out-of-court disposals is useful to the YOT, both for open cases and as background information on other cases when they formally come to the YOT.

When a youth caution or youth conditional caution is being considered, the case is referred to the decision-making panel. This panel has the right level of authority and can make a full range of decisions. The court had also noted a high number of cases coming through to it where an out-of-court disposal was more appropriate. These were referred to the panel from court.

There was evidence that the YOT's recommendations to the panel were well informed and appropriate to the child or young person. However, this still required improvement. There was a lack of evidence of the YOT working with the police to implement the out-of-court disposal. This was particularly the case with youth conditional cautions. The rationale for decisions and the outcome of the decision were poorly recorded on the case management system.

There was little evidence that the child or young person understood the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal. In some cases, it was not clear on the case management system, or to the case manager, what the disposal actually was.

Summary

Strengths:

- There is a decision-making panel with the appropriate authority to make decisions on out-of-court disposals.
- The panel has access to the relevant databases to provide information for decision-making.

Areas for improvement:

- A complex range of out-of-court disposals are available, and there are no clear policies or procedures on how to use them.
- CANW's work focuses only on reparation and is not targeted at factors related to reducing offending by the child or young person.
- CANW does not provide feedback on the outcomes of the cases it deals with.
- Case records do not clearly set out the panel's decision, when the disposal was delivered, or what the disposal was.
- Not enough attention is given to ensuring that the child or young person, and their parents/carers, understand the implications of receiving an out-of-court disposal.

Annex 1 – Methodology

The inspection methodology is summarised below, linked to the three domains within our standards framework. Our focus was upon obtaining evidence against the standards, key questions and prompts within the framework.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth offending service submitted evidence in advance and the Director of Children's Services delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your YOT is as effective as it can be, and that the life chances of children and young people who have offended are improved?
- What are your priorities for further improving these arrangements?

During the main fieldwork phase, we surveyed 25 individual case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. Various meetings and focus groups were then held, allowing us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 12 meetings.

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Sixty per cent of the cases selected were those of children and young people who had received court disposals six to nine months earlier, enabling us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined 24 post-court cases. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of five), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

Domain three: out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. 40 per cent of cases selected were those of children and young people who had received out-of-court disposals two to seven months earlier. The time span of cases inspected was longer than usual due to the smaller numbers of out-of-court disposals. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and joint working. Where necessary, interviews with other people significantly involved in the case also took place.

We examined 13 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of five), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

Annex 2 – Inspection results

1. Organisational delivery

Standards and key questions	Rating
<p>1.1. Governance and leadership</p> <p>The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.</p> <p>1.1.1. Is there a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p> <p>1.1.2. Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?</p> <p>1.1.3. Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?</p>	Inadequate
<p>1.2. Staff</p> <p>Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people.</p> <p>1.2.1. Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p> <p>1.2.2. Do the skills of YOT staff support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children and young people?</p> <p>1.2.3. Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?</p> <p>1.2.4. Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?</p>	Inadequate
<p>1.3. Partnerships and services</p> <p>A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children and young people.</p>	Requires improvement

- 1.3.1. Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of children and young people, to ensure that the YOT can deliver well-targeted services?
- 1.3.2. Does the YOT partnership have access to the volume, range and quality of services and interventions to meet the needs of all children and young people?
- 1.3.3. Are arrangements with statutory partners, providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services?

1.4. Information and facilities Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children and young people.	Requires improvement
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- 1.4.1. Are the necessary policies and guidance in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children and young people?
- 1.4.2. Does the YOT's delivery environment(s) meet the needs of all children and young people and enable staff to deliver a quality service?
- 1.4.3. Do the information and communication technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children and young people?
- 1.4.4. Is analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?

2. Court disposals

Standards and key questions	Rating and % yes
2.1. Assessment Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	Requires improvement
2.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?	58%
2.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?	58%

2.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	58%
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2.2. Planning	Inadequate
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

2.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	54%
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2.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	30%
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2.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	39%
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2.3. Implementation and delivery	Inadequate
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.	

2.3.1. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?	33%
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2.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?	30%
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2.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	22%
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2.4. Reviewing	Inadequate
Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.	

2.4.1. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?	38%
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2.4.2. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	40%
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2.4.3. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	38%
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3. Out-of-court disposals

Standards and key questions	Rating and % yes
<p>3.1. Assessment</p> <p>Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.</p>	Inadequate
<p>3.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child or young person's desistance?</p>	36%
<p>3.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child or young person safe?</p>	21%
<p>3.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?</p>	21%
<p>3.2. Planning</p> <p>Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child or young person and their parents/carers.</p>	Inadequate
<p>3.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child or young person's desistance?</p>	29%
<p>3.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?</p>	0%
<p>3.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</p>	29%
<p>3.3. Implementation and delivery</p> <p>High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child or young person.</p>	Inadequate
<p>3.3.1. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child or young person's desistance?</p>	7%
<p>3.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child or young person?</p>	0%
<p>3.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?</p>	29%

3.4. Joint working	Inadequate
Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	
3.4.1. Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child or young person, supporting joint decision-making?	50%
3.4.2. Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?	21%

Annex 3 – Glossary

AssetPlus	Assessment and planning framework tool developed by the Youth Justice Board for work with children and young people who have offended, or are at risk of offending, that reflects current research and understanding of what works with children.
AIM	Assessment, Intervention, Moving On: specialist training and intervention for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviour.
County lines	A term used to describe a form of criminal exploitation of children and young people. Used to describe the way in which gangs and organised crime networks force children and young people into selling and transporting drugs, across counties, often using dedicated mobile phone lines.
Court disposals	The sentence imposed by the court. Examples of youth court disposals are referral orders, youth rehabilitation orders and detention and training orders.
Curfew	Restrictive intervention requiring a service user to remain at an agreed address during a pre-determined period. The curfew may be monitored electronically (electronic tag) or by the police (doorstep curfew).
Desistance	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour.
Enforcement	Action taken by a case manager in response to a child or young person's failure to comply with the actions specified as part of a community sentence or licence. Enforcement can be punitive or motivational.
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose the highest risk of harm to others. Level 1 is single agency management where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the agency responsible for the supervision or case management of the offender. Levels 2 and 3 require active multi-agency management.
Mosaic	The Children's social care case recording data base used by Blackpool council.
Out-of-court disposal	The resolution of a normally low-level offence, where it is not in the public interest to prosecute, through a community resolution, youth caution or youth conditional caution.
Personalised	A personalised approach is one in which services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals, giving people as much choice and control as possible over the support they receive. We use this term to include diversity factors.

Risk of Serious Harm	Risk of Serious Harm (ROSH) is a term used in AssetPlus. All cases are classified as presenting either a low/medium/high/very high risk of serious harm to others. HMI Probation uses this term when referring to the classification system, but uses the broader term risk of harm when referring to the analysis which should take place in order to determine the classification level. This helps to clarify the distinction between the probability of an event occurring and the impact/severity of the event. The term Risk of Serious Harm only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using 'risk of harm' enables the necessary attention to be given to those young offenders for whom lower impact/severity harmful behaviour is probable.
Safeguarding	A wider term than child protection that involves promoting a child or young person's health and development and ensuring that their overall welfare needs are met.
Safety and wellbeing	AssetPlus replaced the assessment of vulnerability with a holistic outlook of a child or young person's safety and wellbeing concerns. It is defined as "...those outcomes where the young person's safety and wellbeing may be compromised through their own behaviour, personal circumstances or because of the acts/omissions of others" (AssetPlus Guidance, 2016).
YOT	Youth Offending Team is the term used in the <i>Crime and Disorder Act 1998</i> to describe a multi-agency team that aims to reduce youth offending. YOTs are known locally by many titles, such as youth justice service (YJS), youth offending service (YOS), and other generic titles that may illustrate their wider role in the local area in delivering services for children.
YJB	Youth Justice Board: government body responsible for monitoring and advising ministers on the effectiveness of the youth justice system. Providers of grants and guidance to the youth offending teams.



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Blackpool Borough Council

Inspection of children's social care services

Inspection dates: 26 November 2018 to 7 December 2018

Lead inspector: Lorna Schlechte
Her Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate

Longstanding and widespread failures in the quality of social work practice mean that many children are not having their needs responded to in the right way or at the right time. As a result, some children live in situations of chronic neglect for long periods of time. Their situations do not always improve and, for many, they deteriorate, resulting in poor outcomes and increased risk. For some children, the impact is serious, with children suffering additional harm that affects their health and development.

Since the last inspection in 2014, the pace of progress has been too slow, and there has been a decline in strategic leadership. By the time a new director of children's services (DCS) was appointed 17 months ago, standards of practice had seriously deteriorated. Although there has been a focus on improvement since then, it has not led to the level of improvement required to ensure safe and effective services for all children. Strategic partnerships have not addressed key weaknesses effectively, including chronic neglect, which leads to poor outcomes for too many children in Blackpool. Prior to the inspection, the local authority had recognised some of, but

not all, the shortfalls in its practice. Senior leaders have not sufficiently understood the extent of widespread and serious failings when children need help and protection. This means that the issue was not prioritised or challenged for the necessary improvements to be made sooner. Concerns in relation to the quality of decision-making at the front door, the recognition and response to risk when children are exploited, and the drift and delay that children experience when they are subject to pre-proceedings or in the court arena were not fully understood until the inspection. This has resulted in the screening of all child exploitation cases to ensure that there are no unaddressed safeguarding concerns, and the DCS commencing reviews of pre-proceedings work and audit actions.

An improvement board was set up when the new DCS came into post. A new quality assurance framework was introduced and led to an increase in auditing activity. New systems have recently been implemented to improve the quality of management oversight. This has led to some improvements for children looked after, children with a plan of adoption and care leavers.

What needs to improve

- The identification of and response to risk, particularly in relation to long-standing concerns of chronic neglect.
- The response and recording of decisions in relation to contacts, thresholds and issues of consent at the front door to be clear and proportionate.
- The quality of social work assessments and plans and the extent to which they reflect the child's history.
- The response to children at risk of exploitation, and those young people who are homeless, and the extent to which their vulnerabilities are fully recognised and lead to responsive intervention to keep them safe.
- The effectiveness of strategic partnerships to work together to improve outcomes and protect children.
- Oversight of pre-proceedings work and placement-with-parent practice to address drift and delay.
- The quality of decision-making, management oversight and recording of threshold decisions when children come into care.
- Training needs of social workers to ensure that they are prepared for court proceedings.
- The quality and impact of personal education plans for children in care, and the extent to which these children are effectively supported at all key stages.

- A clearer and more consistent approach to agency decision-maker processes for approval and matching of foster carers and adopters.
- The strategic and coordinated approach to providing support for care leavers to improve their outcomes, including in education, employment and training.
- The quality and impact of audit and performance management.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection is inadequate

1. Services for children in need of help and protection in Blackpool are inadequate because serious failures leave some children at risk of significant harm. Thresholds are not consistently applied or understood. Many children's needs are not responded to in the right way or at the right time. Children live in situations of chronic neglect for too long before action is taken to improve their circumstances.
2. Children in need of protection are not consistently recognised as needing support and intervention to protect them. Referrals into the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) do not provide sufficient information to inform decision-making. Use of the new multi-agency referral form by partner agencies is inconsistent. Although contacts are responded to in a timely way, recording is unclear and does not provide a complete record of the next steps taken. Evaluation of children's histories is ineffective. Information-gathering is too often focused on the presenting issue, rather than an understanding of the child's lived experience. This means that crucial information can be missed and, therefore, decisions are made on partial information, which may leave children vulnerable and at risk.
3. The need to seek parental consent is not always fully understood and workers often fail to take account of historical information to inform a more balanced understanding of risk. Some children are not receiving the help they need at the right time. This shortfall was recognised by senior leaders during the inspection, and appropriate steps were taken to increase resources and management oversight in the MASH while inspectors were on site. The local authority intends to re-structure the MASH in early 2019 to address this, when a dedicated manager will replace the current duty arrangement of rotating managers and staff.
4. The police triage of domestic abuse notifications has led to some cases being stepped down to the early help hub (EHH) inappropriately, when the threshold for intervention by children's social care had already been met. A manager screens all referrals into EHH, although the effectiveness of this is limited by an insufficient evaluation of historical information. This means that risk is not

always identified to ensure that the right help is provided at the right time, resulting in drift and delay for some children. Early help assessments are completed, although the quality of these vary. This leads to plans that are not always clear or specific about what needs to be done, by whom, and by when. The unique identity needs of children are not responded to, or recorded, well.

5. Children whose needs appropriately meet the threshold for early help are supported well in the families in need (FIN) teams and, in some cases, joint working with social workers leads to purposeful interventions. This is a stronger part of the service, and more complex, high-risk cases are escalated up to children's social care appropriately.
6. When children are subject to child protection enquiries, in most cases appropriate procedures are followed, and children are offered immediate protection. However, the quality of the investigation and the subsequent assessment does not lead to consistently effective decision-making. There are sometimes over-optimistic views about parental capacity to change, despite significant safeguarding concerns. As a result, risks are not sufficiently recognised for some children.
7. Social work practice in the duty and safeguarding teams is variable in both its quality and impact. A preferred model of social work practice is used in assessments, but it is often a list of risk factors rather than an accurate analysis of a child's needs and experiences. There is too much focus on the presenting issue, and assessment sometimes fails to include significant historical information about children's lives. Chronologies are not used routinely to understand contextual information. The needs of older children who have been living in neglectful situations are not accurately evaluated. This leads to decision-making and intervention that is flawed, as it is overly focused on children's behaviour rather than on an understanding of their lived experience and wider circumstances.
8. Children are seen regularly and they benefit from direct work with social workers. Children's views do not consistently inform plans, which are too brief, task-focused and lack clear timescales or contingency arrangements. Regular core groups for children on child protection plans take place but progress is not always well recorded. Some children step down from a child protection plan prematurely at the first review, before change has been achieved and sustained. Child in need plans are not sufficiently outcome-focused and subsequent interventions are reactive to crisis and lack sufficient pace to effect change. This can lead to drift and delay for children and families when concerns re-emerge. A small number of complex child in need cases were allocated to non-qualified staff inappropriately.
9. When children's circumstances do not improve, timely and responsive action is not always taken to protect them. The local authority recognises that the use of the public law outline (PLO) is not robust. It has, subsequently, referred two

cases identified by inspectors to the Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board for a learning review and has escalated one case into the court arena for action. Decision-making on PLO is unfocused, and cases are stepped up and down without a clear rationale. For some children, this has led to a premature de-escalation of PLO, despite increased risk. Consequently, some children are left in situations where they continue to experience harm.

10. Young people who present as homeless are not systematically offered the opportunity to become looked after following an assessment of their need for support. A small number of 16- and 17-year-olds experience unsuitable accommodation, such as bed and breakfast and sofa-surfing. This increases their exposure to risk and their views are given insufficient consideration, even when they have requested to come into care.
11. Children at risk of exploitation do not consistently receive holistic assessments of their needs and risks. The language used in records to describe children's vulnerabilities is sometimes inappropriate and places the responsibility on children for the risks they are exposed to. The Awaken team specialises in child sexual exploitation and has a more informed understanding of exploitation, although weak assessments and plans undermine this. Direct work is undertaken with children by Awaken, although the impact of this is unclear as the risk assessment tool is not used consistently to evaluate and measure risk. The local authority has appropriate plans to develop the exploitation service to take account of wider contextual safeguarding issues. These issues, however, were not fully understood by senior leaders at the time of the inspection. In light of the concerns raised by inspectors, screening of all open child exploitation cases was undertaken during the inspection, to ensure that there were no unaddressed safeguarding concerns.
12. In a context where child sexual exploitation and children going missing are prevalent and widely known, the absence of a strategy to respond to contextual safeguarding is a significant concern. Children who go missing do not always receive a timely return home interview. There is limited intelligence-gathering to explore risk in more detail or consider wider factors, as the interview is limited to an account from the child. Return home interviews do not include a clear risk assessment or actions to reduce further risk. This means that leaders and managers across the wider partnership do not fully understand the reasons for children going missing. This limits their ability to identify and respond robustly to emerging patterns and trends.
13. Children who are missing education, who are educated by alternative providers or who are in receipt of part-time education are monitored appropriately. There are procedures to monitor children who are educated at home. This means that half of all children are visited. The number of pupils being educated part-time or by alternative providers is high. The pupil referral unit, for example, is over-subscribed and not enough has been done to address the complex challenges faced by many children and families.

14. Children who are privately fostered receive a sufficient level of support, and the local authority is compliant with its statutory responsibilities. Allegations against professionals working with children have led to appropriate involvement of the designated officer. Disabled children benefit from a safe, timely and outcome-focused service, provided by a stable and experienced complex needs team. Clear criteria are applied to assess need and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers requires improvement to be good

15. Senior leaders have recognised the need to improve services for children in care and care leavers. The DCS has led some focused improvement, especially in relation to permanence. The service is now more compliant and timely than it was. Further work is required to strengthen the service to ensure that outcomes for all children in care continue to improve.
16. Children live in neglectful circumstances for longer than they should, resulting in their needs often becoming more complex. This means that it becomes more of a challenge to find a suitable placement for them. A recently formed 'becoming looked after' panel has improved senior managers' understanding of children coming into care. The rationale for children being taken into care is not always clearly recorded.
17. In most instances where children come into care by agreement with their parents, Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 is used appropriately in the short term. This can result in suitable decisions for them to return home, but the rationale for these decisions is not consistently recorded. Children reunified with their families are not offered a consistent level of support. Placement with parents regulations are poorly understood. In a small number of cases seen during inspection, the assessment underpinning the plan to return home was weak, sometimes based on inaccurate information about parental responsibility or the level of risk. In such cases, management oversight lacks rigour.
18. Most children in care are living in stable placements within the North West region. This means that social workers can keep in touch and develop a detailed understanding of their needs. Some children, however, experience too many placement moves, and stability is often reached by remaining in a short-term placement, instead of through careful matching. Children's circumstances are regularly reassessed as part of their statutory review, although their identity is given insufficient consideration.
19. Children in care have care plans that are routinely completed and updated, but these are not always tailored to the needs of individual children, and lack clarity in relation to a plan for permanence. Social workers undertake direct work with children who are generally engaged well in their own care planning.

Social workers have clear aspirations for children, but these are not reflected in the plans. Although workforce stability is improving, young people told inspectors that they had experienced too many changes of social worker, which makes it difficult for them to develop stable relationships with their social workers.

20. Social workers are not being well prepared to confidently present the plan for permanence to the court to achieve appropriate outcomes for children. Chronologies are not sufficiently updated or used effectively. This means that social workers are not always able to present a detailed understanding of children's histories to the court. Although most proceedings are completed within 26 weeks, they can sometimes be delayed due to requests for adjournments to understand case history. In addition, there are missed opportunities to explore wider family alternatives earlier, and the possibility for permanence through that route during pre-proceedings. This means that relatives often emerge late in the proceedings to ask to care for the child. Some children's circumstances are not assessed with sufficient rigour and have to be reassessed. Concurrent planning is insufficiently robust. The delay in achieving permanence for some children can negatively affect outcomes for them in the longer term.
21. When children have a plan for adoption, a timely referral is made to the adoption team to begin family finding. Although children who need adoption do not have a wide choice of placements, assessment and matching results in stable adoptive families being identified, and they are increasingly placed with adopters in a timely way. Introductions are effective for children, and post-placement support ensures that they are secure and settled. Adoption support ensures that challenges are identified and swiftly addressed, preventing further disruption to children's lives. Adopters spoke highly of the support provided to them.
22. For a small number of children with a plan of adoption, there is delay. This is due to ineffective work with families prior to proceedings, leading to lengthy care proceedings. Life-story books are not always completed in a timely way for children with a plan of permanence and this undermines an understanding of children's backgrounds and sense of identity. Agency decision-making takes place at the right time, but the quality of recording is weak. It does not fully demonstrate consideration of issues, or give the rationale for adoption being in a child's best interests.
23. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) are appropriately accommodated in places that meet their immediate needs for support and protection. There are gaps in assessment, for example in establishing whether the child has a clear sense of identity, or whether they have experienced trauma following loss of family, trafficking and modern-day slavery. This means that the children's needs are not fully understood.

24. Reviews of children's circumstances are generally timely and result in care plans that are suitably updated. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) write review templates directly to the child, which means that they will understand in future why decisions were made about their lives. In complex cases, there is less evidence of the IRO and supervising manager driving the plan for permanence forward and making sure that it is effectively progressed.
25. Members of the fostering team are knowledgeable and experienced. Foster carer assessments are timely and of good quality. The mandatory training offer for carers is wide-ranging, but there is limited monitoring or evaluation of carers' training needs. The agency decision-making process is weak and does not ensure the integrity of the assessment and approval process of foster carers.
26. Children's health needs are routinely assessed by health workers located in the social work teams. Health assessments and plans are not always completed in a timely manner. Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) are available and are seen to be making a positive difference to some children looked after.
27. There has not been a leader in post for the virtual school until recently. A year ago, only 14% of children looked after had a personal education plan (PEP). This situation is improving and at the time of the inspection, 68% of children looked after had a PEP. The quality of these plans varies, and many are poor with targets that lack aspiration. Senior leaders have recently prioritised the development of the virtual school, and improved leadership in this area has already secured improvements to the behaviour and attendance of children looked after. At the time of the inspection, the impact of the virtual school on children's educational progress and attainment was very limited. For example, a significant number of children (52%) in care who left Year 11 at the end of the previous school year are not in education, employment or training. The complexity of their needs means that some require greater support than is currently available to enable them to access education, employment or training.
28. Young people spoken to feel supported by the recently restructured leaving care service and feel that services are improving. A care leavers' charter now sets out expected standards of practice. The absence of a care leavers' strategy is a gap as the overall vision of how to improve and develop the service is unclear. The leaving care service has increased capacity to support care leavers, but the introduction of personal assistants (PAs) to 15-year-olds is very new. Current 18-year-olds have only had a PA from their eighteenth birthday, and this is too late to provide them with the necessary support and skills for adulthood at the earliest opportunity. Staff are empathetic and outcomes for many young care leavers are more positive due to the level of support they receive from their PA. The service is working with young people who have highly complex and challenging needs, some of whom have

experienced placement breakdown. Progress in reducing risks for some of these young people is a challenge.

29. All care leavers seen have a current pathway plan, although they are not always completed soon enough, or updated when a young person has experienced significant change. More recent pathway plans completed by PAs are better quality and reflect the lived experience of young people.
30. Care leavers have access to information about their health needs. Those in higher education are well supported, with others benefiting from apprenticeship and job opportunities in the council.
31. Most care leavers are in appropriate accommodation. PAs have good relationships with housing schemes in order to support young people in transition to independent accommodation. Housing options remain limited, however, with the range of options having only recently begun to improve. A few care leavers have experienced periods in bed and breakfast accommodation and this represents an unnecessary risk. The risk of sexual exploitation of care leavers is not sufficiently considered.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families is inadequate

32. The standard of social work practice in Blackpool has declined since the last inspection. Help and protection are inadequate. Services have not sufficiently met children's needs for help and protection at the right time. This has sometimes led to unsafe decision-making, which places children at risk of harm. Widespread and serious failures were identified in some areas of practice during the inspection. This is because of an insufficiently robust approach to thresholds, drift and delay for the most vulnerable children and insufficient management oversight at all levels. The response to risk has been fragmented, and at times, too slow (such as within the MASH, pre-proceedings work and children at risk of exploitation).
33. Senior leaders, including the chief executive (CE) and political leadership, have had an optimistic view of practice improvement and have under-estimated the impact on children. This is a serious failure in leadership. The decline in practice was recognised by senior leaders and the current DCS was brought in to post 17 months ago. The DCS and CE set up the improvement board, which is chaired independently in order to offer additional scrutiny and challenge. A shadow board was created to involve the wider children's workforce in the roll out of improvement plans, but the impact of this to date is limited. Despite the work of these boards, leaders did not fully understand or recognise the level and extent of concerns in some areas of social work practice until this was

raised by inspectors during this inspection. This means that they have been unable to effectively address some of the serious issues that negatively impact on children's lives. The local authority presented an updated review report of their improvement journey to inspectors on the final day of the inspection and acknowledged some of the deficits that had been highlighted during the inspection.

34. A revised quality assurance framework has recently been introduced and has led to a significant range of audit activity, which is externally moderated. While it is positive that a quality assurance framework has been implemented by the DCS, the local authority has acknowledged that the quality of audits is too variable. Audits do not always lead to timely completion of actions to ensure that learning is embedded and leads to effective change.
35. In the absence of a performance management framework, the DCS has recently introduced one, and performance meetings are now held to review key performance information. However, this does not sufficiently address the quality of practice or lead to sustained improvement. Neither the quality assurance framework nor the performance management framework have assisted the local authority sufficiently so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of the gravity and level of concerns for children as identified at this inspection. The DCS was broadly aware of some of the deficits and was entirely honest and transparent throughout the inspection about her understanding of the quality of practice and what needed to improve. However, this was based on partial information. The extent of what needed to improve, and how widespread the concerns are, was not fully known, or understood, by the senior leadership team in Blackpool.
36. The DCS acknowledged throughout the inspection the support received from the chief executive and political leadership, but the support has not been effective in bringing about sufficient change. The support and commitment from some partners is weak, with limited evidence to show consistent joint-working that leads to positive change for children.
37. The Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB) is more closely aligned with the improvement board than it was, but attendance of key partners has been a constant challenge at both strategic boards and further work is required to hold partners to account.
38. The DCS has been pro-active in taking prompt remedial action during the inspection to address practice deficits. For example, additional management resource has been provided in the MASH due to the concerns raised about the quality of decision-making at the front door. A review of cases where families are subject to public law outline (PLO) processes is underway due to the concerns about risk, drift and poor management oversight. In addition, screening of all open child sexual exploitation cases was undertaken during the inspection to provide assurance that risk assessments of children's needs are

appropriate. However, this action was only triggered by the inspection process and was not identified sooner through robust audit and performance activity.

39. The response to long-standing neglect for some of the most vulnerable families in Blackpool has not been fully addressed since the last inspection. A refreshed neglect strategy is planned, but at the time of the inspection the current Safeguarding Board Neglect strategy (2016–18) had not led to an effective, coordinated response to neglect.
40. The local authority understands its corporate parenting responsibilities and has listened to children's experiences. However, the care leaver offer has not translated into a clear, ambitious care leaver strategy. This is a significant gap. Figures of care leavers not in education, employment or training are too high and this means that some young people have not had the right level of support. Leaders have only recently prioritised the development of the virtual school, and improvements in relation to attendance and attainment are still below national comparators.
41. A new model of social work practice has been introduced to help social workers recognise risk. This is leading to more focused consideration of risk factors, but there is still too much variability in the quality of plans and assessments, and management oversight is weak. There has been significant management turnover in the last 12 months due to concerns about the quality of management oversight and response to escalating risk. Leadership capacity has been stretched due to staff turnover. Some senior managers 'act down' to model good practice. New systems and processes have recently been introduced to improve the quality of management oversight on key decisions, but these are not sufficiently well embedded to ensure sustained and effective change.
42. Staff turnover has created a level of instability and uncertainty in the workforce, which has begun to stabilise as vacancies are filled and the reliance on agency workers reduces. A comprehensive workforce strategy has been implemented since the DCS came into post. Despite this, children have experienced too many changes of social worker due to the legacy of high turnover in some social work teams.
43. Social work capacity has been increased in some parts of the service and practice development roles are starting to become a feature of teams. Staff report that they feel positive about working in Blackpool, although some caseloads are still too high. Social workers require more training and support, including in the court arena, where they are often ill prepared to deal with complex court proceedings. This creates significant drift and delay for some of the most vulnerable children.
44. There is an emphasis on bringing about positive cultural change in the organisation, driven by the DCS, in order to create an environment that is both

supportive and challenging to staff. Supervision of social workers and support staff is mostly regular, and staff report that they feel well supported. However, the record of supervision is too task-focused and provides limited reflection, which is a missed opportunity to provide clearer direction to social workers who are working with challenging and complex families. Overall, social workers are not working in an environment in which good social work is encouraged and able to develop and flourish.



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Report to:	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2019

INCLUSION UPDATE

1.1 To provide an update on the implementation of the Inclusion Plan and the impact it is having on numbers of exclusions.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To review the update and monitor the impact of work undertaken.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure that a suitable impact is being made and identify any areas for further improvement.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Blackpool School Improvement Board Inclusion Plan was written in January 2018 and adopted by the local schools, strategic partners and leaders in Blackpool. The aim of the plan is to address the prevailing issues in Blackpool.

These are –

- A high number of pupils are excluded from Blackpool schools, either for a fixed period or permanently.
- There is higher than average pupil absence from schools.
- High numbers of pupils are educated at home.
- Blackpool has challenging numbers of children in need and children on a child protection plan.
- Deprivation affects education life chances for Blackpool children.

A number of strategies have been put in place in Blackpool to make changes that directly improve the life chances of children and young people, based upon the initial outline in the inclusion plan.

- 5.2 ***We will investigate the reasons for the rise in elective home education, talking to young people, their parents and schools. The outcomes of the research will inform decisions about interventions later in the programme.***

This analysis has been completed. The largest stated reason is “Parental Choice”, with over 60% of the cases stating this as the primary reason.

- 5.3 ***We will test provision of school-based social care services with the aim of keeping more children in school by improving the pastoral support available to them so that they are better able to learn.***

Ongoing development of this project.

- 5.4 ***We will provide behaviour support to secondary schools to reduce challenging behaviour and enable more pupils to remain in mainstream education.***

External specialist training and support has been commissioned and this support is ongoing. Statistics suggest that behaviour in Blackpool schools is improving. (See Appendix 6(a)).

- 5.5 ***We will review alternative provision across Blackpool.***

This is an ongoing Department for Education project, funded through the Opportunity Area programme and full work is underway on evaluating the available provision and looking for gaps in Blackpool that need to be filled. A project officer has been confirmed and is beginning work.

- 5.6 ***We will agree with Blackpool School Improvement Board the scale and timing for the roll out of Department for Education programmes and pilots designed primarily to improve mental health and well-being amongst children and young people, making sure to co-ordinate our work with Headstart.***

Ongoing and still under discussion due to capacity issues within the system.

5.7 ***We will build capacity locally to improve Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision by training an experienced practitioner to become a SEND reviewer, and nominating a SEND regional leader in Blackpool.***

The SEND regional leader has been identified as Philip Thompson, Head of SEND for Blackpool Council.

The National Leader of Education in Blackpool is Keith Berry, Headteacher of Park Community Academy.

Three full SEND reviews have now been completed.

5.8 ***We will commission research, the Blackpool 'Community Wide Assessment', which will allow us to identify which groups of children will benefit most from a range of interventions. As part of this work we will seek views from families, parents and carers as to why children are missing school or being excluded. We will use this research to assess which interventions are most appropriate and whether we should target more activities at families and in the home learning environment.***

Completed. A summary of the main findings is detailed below -

Non-traditional bullying is evidently a key and ongoing issue for a number of children and young people in Blackpool. Quotes and feedback from them indicate that – in a number of cases – this affects attainment levels and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) wellbeing.

Parents of Elective home educated (EHE) pupils repeatedly believe that their child's attainment would be enhanced by access to Blackpool schools' resources such as science labs or IT resources, during evening or weekend periods.

There continues to be a collective awareness of the pressures placed on Blackpool Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), with a belief that a reflex solution of referring an evidently troubled pupil to the PRU needed to cease/be challenged and that intervention initiatives within a mainstream school needed to be considered with an enhanced collective enthusiasm.

Prioritise support and the development/initiation of projects aligned to how bullying has adapted, particularly within the locality's high schools – including in order to maintain attainment and SEMH wellbeing.

Continue to be mindful of the influence that parents have with regard to EHE. Aligned to its incidence, the Partnership could also consider whether it might facilitate appropriate access to Blackpool schools' resources.

These points are all being mapped into planning in relation to the individual areas that are mentioned in the review.

5.9 ***From January 2018, we will start delivering targeted appropriate interventions to those groups of children and families who will benefit most, including those***

children at risk of not attending or being excluded from school. These interventions will draw on the 'Community Wide Assessment' (September 2017) and the joint research project with Norwich Opportunity Area on high exclusion rates (October 2017).

An Inclusion officer is now in post, employed within the School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion service area.

A Pupil Referral Unit outreach service and a re-integration programme is now in place.

Right to Succeed's REACH programme is in place, working with pupils who have speech, language and communication issues that are preventing full access to the school curriculum.

HeadStart are currently engaged in programmes in Blackpool.

6.0 *By September 2018, we will commence testing of new school-based social services support in at least four secondary and three primary schools.*

The tender has now been completed and a charitable partner has now been engaged.

6.1 *By April 2018, we will complete a review of Special Educational Needs and Disability and alternative provision in Blackpool. We will take action, where relevant, in response to the findings including training for mainstream schools in SEND starting after Easter 2017.*

Ongoing.

6.2 *Reduction of special school placements*

Through the SEND service, this is under review.

There are 454 pupils in Special Schools from a total of 19,289 pupils in education. (2.3%)

6.3 *An SEMH free school will open in Blackpool in September 2019*

A sponsor was identified by Easter 2018.

Blackpool council will "self-build" to facilitate the process, bringing down high-needs block spending and educating more Blackpool pupils in Blackpool.

The new School will open in September 2020.

6.4 *Single gatekeeping arrangements for the PRU and pupils who meet In Year Fair Access Panel criteria*

All admissions to the Pupil Referral Unit (Educational Diversity) must now go through the Blackpool school admissions team and through In Year Fair Access Panel (IYFAP).

There are 248 pupils on roll / 258 this time last year, but the demographic has changed due to SEND placements, who would previously have been placed out of area.

Of these, 64 are dual rolled and are expected to return to their main schools within a short time-frame.

6.5 *Remodelling the financial plan in relation to the High Needs budget*

An updated financial plan for the High Needs funding has been presented to the funding forum in Blackpool on 15 January 2019.

This is still forecasting a sizeable deficit.

6.6 *Inclusion officer*

An inclusion officer is now based within the LA teams, and is actively supporting schools to prevent exclusions.

6.7 *Headline figures relating to Inclusion*

Numbers of Fixed Term Exclusions – Down 26% since 2017/2018 Academic Year.

Days lost to Fixed Term Exclusions – Down 35% since 2017/2018 Academic Year.

Permanent Exclusions – 12 Permanent Exclusions compared to 25 Permanent Exclusions at the same time last year.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 *List of Appendices:*

Appendix 6(a)– Inclusion data

8.0 *Legal considerations:*

8.1 There are no legal issues to consider.

9.0 *Human Resources considerations:*

9.1 There are no relevant human resource issues to consider.

10.0 *Equalities considerations:*

10.1 All children are entitled to a good quality of teaching in the school of parental choice.

11.0 Financial considerations:

11.1 There are no financial considerations in relation to this report.

12.0 Risk management considerations:

12.1 The only risk issues relate to school community cooperation with projects aimed at promoting inclusion.

13.0 Ethical considerations:

13.1 No specific considerations in this report.

14.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

14.1 None required currently.

15.0 Background papers:

15.1 None.

Appendix 6(a) – Inclusion data

PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS						
Total for 2016-17 = 45			December 2018 = 7			
Total for 2017-18 = 44						
Running Total for 2018-19 = 12*						
School	KS		Totals	Number dereg to EHE	Name	School
Aspire	KS3	3	3	11		Montgomery
	KS4	-				Montgomery
Highfield	KS3	-	-	6		Aspire
	KS4	-				Aspire
Montgomery	KS3	4	5	4		Aspire
	KS4	1				St George's
South Shore	KS3	2	2	6		South Shore
	KS4	-				
St George's	KS3	1	2	3		
	KS4	1				
St Mary's	KS3	-	-	-		
	KS4	-				
Unity	KS2		-	11		
	KS3	-				
	KS4	-				
Ed Diversity	KS3	-	-	2		
LCC Schools						
			6	3		

EDUCATIONAL DIVERSITY Numbers in Centres as at 8 January 2019

SERF PROVISION					
	No attending	Capacity		No attending	Capacity
Bispham Smile Centre	7	8	Mereside – Pathways	6	8
Boundary	12	16	Pegasus	14	12

On Roll	PEGASUS	ORACLE	SPECIALIST	ATHENA	HHM	TOTAL
Yr 11		20	29 (2)	28 (1)	7 (2)	84
Yr 10		26	15 (1)	16 (2)	9 (3)	66
Yr 9	34 (2)	5		12 (1)	2 (2)	53
Yr 8	13 (2)			9 (3)		22
Yr 7	1			2 (1)	1	4
Yr 6	7 (1)				1 (1)	8

Yr 5	5 (2)					5
Yr 4	2				1	3
Yr 3						
Yr 2						
R / Yr 1						
Total	62	51	44	67	21	245
Capacity	70	50	60	75	15	270

* Numbers in brackets = children with an EHCP

Pegasus	Willows & Oxford	Athena	Home & Hospital
Oracle	KS4	HMM	Home Tuition
Specialist	Atlas/VALT		

In Year Fair Access Referrals Year 2018-19							
Total Referrals 2016-17 = 69 (including 2 students who did not go on roll until the 2017-18 period)							
Total Referrals 2017-18 = 58 (including 6 students who did not go on roll until the 2018-19 period)							
Current Yearly Total of Referrals = 34							
Closed Referrals = 21					Active Referrals = 12		
Provision	KS		2018-19 To date	2017-18	2016-17	Name	Identified Provision
Mainstream	KS2	-	7	31	29		Montgomery
	KS3	5					Montgomery
	KS4	2					Kincraig
Ed Diversity	KS2	-	9	17	26		South Shore
	KS3	4					South Shore
	KS4	5					Aspire
Left area/missing out			-	4	10		Ed Div
LAC Residential			-	-	-		Highfield
EHE			-	2	1		South Shore
Over School Age/CME			-	-	3		Montgomery
No offer (LCC resident)			-	-	-		St Mary's
Reintegrations			5				
						Reintegration Active Referrals = 3* (incl 2 c/f from 17/18 period *)	
							St Mary's
							Unity
							Aspire

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION												
Current Total on Register = 221												
Yr R	-	Yr 3	12	Yr 6	21	Yr 9	32					
Yr 1	6	Yr 4	9	Yr 7	13	Yr 10	46					
Yr 2	4	Yr 5	7	Yr 8	32	Yr 11	39					
Monthly Analysis on Elective Home Education												
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Register 2016-17	121	138	141	144	157	151	172	175	181	158	161	155
Register 2017-18	162	166	179	188	195	206	207	204	211	183	185	182
Register 2018-19	187	195	212	221								
Visits/ Children seen	6/7	12/12	10/11	7/7								
Enquiries/ Remained in school	32/9	15/2	21/3	14/3								
Returned to school	11	4	3	3								
Total returned to school 2018/19	11	15	18	21								
Total seen 2016-17	1	4	18	26	26	30	48	52	57	68	70	74
Total seen 2017-18	20	28	39	46	55	70	81	90	97	105	108	109
Total seen in academic year 2018/19	7	19	30	37								

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Report to:	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Philip Thompson, Head of SEND
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2019

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update on Special Educational Needs (SEND) provision in Blackpool.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Free School

To note the new Social, Emotional and Mental Health Free School for Blackpool will be open for September 2020.

2.2 SEND Strategy

To note that the SEND Service has been consulting on the new SEND Strategy for the Local Area and to provide a contribution to the Strategy before the final version is published shortly.

2.3 Early Years

To note that the Early Years' Service is consulting on a draft Early Years Strategy and Implementation Plan for the Local Area.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To input into strategy development.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Free School

Given the limited savings that could be delivered by opening in the Oracle, combined with the likely unviable position in which this would place the Trust, it is recommended that plans to open in September 2019 are not taken forward. A significant amount of work would be required to enable this to happen at a time when the focus needs to be on Ofsted requirements, and any savings that could be realised would be negligible in comparison to the effort required.

It has been agreed the opening date is put back from April 2020 to September 2020, given that the earlier date is unlikely to be financially viable for both the Council and the Trust. The later date will allow for a better planned lead-in time, with the best chance of success for the new school.

5.2 SEND Strategy

The Local Area is required to publish a strategy detailing how the needs of young people with SEN will be met. This new strategy will replace the current strategy that ended in December 2018. The strategy has been out for public consultation since November 2018 and closed on the 4 January 2019. The draft strategy has also been shared with Parents and the Young Peoples voice forum for SEND. The Young Peoples Forum has produced a child friendly version.

Since the introduction of the Children and Families Act in 2014, the Local Area is required to publish on their Local Offer a SEND Strategy. The strategy must be consulted on with wider partners and stakeholders. It must include arrangements on how the Local Area plans to meet the needs of young people aged 0-25, and how they will have their needs identified and supported if they have a Special Educational Need.

The SEND Strategy vision is:

‘for all young people in Blackpool, particularly with SEND or who are looked after, to have the right support and opportunities at the right time. So that they become resilient, happy and successful in their adulthood.’

This will be done by undertaking the following:

- To support early years providers and mainstream schools to improve inclusion and education for all children with SEND.
- To develop a continuance of local provision and services to meet the needs of children with SEND.
- To improve post 16 education, employment and training.
- Children and young people with SEND to enjoy good physical and mental health and wellbeing emotional health

5.3 Early Years

The Local Area is required to publish a strategy detailing how it will support and educate early years children and support their family in supporting their children for school readiness.

The strategy is in the early stages of development and the authority is still meeting with partners to discuss the strategy and its content.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, the Children and Families Act and the Early Years Workforce Strategy published by the government place a requirement on local authority areas to follow the frameworks and plan and monitor the quality of Early Years education. This new strategy will support meeting these requirements and will detail the LA priorities for the next three years.

The Early Years strategic objectives will be:

- Improve health and wellbeing for children in Blackpool and reduce inequalities
- Support and Increase parents' knowledge and skills
- Children ready for school and schools ready for children
- Support the development of high quality leadership together with a highly skilled and responsive workforce
- Integrated working and system change

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 7(a): SEND Strategy

Appendix 7(b): Young People Friendly version

Appendix 7(c): Early Years Strategy

6.0 **Legal considerations:**

6.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, the Children and Families Act and the Early Years Workforce Strategy published by the government place a

requirement on local authority areas to follow the frameworks

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 There are resource implications for the Local Area, as most of the functions are statutory partners and the LA should have staff in place to perform the roles identified in the strategy.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 Covered in the appendix documents.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 Free School

There are financial considerations for the Free School and they are detailed in the appended options paper.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are risk to the delay in opening of the Free School, they are highlighted in the attached options paper.

The risk of not having a SEND strategy would be highlighted through a local area OFSTED SEND Inspection.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 Covered in the appendix documents.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 The SEND strategy will need to be agreed at the SEND Board. Health and other partners sit on the SEND Board. The Strategy has been out for public consultation and has also been through the young people's voice forum for SEND.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None

SEND Strategy 2019 - 2021

Draft document for consultation

Blackpool Council

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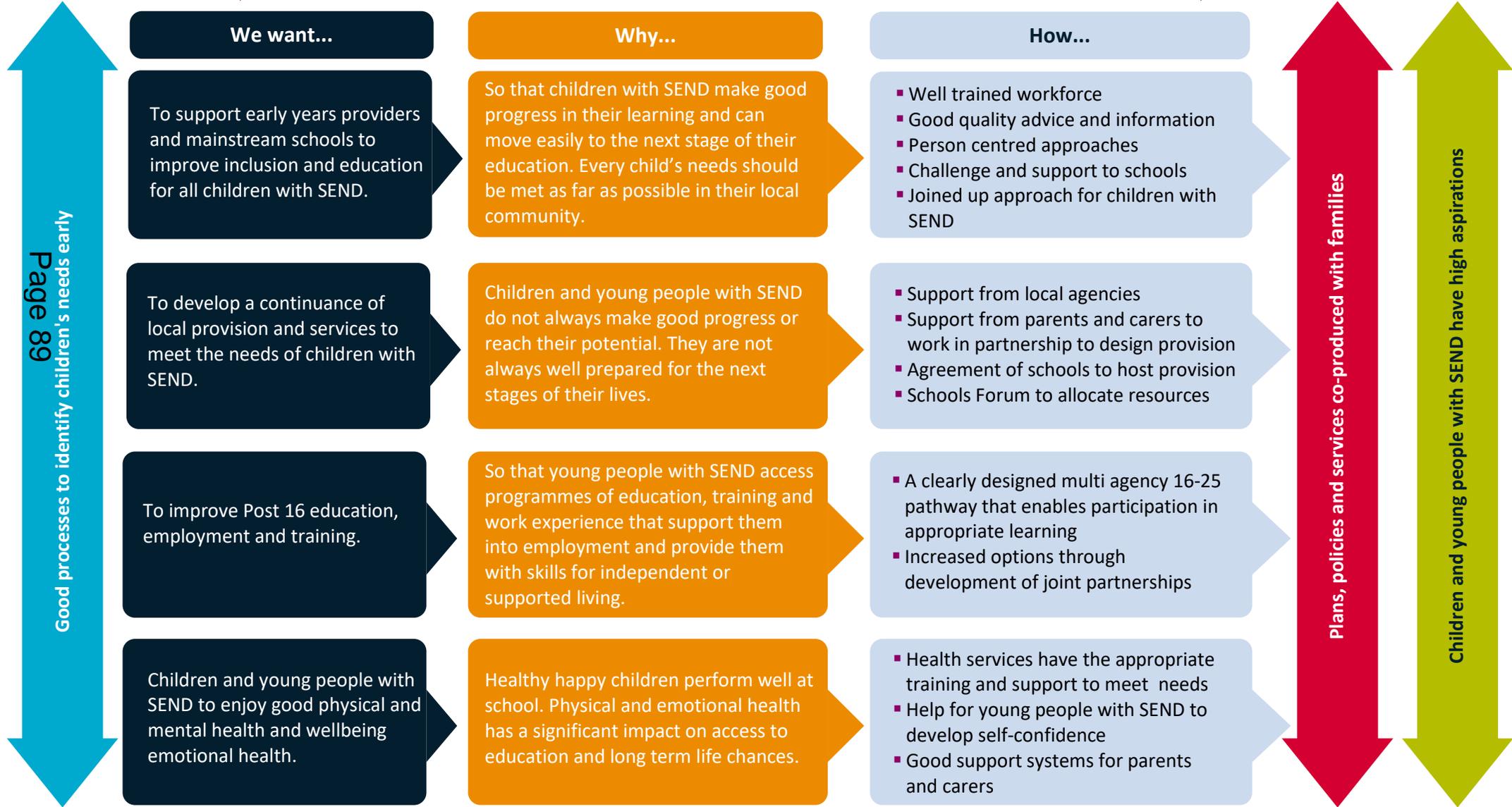


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Summary of SEND Strategy for 2019 - 2021

Our vision...
 Is for all children and young people in Blackpool, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities or are looked after, to have the right support and opportunities at the right time.
 So that they become resilient, happy and successful in their adulthood.



Introduction

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced the biggest changes to SEN in a generation; a new statutory duty on the local authority to ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents/carers are at the centre of decision making and they are given the right support and information to ensure they are able to participate in decisions which help them to achieve good outcomes.

Now in 2018, we have completed a review of our progress in delivering the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014; this document is our shared vision and our next steps for improving the outcomes for every Blackpool child and young person with SEND.

This strategy aims to meet the requirements of the Children and Families Act in a way that is ambitious, inclusive and realistic in a challenging financial context. It forms the Council's policy for SEND.

Developments so far include the formation of a SEND Strategy Board and Operational groups focusing on the effectiveness of the local area to meet the needs of young people with SEND. The board oversees the strategic vision and implementation of the SEND reforms. Person centred planning, young people and parental engagement have been key focuses since 2014. A Young People's Engagement Strategy has been written and a Young People's Voice Coordinator appointed across health and education. The Local Area have made positive efforts to complete the conversion of Statement to Education, Health and Care

plans (EHCP) in a timely manner and all conversions were completed within the DfE timescales set.

Positive engagement is now in place with parents/carers and members of local third sector organisations are members of the SEND Board and Operations Group. Local Authority Officers attend parent forum meetings and parental engagement days occur with a multi-agency approach to gaining parental feedback.

The SEND Board oversee the completion of the Local Area Self Evaluation and monitors the action plan behind it. The development of the Local Offer continues to improve and there is an expectation the Local Offer will become a daily platform for people to use for identifying support and accessing resources.

Going forward we recognise that there is still much to do, to keep pace with demand, to improve the quality of provision further and to ensure that more children and young people can have the specialist support they need in local schools and early years settings.



Our vision for SEND support in Blackpool

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Our vision is for all children and young people, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities or are looked after to have the right support and opportunities at the right time, so that they become resilient, happy and successful in their adulthood

We want to be aspirational and ambitious for all our children and young people with SEND, especially where that child may be looked after. To achieve our ambitions for children and young people with SEND, we will continue to focus on taking actions to reduce inequalities and closing the gap between those who already do well and those who may need extra support to thrive.

Where possible we believe that every Blackpool child and young person should be supported in the community where they live.

We will achieve this through access to good high quality local early years provision, schools and further education settings. In addition to the right learning opportunities, children with SEND should be offered access to appropriate health and care support in response to their assessed needs.

Underpinning this vision is

- A focus on individual strengths and assets
- An understanding of children, young people and families' skills and knowledge
- A focus on building resilience
- The effective use of finances and resources
- Enhancing social networks
- Developing a deeper understanding of the barriers children, young people and their families/carers may face
- Strengthening the involvement in community activities.

Blackpool is committed to early intervention and prevention, providing early help in a timely way so that the needs of local children and young people do not increase. Making sure that we identify needs early and provide the right support, is key to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND. We will continue to focus on a 'Quality First' approach in our universal settings (in early years, schools and colleges) so that more children learn and make good progress without the need for additional support.

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting all our children and young people with SEND.



Our vision for SEND support in Blackpool

Everyone who comes into contact with children and young people with SEND and their families has a role to play in:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing the impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

We want to provide a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to age 25. This means high quality and well-integrated services across education, health and social care, which work closely with young people, their parents and carers and where individual needs are met without unnecessary bureaucracy or delay. We aim to meet the needs of children and young people in universal and mainstream settings wherever possible and where more specialist help is needed, we will aim to provide it in Blackpool wherever possible.

We want the journey from childhood to adolescence and through to adulthood to be a good and positive experience for every child and young person. We want them to be getting the right information, advice and guidance in the right places at the right time depending on their needs. We want young people's experience of adolescence to be one where taking informed risks, making choices, being

challenged and challenging boundaries is about the preparation for adulthood journey.

The term "special education needs" does not mean the child/young person's needs will only be educational. Whilst educational progress is fundamental to the SEND Code of Practice, ensuring that children and young people with SEND have access to good opportunities to make educational progress requires a broader approach which includes family and health needs.



Strategic principles

In essence, our vision is underpinned in our strategic principles

- Our plans, services and policies are coproduced with families
- Children and young people with SEND feel safe and protected from harm. They are seen, heard and helped, effectively safeguarded, properly supported and their lives improved by everyone working together
- A person-centred approach to service delivery
- A focus on inclusive practices, removing barriers to learning and high-quality teaching
- Systematic, proactive and appropriate early identification and early help and provision made available locally within supportive communities
- Children, young people and their parents/carers are enabled to plan and make choices about their support and involved as much as possible in decision making
- Greater independence, choice and control for young people and their families over support
- Successful preparation for adulthood, including supporting independence, independent living and training and employment
- Partnership – Education, Health and Social Care services working well together, supported by voluntary and independent organisations and sharing accurate information in the best interests of the child and family
- Integrated, evidence based, high quality services, interventions and approaches – locally provided as far as possible
- Funding and support are allocated fairly and openly.



Key enablers

The key enablers to take this strategy forward and to realise our vision

Processes

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A well-planned continuum of provision from birth to 25 years that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families. This means integrated services across education, health and social care which work closely with parents and carers and ensures that individual needs are met without unnecessary bureaucracy and delay.

- Ensuring local SEND services are inclusive of and integrated with high quality Social Care, NHS and voluntary and community services so that the experience of families accessing services is positive and children and young people's learning, development, safety, wellbeing and health outcomes are well promoted alongside their educational progress and achievements.
- Our strategy requires a robust system of early identification of children and young people's needs. Early identification is being developed on the principle of evidence based, targeted interventions delivered by trained staff to ensure families have their needs met early and they do not experience the level of challenge and difficulty in their lives that require statutory interventions.
- A coherent SEND system designed with the child's need at the centre.
- The success of our strategy is reliant on a multi-agency and whole school/team approach rather than a stand-alone and therefore fragmented "silo" approach to children and young people with SEND.

Infrastructure and resources

- Strong strategic leadership by the Council, the education sector and Health, across the SEND system in Blackpool.
- Local education, training and support: a place in a good or outstanding school or provision, mainstream where appropriate, as close to home as possible with health and social care support for children and their families.
- Improving provision and increasing parental choice: working in partnership with providers in the voluntary, community and independent sectors who share our values and vision.
- As we continue to see our High Needs expenditure increase, indications are that the National Funding Formula will cap this. Partnership working with schools will be fundamental to develop more effective and innovative ways to use high needs funding in mainstream schools.



Key enablers

People

- Parents/carers and young people to have confidence in SEND services in improving the quality of life for them and the opportunity to coproduce these services.
- Early years settings, schools, colleges and care support services to have the capacity, skills and confidence to deliver high quality provision for children and young people with SEND to improve their educational and health outcomes and their access to wider social development and opportunities and to participate in their local community.
- The importance of providing good training for all staff, whichever setting they are working in. To achieve this aim, we need to use the best expertise and knowledge in educational establishments and other services, to increase capacity throughout the area by sharing best practice and by promoting a model of collaborative working and shared responsibility.
- A commitment to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people, which supports inclusion and understands the barriers to learning, independence and successful preparation for adulthood.

Joint strategic leadership and management

- Strong governance, accountability and challenge through the Blackpool SEND Strategic Partnership Board.
- The vision for SEND is a golden thread weaving through all provider services, including schools, through a clear commitment from senior leaders including school governing boards.
- Robust pace and delivery of our plans through joint working with the range of support, provision and services across a child or young person's life from birth through to young adulthood.
- All teams and services working towards our strategy through team plans, individual performance and development targets.
- Budgets aligned to our strategic priorities.



Strategic objective - One

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We want to support early years providers and main stream schools to improve inclusion and education outcomes for all children particularly those with SEND, including those children who are looked after

Research tells us conclusively that high quality care and learning experiences in the early years have a significant impact on outcomes for children and lay the foundations for better life chances. There is no group for whom this is more important than children with SEN and Disabilities.

We are committed to ensuring the inclusive education of children and young people and the removal of barriers to learning.

There is an expectation that all educational settings will work to enable all children and young people to develop, learn, participate and achieve their best possible educational potential and achieve their aspirations.

We want every child's needs to be met, as far as possible, in their local community, by local early years providers and mainstream schools.

We expect every early years provider and mainstream school to make effective provision for children with SEND, so that they make good progress in their learning and can move on easily to the next stage of their education and later into employment and independent adult life.



Strategic objective - One

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Why is this important	What outcomes do we want to see?	What do we need in place to achieve our outcomes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taken from the January 2018 statistics in Blackpool there are 18,996 school age children. There are 3,037 currently identified as having a special educational need, this is 16% of the total school population. There are 555 pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan not including early years and post 16 ▪ The national average split of pupils with EHC plans is 47% in mainstream and 53% in special. In Blackpool the split is 21% in mainstream and 79% in special ▪ The total percentage of pupils with SEND support is 18.9% compared to an England average of 14.6% ▪ Blackpool meets the England average for the number of pupils with EHC plans ▪ The total number of pupils with EHC plans in mainstream schools is significantly less than the national average even though the numbers identified are higher than average. The total 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The percentage of children with SEND assessed in Early Years Foundation Stage as achieving a Good Level of Development to increase year on year. These children are better able to engage with the national curriculum and more likely to reach their full potential at school ▪ Children and young people with SEND achieve well at every stage of their learning, including in Literacy, Phonics, and Maths at all key stages, including post 16. This will be demonstrated through good exam results ▪ All children and young people with SEND make good progress relative to their starting points and needs ▪ The overall gap between attainment of children with SEND including those who are looked after compared with all children to reduce ▪ The number of children with SEND being excluded from schools to reduce ▪ Above expected levels of attendance for children with SEND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrated reviews for all two and three year olds in early years provision, to support the early identification of SEND ▪ Professionals who work with very young children, including health visitors, identifying children with SEND early and making appropriate onward referrals ▪ Funding arrangements in early years settings and mainstream schools to identify, assess and support children with SEND, following the graduated approach set out in the SEND Code of Practice (“assess, plan, do, review”) ▪ A knowledgeable and well trained workforce with sufficient skills to support children with SEND effectively in early years settings and schools ▪ Access for families and schools to a range of support services to assist with identification and assessment ▪ Good quality information, advice and guidance to assist early years settings and schools to meet the needs of children with SEND ▪ Commitment to person centred approaches across all education settings and services so that children and families are equal partners in decisions which are made about how their needs are met

Strategic objective - One

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number of pupils on SEND support is also above national average in mainstream schools

- In real terms this means approximately 131 pupils (71 at primary and 60 at secondary) are in special school provision more than mainstream

- Children with SEND to make clear evidence based progress against their EHC plan outcomes

- The percentage of children with EHC plans who are being educated in mainstream as opposed to special schools, to increase to be consistent with national averages

- NHS providers work in a formal partnership arrangement with the council to provide a joined up approach for children with SEND
- The School Improvement Board to challenge and support schools in raising attainment, attendance and improve outcomes for young people
- Rigorous scrutiny of pupil documentation in place to ensure maximum benefit and use of all funding given to schools for SEND/LAC to ensure wise spending than has maximum impact on outcomes for learners

Strategic objective - Two

We want to develop a continuum of local provision to meet the needs of children with SEND, including Moderate Learning Difficulties, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Social Emotional and Mental Health

Blackpool Council maintains a range of provision for children with special educational needs. Most children with SEND will have their needs met in their local mainstream schools. All schools have delegated SEN budgets to help them to support children who have SEND but who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan, that is, children who are at “SEN Support”. In the case of children with Education, Health and Care Plans, the school’s resources will be supplemented by additional funding provided by Blackpool Council. There is now a high level of pressure for places in our local special schools which needs to be addressed, as well as increasing numbers of children transferring to non- Blackpool special schools. Blackpool will never be entirely self- sufficient in being able to meet the needs of all children with SEND locally. However, there is scope to develop more local provision so that more children are able to have their needs met in local schools and within their own communities.

The cost of specialist placements outside of Blackpool is rising to a significant extent; the rate at which these costs are rising is not sustainable in the long term and could lead to a reduction in local SEND support services in order to move resources in to specialist placements.

It is fully acknowledged that there will always be some young people who require very specialist provision which cannot be provided within Blackpool. However, if we can create additional local provision to meet the needs of some of these young people, this will have benefits for those young people and their families and will also enable us to contain costs of specialist placements and protect local SEND support services.

Strategic objective - Two

Why is this important	What outcomes do we want to see?	What do we need in place to achieve our outcomes?
<p>Page 100</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In Blackpool there are three Special Schools, in addition a new school for students with social, emotional and mental health needs is due to open during 2019. Currently pupils have to travel long distances outside Blackpool to attend independent special schools ▪ The special school provision is at capacity and the number of children with EHC plans educated in specialist provision exceeds the average for England. The High Needs budget has increasing pressure to fund places outside Blackpool and this is unsustainable ▪ The vision is for a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to age 25 in Blackpool that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families. This means integrated services across education, health and social care which work closely where individual needs are met without unnecessary bureaucracy or delay ▪ Where schools and other education settings offer good or outstanding provision, children and young people with SEND can be supported to achieve their ambitions and make good progress ▪ Data shows us that a significant number of children and young people with SEND do not always make good progress or reach their potential, and are not always will prepared for the next stages of their lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most children with EHCPs attend and achieve well in high quality local provision and are able to remain with their families and in their local communities ▪ Children remain in contact with local services and as a result of remaining within local education services, and so have continuity of support ▪ There is an enhanced range of local specialist provision and reduced reliance on external specialist placements ▪ The number of children with Education, Health and Care plans remains within national averages ▪ Where children do need to become Looked After, their needs arising from the EHCP are fully considered when deciding upon suitable education and home placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreement of local schools to host new provision, where the provision is going to be linked to an existing mainstream or special school ▪ Support from other local agencies including health to develop new facilities in partnership ▪ Support from local parents/carers to co-design the new provision and ensure it meets parents/carers requirements ▪ Agreement from the Schools Forum to allocate resources to meet the set up and running costs of new specialist provision ▪ The use of the Local Authority Inclusion, Virtual School, Education Psychology, Children with Complex Needs, and SEN officer teams to support schools with inclusive whole school practice approaches

Strategic objective - Three

We want to improve Post 16 - education, learning, employment and training

We want all young people with SEND in Blackpool to fulfil their potential and, as far as possible, meet their aspirations; so that they lead happy, healthy lives and are able to make positive contributions as members of their communities.

We want to support this vision through high quality provision in education, training, work experience, apprenticeships and study programmes that support young people into engagement or employment and provide them with skills for independent or supported living.



Strategic objective - Three

Why is this important	What outcomes do we want to see?	What do we need in place to achieve our outcomes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We want all young people with SEND in Blackpool to fulfil their potential and as far as possible meet their aspirations so that they lead happy, healthy lives and are able to make positive contributions as members of their communities ▪ We want to support this vision through high quality provision in education, training, work experience, apprenticeships, and study programmes that support young people into engagement or employment and provide them with skills for independent or supported living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision available to all young people with SEND aged 16-25 to enable them to access purposeful activities (including education, work experience, supported employment, supported internships, apprenticeships, training including voluntary and community projects as appropriate) ▪ All young people with SEND have a clear destination pathway and they are able to make appropriate progress whatever their starting point ▪ All young people with SEND Post 16 and their parents and carers have access to high quality impartial carers have access to high quality impartial careers advice guidance which prepares them for their next steps in life ▪ All young people have access to work related learning activities, as appropriate to their level of ability to enable them to work towards paid employment wherever possible ▪ Through partnership working and joint commissioning arrangements for Post 16 SEND services are delivered in a coordinated way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A clearly defined multi agency 16-25 pathway for all young people with SEND that enables participation in appropriate learning opportunities which enable young people to reach their potential and achieve as much independence in life as they can, including paid employment wherever possible. There is no automatic entitlement for young people with an EHCP to remain in education until the age of 25, and for some young people there will be more appropriate pathways to adult life ▪ Our vision of SEND Post 16 recognises that some young people with SEND will require longer to achieve their education or training outcomes to enable them to prepare for adulthood in a meaningful way, therefore we need in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High quality provision for education, work experience, supported internships and employment ▪ Jointly commissioned arrangements and agreed protocols between the Blackpool SEND Strategic Partnership Board, its

Strategic objective - Three

- All young people have access to a range of SEND Post 16 services and support to provide increased choice and control
- Reduction in NEET figures for SEND and Looked After Children

- partners and its providers for agreed standards of provision
- Increased options and appropriate pathways for Post 16 with Blackpool and its neighbouring local authorities through development of joint provision where appropriate
- Strengthened collaborative partnership working between Education, Children's and Adult Social Care services and Health to enhance local provision for young people with significant needs

Strategic objective - Four

We want children and young people with SEND to enjoy good physical and mental health and wellbeing emotional health

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A happy and healthy child will have the best opportunities for learning. The Education, Health and Care Plan will ensure that all children with SEND receive integrated support from education, health and social care services. Support for children with SEND will be the golden thread running through all these services and staff will have the capacity, skills and confidence to provide family centred support to all children.

There will be a focus on prevention and early intervention to ensure that health and care services are provided in a timely manner. Children and families will be provided with information about their health and social care to enable them to make informed choices about the services that they receive. These can and will evolve as the child grows, focussing on early years and adapting as required.

Emotional health and wellbeing underpin child development. This strategy will ensure that all children with SEND to receive appropriate service to support their health and wellbeing needs.

Strategic objective - Four

Why is this important	What outcomes do we want to see?	What do we need in place to achieve our outcomes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We know that healthy, happy children perform well at school and we know how a child’s physical and emotional health has a significant impact on their access to education and their long-term life chances <p>We will work together in partnership with children and young people and their families/carers to improve access to the support they need in order to have good health, from both universal and specialised services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information about health provision is clearly explained to children and young people ▪ Children and young people learn how to manage their own health and wellbeing ▪ Universal services are understood and accommodate the needs of children and young people ▪ Children and young people are satisfied with the quality of services offered to meet their needs and have confidence in the professionals working with them ▪ Children and young people feel involved in planning and decision making about their health ▪ The families of children and young people have the support they need to help them to support their children ▪ There are effective networks for children and young people, including friends and family ▪ Children and young people’s care is coordinated and connected so people understand their needs and jointly meet them so that they don’t have to keep telling their story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Universal health services which have the appropriate training and support to meet the needs of children with SEND ▪ Specialist health services which have the appropriate training and support to meet the needs of children with SEND ▪ Specialist health services which can be assessed in as timely manner a way as possible, and support made available for families if they do need to wait to access services ▪ All providers offering person centred services which put the child at the centre ▪ Good co-ordination between services ▪ Support systems for parents and carers of children with SEND ▪ Help for young people with SEND to develop self-confidence and resilience

The strategy will be successful if...

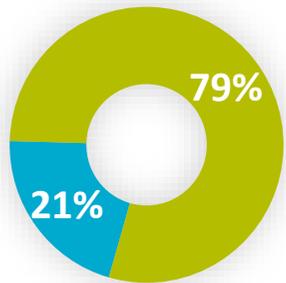
- There are clear processes to identify children's needs early and partners communicate and coordinate services well working together to meet these needs
- Children and young people with SEND can take part fully in all aspects of education, community and fun activities
- Children and young people with SEND have high aspirations and we support them to be independent and well prepared for adult life
- Practitioners in education settings feel confident about providing for children with a broad range of SEN and working closely with their parents/carers to provide effective evidence based approaches across the setting
- Early preventative services help parents/carers to provide appropriate physical and emotional care to their children
- We meet children's needs in mainstream settings wherever possible, and when more specialist help is needed we are able to provide this in Blackpool wherever possible
- We know that provision is improving outcomes: that aspirational yet realistic targets are agreed and progress towards them monitored, and that children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers have been involved in setting and reviewing goals
- Children and young people with SEND tell us that they are satisfied with services and that their needs have been met appropriately
- We rely less on statutory assessment of children's special educational needs (SEN) and more on getting the right level of support when it is needed
- We use appropriate evidence-based interventions so all children and young people at all key points through to adulthood. All children, young people and families are positive about their experiences
- We give young people with SEND and their parents/carers the right information and advice about the services they can use at the right time
- Our workforce has the right skills, competencies and confidence to meet needs of children and young people with SEND
- Reviews are thorough and lead to improvements in outcomes for the child or young person
- There is well co-ordinated transition for children and young people at all key points through to adulthood. Children, young people and families are positive about their experiences
- Children and young people with complex and additional needs have more choice in services based in the community



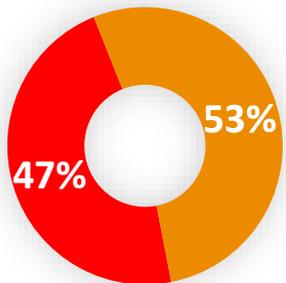
Key data

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Comparison of pupils with EHC plans 2018



Mainstream Special
Blackpool

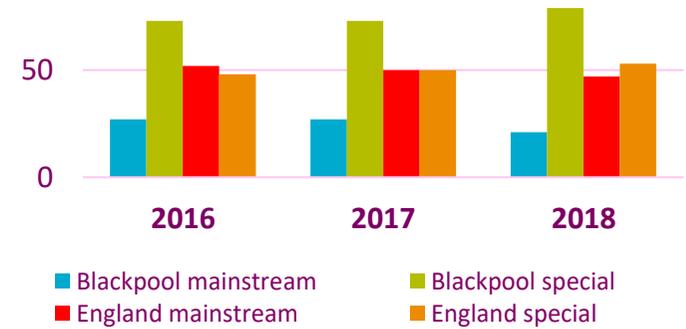


Mainstream Special
England

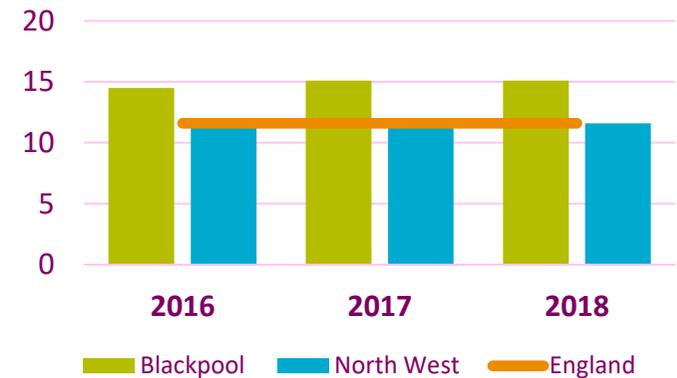
The Challenge

- 3.5%** Higher than the England average number for pupils with SEND Support
- 4.3%** Higher than the England average number for pupils with SEND
- 32%** More pupils on EHC Plans in special schools, compared to mainstream than England average

Percentage of pupils with EHC Plans by type of school

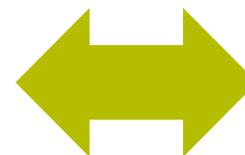


Percentage of pupils with SEND support



Going forward...

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Successful delivery of the strategy

Requires a partnership approach owned by all stakeholders working with children, young people and families, including:

- Health
- Education
- Social Care
- Schools
- Voluntary and community organisations

Blackpool SEND Strategic Partnership Board

- Will ensure that the work is undertaken to achieve the vision
- Monitor and challenge progress
- Will bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to enable public, private, community and voluntary organisations to work together

Blackpool SEND Operational Group

- Provides the strategic drive, co-ordination and oversight
- Receives regular performance and outcome indicator reports

Partners

Grouped under thematic priorities:

- Will be the delivery mechanism for implementation of the strategy

Delivery plan

This section will be updated with a detailed delivery plan once feedback from the consultation has been completed.

Delivery plan

To ensure our services are accessible to all, documents are available in alternative formats.
Please ask for details.

SEND Team

Children's Services
PO Box 4
Blackpool, FY4 1NA

Contact

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Our Vision



We want...

How will we do this?

Because...

To support early years services and mainstream schools to improve inclusion and education for children with SEND.

There is a high percentage of children and young people with an EHC plan in our mainstream schools.
We want to be consistent with the national averages.

- Staff are well trained.
- Good advice and information.
- Use person-centred approaches.
- Provide support to schools.
- Work in partnership to support young people with SEND.

To make sure there are local services that are continually available and are accessible for children and young people with SEND.

Children and young people with SEND do not always reach their potential.
They are not always well prepared for the next stages of their lives.

- Support from local services.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers to design services.
- Agreement from schools to host services.
- Ask the Schools Forum to decide how resources are used.

To improve education, learning, employment and training for young people who are over 16.

Young people with SEND should be supported into employment or engagement, and they should be able to learn skills for independent or supported living.

- A clear pathway for 16-25 year olds, that involves different services for appropriate learning.
- More options for education through partnership working.

Children and young people with SEND to enjoy good physical and mental health and wellbeing emotional health.

Young people who are happy and healthy are better able to do well at school.
Your health can impact your access to education and your options throughout your life.

- Health services have training and support to meet young peoples' needs.
- Help for young people with SEND to develop their confidence.
- Good support for parents/carers.

Children and young people's needs are identified early

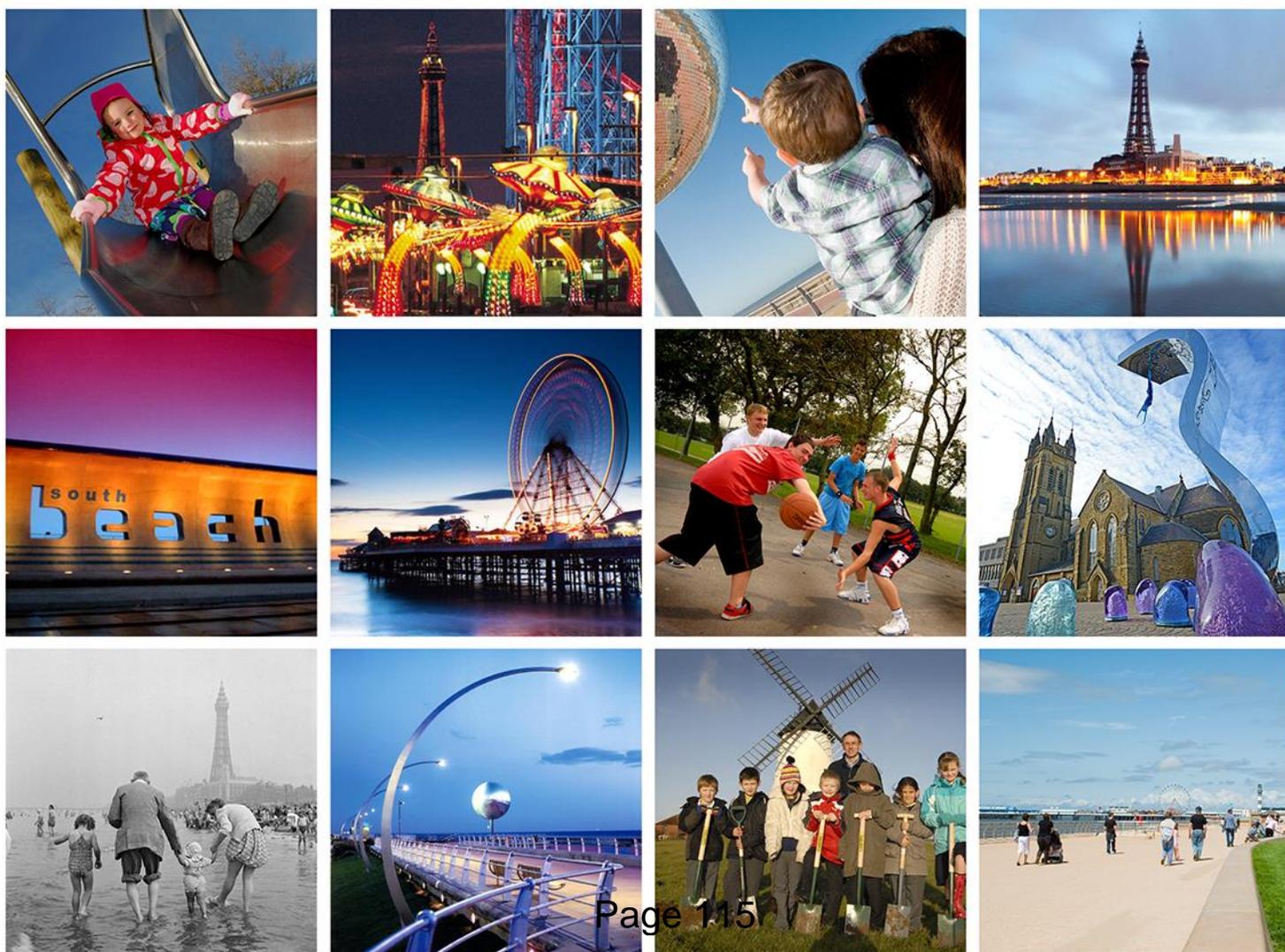
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Plans, policies and services are created with families and young people
Children and young people with SEND have high aspirations

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Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy 2018 – 2020 For Consultation

Blackpool Council



Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Contents

Place title here	00

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Working effectively together to make sure that every child in their early years has the opportunity to be the best they can be.

From the point of conception through to the first day at school, parents, babies and young children have regular contact with a range of different services including midwifery, health visiting, GPs, Family Hubs/Children Centres, childcare and early education provision.

Getting this contact and these services right in these critical years is crucial to ensure that parents are supported sufficiently and that all babies and children are given the best possible start in life.

An effective Early Years Strategy needs to be based on the assumption that parents are the first educator and ensure that there is a robust system in place to support them in this vital role.

Research shows social class, income, co-parental relationships, living conditions and parent's own education levels are directly related to child development outcomes. However, the quality of the early home learning environment (from birth) acts as a significant modifying factor. All parents can enhance their child's progress if they engage regularly in activities that encourage positive social development, communication and thinking.

Children with strong early home learning environments are ahead in both social and cognitive development at the age of three.

They show secure language ability, higher levels of confidence, co-operation and sociability, and this advantage continues as they progress through school.

Services need to be focused on delivering an approach that is underpinned by in supporting parents in good parenting skills. This will provide the basis for them to have an understanding of how a child learns and ensure that they are an active participant in their child's brain development, enabling the child to become an active learner with a strong attachment and healthy relationships.

Whilst parents are recognised as the child's first educator, this strategy recognises the impact that access to high quality education can have in improving outcomes for children. Research shows us that access to high quality educational experiences can have a significant impact on the outcomes a child achieves. This strategy has a strong focus on ensuring children have a breadth and depth in their learning within early year's settings and building upon the good and outstanding provision that exists within Blackpool.

For the purpose of this strategy **school readiness** is defined as:

“Children will be able to express their needs, feelings and wants effectively with their peers and adults. A setting/school will ensure that children feel heard and understood by their practitioners. Children will be excited, enthused and demonstrate a willingness to learn both inside and outside of the setting/school”.

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

National context

It is now recognised that the earliest years of a child's life can have an important impact on his or her long-term development. These are formative years, physiologically, cognitively, socially and emotionally.

For a child to flourish and fulfil their potential, they need their environment to provide them with specific types of support from conception to the age of five. The parent or primary caregiver is the most important part of a child's environment, and attachment has long been recognised as a key factor in positive child development.

Research found that children who are supported to develop positive behaviour are associated with a number of improved outcomes in later life, including income and aspects of mental health and well-being.

Language development - one of the earliest areas of cognitive development and an important stepping-stone to future success - is also influenced by parents or caregivers. If adults talk with children effectively - taking the lead from the child, elaborating on what they say, asking questions, sharing rhymes or songs or books - then children are given the best start in developing the cognitive tools they need to succeed at school.

Early intervention and prevention

For many years research has helped us understand that intervening early in the lives of young children can have a positive influence on their lives as they live and grow. Intervening early for those children and families who need it most makes a positive difference and the importance of the contribution that the Blackpool Family Hubs/Children Centres, Blackpool Better Start, Public Health and the Early Years Quality and Inclusion service can make to this process cannot be underestimated. Yet intervention from services has historically often started at a higher level of need.

Investing in the early years of a child's life with effective evidence-based interventions, with both universal services and also targeted approaches with families and children at risk, ensures all children will have improved outcomes and reduces inequalities. The cost benefit of this approach in terms of an 'invest to save' model for the future is also well evidenced.

Blackpool aims to offer support at a much earlier stage, building resilience, preventing the escalation of needs, wherever possible, and reducing the likelihood of problems emerging in the first place.

Early intervention services direct support to the most vulnerable children and families who require additional and intensive support, focusing on improving outcomes. Services aim to improve the resilience and well-being for children and families and ensure they are able to access the right services at the right time in the right place. They also aim to make a significant difference in reducing demand for statutory services and to provide support to families who are stepping down from statutory services.

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

This approach helps to provide responses to the most vulnerable families and reduce inter-generational cycles of poor outcomes. The approach has far reaching implications which extends to both universal and targeted services who work with adults, young people, children and families and who work across all sectors.

Systems and services have recently been redesigned to ensure vulnerable children, young people and adults secure better outcomes, by coordinating the support they receive and the impact that services have.

Blackpool's approach is designed to be flexible enough to support all children and families whatever their need, whenever they need it.

It aims to respond in a meaningful, supportive way, working with parents wherever possible. It takes into account that everyone involved with the family has an important part to play and puts the wellbeing of children and families at the heart of any support.

What will Early Years Services look like for children, families and partners in Blackpool?

There is good practice happening across Blackpool and families are supported well. However, more needs to be done not only in embedding this good practice but in constantly improving the outcomes for children and families.

As a partnership we will deliver an integrated early years' service delivered by health, early education, social care and voluntary service partnerships. The more that agencies join-up to deliver services to meet the needs of families with young children, the more those needs can be met in a seamless way. We want to ensure parents and carers have access to the services they need and feel confident, competent, well informed and secure in their role as parents so that children thrive in an environment where they are encouraged and supported to reach their potential.

In order to capture a child and family's journey and ensure the services we offer to them impacts on their outcomes, the Early Years Strategy has identified a number of key strategic priorities which have been grouped into the following five themes:

- Good Maternal and Child Mental Health and Well Being
- Parental Engagement
- High Quality Inclusive Education
- Workforce Development
- Integrated working and system change

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Good maternal and child mental health and well being

Objective 1: Improve health and wellbeing for all children in Blackpool and reduce inequalities.

Good health and wellbeing is vital if children and young people are to enjoy their childhood and achieve their full potential. Establishing good lifestyle habits in childhood provides the basis for lifelong health and wellbeing.

This theme focuses on ensuring there is a consistent approach to the delivery of health services for families with a clear pathway from conception to age five, in line with the Healthy Child Programme, outlining what families can expect from professional services. This will be achieved through good partnership working that ensures specialist services such as drug and alcohol and mental health services receive referrals at the earliest possible point, to help parents develop and sustain a strong bond with their child. The achievement of successful outcomes as a result of early intervention will support parents across Blackpool.

Family Hubs/Children's Centres offer both universal and targeted support to families across the Blackpool. These are facilitated by a range of multi - agency professionals. Delivering universal services to every child and family provides an invaluable opportunity to identify children at risk of poor outcomes and provide early help to families. Research around early attachments tells us that promoting secure attachments and good maternal health are important for the emotional well-being and development of both mother and baby to secure the best start in life.

By offering a consistent and well-planned approach to service delivery, families will be supported in developing secure attachments and identification of early needs. A clear pathway will ensure the ease of access to services such as early parenting support, specialist health services (such as community-based health services/professionals) and Family Hubs/Children's Centres.

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Parents	Professionals
<p>Will be engaged in health/ universal services at the earliest point and are clear about what is on offer across the Blackpool.</p>	<p>Will launch a pathway that all professionals who support children and families in the early years will sign up to that offers a consistent message and ensures the best start in life</p>
<p>Will participate in services so that their children have the opportunity to receive high quality health care</p>	<p>Will provide services at the appropriate milestones to ensure children get the best start in life.</p> <p>Will initiate whole family Early Help Assessment where needed and coordinate a plan to meet identified needs.</p>
<p>Will understand their child’s development milestones and how they can support them through their parenting</p>	<p>Will provide Perinatal Education classes that offer an attractive Early Parenting Programme to expectant parents and beyond including sessions focused on early attachment/bonding.</p>
	<p>Will identify and make available a suite of multi - agency services to support expectant/new mothers and fathers at the earliest point, especially those who may present with early signs of low mood or historical mental health issues</p>
	<p>Will support parents’ access to services already on offer.</p> <p>Will inform and support parents in their understanding of the importance of physical and mental wellbeing in child development.</p>

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Parental engagement

Objective 2: Support and increase parents' knowledge and skills

Parenting is an important, exciting, complex and challenging role. Positive parenting has a strong and significant impact on children's ability to maximise the available opportunities and reach their full potential both personally and academically.

This theme focuses on developing the provision of universal services for families in order to support parental engagement. Parents will be supported to develop good parenting skills to enable them to help their child(ren) achieve their full potential. This meets the key strategic priorities, by developing a clear pathway for parents and professionals that promotes an understanding of child development and improves readiness for school.

Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) research shows that parental engagement with their child's learning has a significant impact on their outcomes. The role of *Universal Services Practitioners* is to support parents in becoming their child's first educator, as well as supporting families with school readiness. Practitioners and other professionals; including Health workers; are promoting Early Education Funding for eligible 2-year olds and all elements of 3 and 4 year old entitlement. Access to high quality educational experiences can have a significant impact on narrowing the attainment gap.

We are aware that parents are the first and most important educators in their child's lives and the things that parents or carers do with children at home, like talking to, reading to, and playing with them, are key predictors of future development and readiness for school. We will develop the skills of providers to build warm and genuine relationships with parents and carers to support this 'home learning environment'.

To ensure healthy minds and bodies we will promote children having access to active and energetic play on a regular basis and support the development of high quality active outdoor learning in early years establishments and green spaces.

Through home learning and promotion of services parents will be assisted to build resilience and be the child's first educator also supporting school readiness. This will be measured by monitoring referrals for home learning and attendance at both play and stay and library groups. By developing the existing parent champions' programme and working in partnership with other professionals, promotion of Early Education Funding will support engagement with families within community groups, Family Hubs/Children's Centres, Schools and Childcare Providers.

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Parents	Professionals
<p>Will increase their understanding of their child's developmental milestones and how they can support them</p>	<p>Will promote services available to families in their community in order to deliver prevention and early Intervention support</p> <p>Will engage with parents in ways that enable them to effectively support their children's learning and development and skills in building relationships.</p> <p>Will initiate whole family Early Help Assessment where needed and coordinated a plan to meet identified needs.</p>
<p>Will develop skills and resilience to be their child's primary educator providing good home learning environments</p>	<p>Will provide child development resources regarding ages and stages to inform parents of expected progress</p> <p>Will promote awareness and access to information to support parenting</p> <p>Will support with school readiness by developing a holistic understanding which supports families</p> <p>Will actively engage parents as partners in their children's learning.</p>
<p>Will feel supported to participate in services.</p> <p>Will access Bookstart, Literacy Weeks, Play and Stay groups, communication and language support and other universal services available within the community including Family Hubs, and Libraries.</p>	<p>Will increase the number of parent champions across the Blackpool</p> <p>Will develop the skills and knowledge of parent champions so that they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote universal services • Encourage other parents to access Early Education Funding • Enable them to signpost and support families to other services available in their community

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Will support their children to access high quality Early Education Funding (EEF) for 2,3 and 4-year Old's and Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Will raise awareness of Early Education Funding and further improve the take up of places

Will identify eligible children so that resources can be targeted to the right children and families at the right time

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

High quality inclusive education

Objective 3: Children ready for schools and schools ready for children

Good communication and language skills combined with strong social and emotional skills are essential for children to be effective learners throughout life and achieve their potential and improve their life chances.

This theme focuses on ensuring all children in the Blackpool have access to high quality inclusive pre-school experience and education which will enhance and improve their learning outcomes throughout their education.

Research (EPPSE3-16+) which tracked children from 1997 through to their educational and developmental outcomes at 16 years old in 2013 continues to drive and shape current government policy. The report demonstrates how pre-school experience continues to influence the outcomes of young children most significantly:

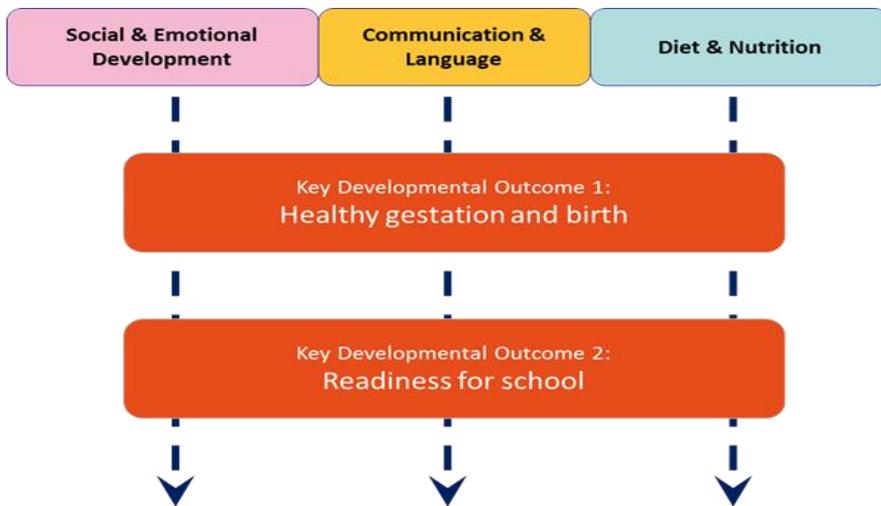
- The quality of pre-school experience predicted both total GCSE scores and English and Maths grades. Quality education was also linked to better pro-social behaviour and lower levels of hyperactivity. The quality of pre-school experience was especially important for children whose parents have low qualifications.
- Attending a high quality pre-school, experiencing a longer duration, or attending settings of higher quality all predicted a greater likelihood of following an academic pathway post 16 as well key findings as a reduced likelihood of taking a lower academic route.

Key findings from Ofsted's good practice survey, "Teaching and play in the early years-a balancing act?" (July 2015) included:

- Accurate assessment of children's starting points was based on constant reflection about what was deemed typical for each child given their chronological age in months. Where we observed this to be most effective, staff entered into frequent discussion, within and between providers, to check and agree their judgments. This included the frequent sharing of information between parents, other pre-school settings and health visitors.
- Collaboration between early years' providers was key to securing a higher quality of teaching and play. We found that where schools and settings shared a site, were directly managed by one overarching leader or had entered into a professional network with others in the locality, expertise was shared effectively to allow all early years professionals to learn from the best. Many had become early years' hubs for their area, championing the importance of early education and raising the quality of learning and development.

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Every child has the right to access a good or outstanding early years' provision and to have access to the best support for their learning and achievement. They should also benefit from providers working in partnership with each other to share the best practice as they continue to improve together. No child should be disadvantaged by not being able to attend a good quality early years provision, ensuring their 'readiness' for school.



In their first few years most children learn to walk and run, speak and communicate, relate to others and explore learning through play but for all children, including those for whom these skills are more difficult, realising and reaching their full potential is the goal and these are the key elements of “school readiness”.

- By the age of five children should be ready to make the most of the wealth of opportunities available to them at their next stage of learning and development.
- Ensuring all children make good progress in the early years requires a good understanding of their development, the early identification of any problems, and support for these children through universal and more specialist services.
- The quality of early years and childcare provision is second only to the quality of parenting in shaping how well children do in the early years.

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Children	Professionals
<p>Will have increased Good Level of Development at the Early Years Foundation Stage and will attain in line with National expectations</p>	<p>Will develop a clear pathway for parents and professionals that promotes a common understanding of child development and how this can be supported</p> <p>Will establish a robust transition protocol to support children's' move onto statutory education including the sharing of data</p>
<p>Will not achieve to a lesser degree if they receive Early Years Pupil Premium compared to those not receiving Early Years Pupil Premium</p>	<p>Will develop a school readiness definition to improve readiness for school for all children with particular regard to disadvantaged and vulnerable children at age 5</p>
<p>Will receive high quality preschool education in settings that are judged to be good or outstanding</p>	<p>Will provide high quality learning environments</p> <p>Will achieve and maintain a "Good" or above Ofsted judgement</p> <p>Will develop self-confidence and resilience in children through high quality inclusive play and experiences.</p> <p>Will provide a support and challenge function within and to settings in order to develop and continually improve practice</p> <p>Will develop training materials, opportunities and practice to support providers in implementing changes in practice that will impact on children's outcomes</p>
<p>Will achieve successful outcomes as a result of early intervention</p>	<p>Will track cohorts of children to monitor progress ensuring children at a disadvantage are fully supported</p> <p>Will use their best endeavours through the graduated approach to make sure that children with SEN get the support they need.</p>

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Will initiate whole family Early Help Assessment where needed and coordinated a plan to meet identified needs.

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Workforce development

Objective 4: Support the development of high quality leadership together with a highly skilled and responsive workforce

Strong leadership and a highly skilled and responsive workforce are essential to the delivery of high quality services. Effective intervention and evidence-based practice and intervention can support every child in achieving the best outcomes.

This theme focuses on challenging and supporting schools and childcare providers to deliver the best education for children and young people through developing a highly skilled Early Years workforce with strong and effective leadership and management. This meets the key strategic priorities, by establishing Early Years forums with a clear programme for improving outcomes. Also, to establish a robust transition protocol and to ensure the workforce support effective transitions between settings.

The model environments focus on strengthening leadership and management to raise the quality of learning environments, progress of implementation is monitored during quality support visits. The Local Offer came into effect from September 2014; this provides parents with information regarding how early years provision can support children with additional needs.

Research demonstrates that inspirational practitioners providing stimulating and challenging environments support children in accelerating their learning.

Through the promotion of focused early years forums, workshops and drop in the workforce will be supported to share and disseminate good practice, building effective working relationships with other partners such as Blackpool and Fylde College and Adult Education services, to provide a consistent approach in developing high quality early years practice. Regular monitoring of the quality of early years practitioners entering the workforce and maintaining a continuous cycle of staff development within provision, will assist in ensuring the stability and quality of practitioners.

Workforce development will focus on achieving:

- Practitioners receiving a strong grounding in current early years child development research and theory to inform practice
- Practitioners being equipped to enhance the quality of adult-child interactions through Sustained Shared Thinking - encouraging 'back and forth' discussions to build vocabulary
- Practitioners who know how to implement evidence-based approaches across language, literacy and numeracy
- Staff that have increased skills and confidence to engage with parents around children's learning – to support the home learning environment
- Staff that are equipped to identify children with SLCN and know how to put into place suitable support strategies

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Children	Professionals
<p>Will learn in high quality learning environments</p>	<p>Will share and disseminate good practice</p> <p>Will maintain a continuous cycle of staff development within the provision to ensure the stability and quality of the workforce</p>
	<p>Will develop and maintain Early Years forums to enable leaders and managers to enhance their knowledge of the sector and to build locality networks</p> <p>Will develop high levels of skills in graduate leaders</p> <p>Will promote and develop a common language, messages and use of evidence-based practice</p> <p>Will access training to support the development of model environments and peer support opportunities</p>
<p>Will achieve to their full potential with those more disadvantaged than their peers progressing well.</p>	<p>Will demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of child development and how to support families</p> <p>Will embed effective key worker practice within provision</p> <p>Will implement observation planning and assessment to meet individuals needs and interests</p>

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Objective 5: Integrated working and system change

Integrated working and system change is integral to the delivery of effective services and providing early help for vulnerable children and families in order to meet the full range of needs within each family and strengthen their ability to provide care and support to each other.

Context:

- Systems and processes need to be streamlined to remove duplication, identify and address any gaps.
- Resources are limited and there is a need for cost effective and readily available services for all families.
- We need to ensure all partners work together in an integrated way to make best use of our resources, to ensure consistent, high quality provision across Blackpool.
- To improve outcomes and reduce inequalities we need to ensure our most vulnerable families are identified early and encouraged through easily accessible services to sustain engagement.

Our Priorities:

- Ensure improved communication, information and data sharing.
- Promote and develop a common language and shared evidence-based messages.
- Improve timely interventions and appropriate help at the right time.
- Improve team around the child and family partnership approaches to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities.
- Ensure the Integrated Care Pathway is fully and effectively implemented and linked to all other key pathways.
- Aligning multi-agency pathways and services to ensure maximum impact on outcomes and inequalities.
- Ensure effective transition of family support from Family Hubs/Children's Centres and health visitor services to schools.

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Appendix 1: Ofsted Inspection Outcomes October 2018

Setting Outcomes

The tables below outline the current Ofsted inspection figures as of October 2018 – judgement at most recent inspection for where providers have received a grading.

All provision types %					
	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	I	Good & Outstanding
All England 31/03/18	18	76	5	1	94
Blackpool 14/10/18	28.7	68.8	2.5	0	97.5

Childminders %					
	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	I	Good & Outstanding
All England 31/03/18	16	78	5	1	94
Blackpool 14/10/18	34.1	65.9	0	0	100.0

Non-domestic %					
	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	I	Good & Outstanding
All England 31/03/18	22	73	4	1	95.0
Blackpool 14/10/18	22.2	72.2	5.5	0	94.4

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Appendix 2: Summary of EYFSP Outcomes

In August 2018 the Early EYFSP data (not nationally published or validated) showed that **Overall GLD has increased from 66.7 in 2017 to 67.9 in 2018**, continuing the upward trend. Unvalidated national data obtained via Nexus system suggests that the gap between Blackpool and National has further narrowed, albeit slightly. The % of boys attaining GLD has increased by 2.3 percentage points (ppts), compared to an increase of 0.4 for girls, this has resulted in a slight reduction in the gap between boys and girls.

% achieving at least expected in all 17 ELGs has increased from 65.1 in 2017 to 66.8 in 2018, again continuing the upward trend. As with GLD, the increase has been greater for boys (2.8 ppts) than girls (0.9 ppts).

Average total point score has decreased from 33 in 2017 to 32.7, continuing the downward trend from 2017. Again unvalidated national data indicates a slight increase (0.1 point) nationally after a static picture last year. The ongoing downward trend this year is as a result of **a decline of 0.6 in the performance of girls**, whilst boys have stayed the same.

Whilst GLD and the % achieving at least expected in all 17 ELGs have increased, the total % of children attaining the expected level in individual goals is a less positive picture. The majority of goals have seen slight decreases compared to 2017, with only listening and attention, understanding, writing, technology and exploring and using media and materials seeing an increase, and managing feelings and behaviour remaining the same.

Main concerns are around falling **Average Total Point Score and reduction in % of children attaining the expected level in several ELGs**. This could be indicative of the impact of increased focus on maths and literacy.

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Appendix 3:

Legislation

The statutory duties of the Local Authority in relation to early years and childcare are set out in a number of key legislative tools which govern the work that Blackpool Council undertakes with partners to support children and families. Key legislation is listed below with more details set out in Appendix 1.

Key legislation

Children Act	1989
Education and Inspection Act	1996
Children Act	2004
Childcare Act	2006
Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act	2009
Working Together to Safeguard Children	2015
Children and Families Act	2014

These duties strengthen the ambitions of the Local Authority to ensure every child in Blackpool gets the best start in life through development of integrated and accessible access to; early years and childcare provision, high quality Family Hubs and timely information, advice and guidance.

Draft Blackpool Early Years Strategy

Document Control

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Name	Title	Signature	Date

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Report to: **RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer: Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager.

Date of Meeting: 7 February 2019

SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Committee to consider the Workplan, together with any suggestions that Members may wish to make for scrutiny review and to note the feedback from the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Scrutiny input.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To approve the Committee Workplan, taking into account any suggestions for amendment or addition.

2.2 To monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations/actions.

2.3 To note the outcomes from the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and consider how to monitor the Strategy's implementation.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure the Workplan is up to date and is an accurate representation of the Committee's work.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Scrutiny Workplan

5.1.1 The Scrutiny Committee Workplan is attached at Appendix 8(a). The Workplan is a flexible document that sets out the work that the Committee will undertake over the course of the year.

5.1.2 Committee Members are invited, either now or in the future, to suggest topics that might be suitable for scrutiny in order that they be added to the Workplan.

5.2 Scrutiny Review Checklist

5.2.1 The Scrutiny Review Checklist is attached at Appendix 8(b). The checklist forms part of the mandatory scrutiny procedure for establishing review panels and must therefore be completed and submitted for consideration by the Committee, prior to a topic being approved for scrutiny.

5.3 Implementation of Recommendations/Actions

5.3.1 The table attached to Appendix 8(c) has been developed to assist the Committee to effectively ensure that the recommendations made by the Committee are acted upon. The table will be regularly updated and submitted to each Committee meeting.

5.3.2 Members are requested to consider the updates provided in the table and follow up questions as appropriate.

5.4 Children's Services Dashboard

Members of the Committee met with Louise Storey, Head of Social Care and Tony Morrissey, Interim Head of Safeguarding and Principal Social Worker to identify the key data to be included in the Children's Services Dashboard. The aim of the dashboard was to provide statistical analysis to back up the narrative provided by Children's Services reporting.

5.5 **Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy**

During 2018, the Council's three Scrutiny Committees considered the draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and agreed to establish a task and finish group to study the draft strategy and action plan in more detail in order to feed into its development.

The comments of the task and finish group and the response from Officers and the Cabinet Member are attached at Appendix 8(d).

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 8(a): Resilient Communities and Children's Scrutiny Committee Workplan

Appendix 8(b): Scrutiny Review Checklist

Appendix 8(c): Implementation of Recommendations/Actions

Appendix 8(d): Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

6.0 **Legal considerations:**

6.1 None.

7.0 **Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None.

8.0 **Equalities considerations:**

8.1 None.

9.0 **Financial considerations:**

9.1 None.

10.0 **Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None.

11.0 **Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2018/2019	
13 September 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's Services Update Report – including MASH update, Demand Management Plan update, CSE, young people NEET 2. Head Start – action planning, evidence and outcomes 3. Key priority report: to be determined 4. Youth Justice – including PVP, Early Help, non-criminalising young people, required support, community orders/court involvement. Joint report with Police.
15 November 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2. Children's Services Update Report – including Opportunity areas update, Corporate Parent Panel Annual Report, Placement Sufficiency Strategy 3. School Improvement – to include latest attainment data, have the short term goals been met, progress against long term planning, school readiness, employment readiness, transition to secondary school 4. Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report
7 February 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's Services Update Report – including Youth Offending Team Inspection outcome, changes to the Awaken Team, Demand Management Update, Neglect Strategy and the Dashboard, CS Ofsted Inspection 2. Strategy Development: SEND and Inclusion Strategy, Early Years Strategy 3. Blackpool Youth Offending Team Strategic Plan 4. Supporting the Workforce Scrutiny Outcomes 5. Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy feedback report on scrutiny work in workplan item
20 June 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leisure Services Update Report – including Leisure Centre performance, Parks and Friends Groups, Grounds Maintenance and Ecological Areas 2. Annual Council Plan Performance 2018/2019 3. Community Engagement, Volunteer Strategy 4. Children's Services Update Report – including Opportunity Areas update, CSE, MATH update (impact of the changes), Safeguarding 5. BSCB Half Year Review – Neglect, Children 'Missing from Home', Child Criminal Exploitation, Early Help 6. Better Start outcomes, value for money
Tbc September 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HeadStart Annual Report

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY REVIEW WORK	
Tbc 2019	Piece of work on the dangers present in Blackpool to children and young people.
July 2019	Proposed joint piece of work with Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee: Child and Adolescent Mental Health to include prevalence, performance of CAMHS, emotional health, looked after children, additional educational needs

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SCRUTINY SELECTION CHECKLIST**Title of proposed Scrutiny:**

The list is intended to assist the relevant scrutiny committee in deciding whether or not to approve a topic that has been suggested for scrutiny.

Whilst no minimum or maximum number of 'yes' answers are formally required, the relevant scrutiny committee is recommended to place higher priority on topics related to the performance and priorities of the Council.

Please expand on how the proposal will meet each criteria you have answered 'yes' to.

	Yes/No
The review will add value to the Council and/or its partners overall performance:	
The review is in relation to one or more of the Council's priorities:	
The Council or its partners are not performing well in this area:	
It is an area where a number of complaints (or bad press) have been received:	
The issue is strategic and significant:	
There is evidence of public interest in the topic:	
The issue has potential impact for one or more sections of the community:	
Service or policy changes are planned and scrutiny could have a positive input:	
Adequate resources (both members and officers) are available to carry out the scrutiny:	

Please give any further details on the proposed review:

Completed by:

Date:

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
1	29.06.17	To request that a precis of school Ofsted reports be sent to Members outside of Committee meetings.	Ongoing	Director of Children's Services	Recommendation amended following Committee meeting December 2017. First document received.	Green
2	12.04.18	To receive the Placement Sufficiency Strategy in late 2018.	November 2018	Director of Children's Services	Consideration of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy has been included on the workplan for November 2018. Update: Mrs Booth, Director of Children's Services has advised that the Strategy is not yet completed and that it will be circulated to Members of the Committee as soon as possible.	Red
3	13.09.18	That a future piece of work be carried out on the dangers present in Blackpool to children and young people.	2019	Tbc	Colleagues at the Police have been contacted to assist with the work, no response received to date.	Not yet due
5	13.09.18	That Mrs Booth be requested to report on partners who did not engage.	N/A	Director of Children's Services	Members are requested to consider how to implement and monitor this recommendation.	N/A
6	13.09.18	To receive an update performance report on HeadStart in 12 months.	September 2019	Programme Leader, HeadStart	Added to workplan.	Not yet due
7	15.11.18	To establish a Task and Finish Group in conjunction with the other Scrutiny Committees to feed into the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy in more detail. Councillors O'Hara, Owen and Mrs Scott. To forward the following	December 2018	Scrutiny Manager	The final report from the task and finish group is attached the agenda.	Green

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
		<p>considerations to the Task and Finish Group:</p> <p>That the Council must not contradict other policies including those on alcohol advertising and fast food advertising in the pursuit of achieving the aims set out in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>That the Green and Blue Implications of decisions taken be considered and clearly set out within reports.</p>				
8	15.11.18	The Committee agreed to add consideration of the changes to Awaken to their next meeting.	February 2019	Director of Children's Services	Included in the Children's Services Update Report.	Green
9	15.11.18	The Committee agreed to consider the Early Years Strategy development and the Special Educational Needs Strategy at a future meeting.	February 2019	Director of Children's Services	Included on the agenda for consideration.	Green

Green and Blue Infrastructure: Scrutiny Input into Strategy Development

The three Scrutiny Committees considered the draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and agreed to establish a task and finish group to study the draft strategy and action plan in more detail in order to feed into its development.

Members were very supportive of the Strategy and recognised the importance of introducing more green spaces within Blackpool, noting that the town was one of the most urban towns in the country. The benefits in relation to health and wellbeing were also considered in detail.

Councillors Galley, Humphries, Hutton, O'Hara and Mrs Scott attended the meeting of the task and finish group, which was supported by John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services, Judith Mills, Consultant in Public Health, Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager and John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser.

The following key points were raised by the Committees and the task and finish group and Members requested that the Director of Community and Environmental Services and Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities) consider incorporating them within the final strategy. The Cabinet Secretary and Director have provided a response to each of the suggestions made as follows:

Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Member/Director Response
The green and blue implications of all decisions taken must be considered and clearly set out in reports in order to place green and blue at the heart of decision making.	Included in action plan.
That the Council must ensure that other policies are not contravened in the bid to create an attractive setting e.g. tree skirts must not be sponsored by premises selling alcohol.	Agreed as this would break our ethical policy.
Children as young as nursery age should be included in the strategy in order to embed the importance of a green environment.	Included within the Better Start actions in the plan.
Ensuring that developers building new large scale developments including the Central Leisure Quarter are aware of the Strategy and take account of it when designing developments, including those that are currently ongoing such as the Conference Centre.	Included in action plan.

<p>The importance of ensuring the road and rail gateways to the town such as Train Stations have green areas in them and establishing the necessary links to Network Rail to do so.</p>	<p>Included in action plan.</p>
<p>To consider the potential to allow paid leave for employees to volunteer on green and blue projects in order to lead from the front as a Council and inspire businesses.</p>	<p>Included in the action plan for consideration and exploration.</p>
<p>Targeting socially isolated people to engage them in activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider how to provide street drinkers with opportunity to be involved and play a part in the green agenda. • To set up a scheme to allow disabled and less physically abled residents to contribute, such as a growing plants in their own garden which could then be passed to businesses or other residents to plant around the town. 	<p>Included in action plan.</p>
<p>The importance of fostering a 'can do' attitude amongst Parks staff. It was considered that saying 'no' to ideas too often was often seen as a lack of support amongst volunteers.</p>	<p>Consideration of joining Leisure and Parks Development together to form a new unit and team which is focussed on making things happen in relation to leisure, sport and parks development.</p>
<p>To consider installing green, living bus shelters.</p>	<p>This requires greater thought and understanding in terms of how this could be developed.</p>
<p>That the Strategy include an action to issue guidance to residents of the importance of having a garden and how to look after their own green space.</p>	<p>Included in action plan and linked to Blackpool in Bloom.</p>
<p>To consider if it would be possible to ensure that roofs were south facing to allow installation of solar panels, if economically viable.</p>	<p>Flagged as an option to the strategic planning team.</p>
<p>To consider entering Britain in Bloom's small neighbourhood award scheme to give direction and opportunity.</p>	<p>Included in action plan and linked to Blackpool in Bloom.</p>

To request that consideration be given to establishing an Urban Community Group to lead on supporting green space across the town centre.	To be discussed with Blackpool's existing Open Spaces Network.
To continue to make improvements to Stanley Park, whilst not neglecting any other green space in the town.	Highlighted in action plan.
To amend the wording in the action plan around hedgerows noting that they can often be an area prone to anti-social behaviour and a barrier to linking a green space to a community.	Hedgerows replaced by shrubs in the action plan.
To engage with the Chamber of Commerce in order to obtain the backing of more businesses.	The implementation of the plan would include engagement with business including the Chamber of Commerce.

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Report to: **RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer: Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager.

Date of Meeting: 7 February 2019

SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To report back to the Committee on the piece of work undertaken looking at the support provided to the Children's Services' workforce.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To consider any issues that might need to be progressed and use the information as an additional evidence source when considering reporting from Children's Services.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To conclude the piece of work undertaken on Supporting the Workforce and use the findings to influence future scrutiny work.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

- 5.1 At its meeting on 13 September 2018, the Resilient Communities and Children's Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a piece of work on Supporting the Workforce of Children's Services in order to qualify the information provided by the Director of Children's Services and Principal Social Worker in relation to changes in culture within Children's Services.
- 5.2 The piece of work was undertaken in two parts. The first, a presentation from Linda Dutton, Head of Human Resources and Tony Morrissey, Interim Head of Safeguarding highlighting the support on offer to staff, and the second, a meeting with the Shadow Improvement Board to speak to frontline staff in order to gather their opinions.
- 5.3 The presentation was attended by Councillors O'Hara, Mitchell, Mrs Scott, Scott and Stansfield and Councillors O'Hara, Mrs Scott and Scott attended the meeting of the Shadow Improvement Board.

5.4 Supporting the Workforce Presentation

- 5.4.1 The support provided by Human Resources was outlined and Members noted the Health and Wellbeing offer comprising of the in-house occupational health service, Employee Assistance Programme, Managing Work Related Pressure and Coping with Pressure training and the Supervision system.
- 5.4.2 A large amount of information was also presented on recruitment and retention and the work ongoing to ensure that turnover of staff was reduced. It was noted that an action plan was in place and was monitored regularly including consideration of monthly data regarding vacancies and agency usage. There was a dedicated advertising portal, the iRecruit applicant tracking system and the Step Up to Social Work programme.
- 5.4.3 Learning and Development requirements and opportunities were identified through Individual Performance Appraisals (IPAs) and a Teaching Partnership had been funded by the Department for Education following a successful funding bid from partners. The Partnership would support student placements in the Council and aimed to improve the quality of the students qualifying as social workers.
- 5.4.4 Members were also informed of the Leadership Charter and the outcomes of the Leadership Survey for 2018. The survey was one way in which staff could submit views anonymously regarding the support received from their line manager. Responses from each of the 49 questions demonstrated that 43 returned a higher agreement score when compared with last year's results from the Children's Services directorate.

5.4.5 A new induction process was being introduced and would comprise of aide memoirs, an induction checklist, practice standards and shadowing opportunities. In addition, the level of 'supervision' had increased and it was now undertaken monthly and included qualitative questions.

5.5 Meeting with Shadow Improvement Board

5.5.1 The Shadow Improvement Board comprises of frontline staff and managers and provides opportunities for engagement and feedback, a steer on training needs and a link to the Improvement Board. Representatives of the Resilient Communities and Children's Scrutiny Committee met with the Shadow Improvement Board during the course of their ordinary meeting held on 27 November 2018.

5.5.2 The meeting of the Shadow Improvement Board was well attended and there was a good level of contribution from across the Board to questions posed by the Committee Members.

5.5.3 Councillor Mrs Scott introduced the Scrutiny Committee representatives to the Board and set out the reasons for attendance at the meeting.

5.5.4 The findings of the meeting were as follows:

- That IPAs were carried out and included a plan for learning and development. There were also more direct ways of requesting training and feeding in views regarding development required either cross-team or individually.
- Managers were supportive in finding time for the workforce to attend training events once they had been deemed appropriate.
- Supervision might vary across teams, however, it was always undertaken and reflected needs at the time. It had generally developed to include more reflection. Outside of formal supervision there is regular interaction to allow cases and concerns to be discussed.
- Workload is more achievable than previously, although there were peaks and troughs. The reduction of cases coming in through the front door had been reflected in individual workloads. It was therefore considered that gatekeeping was working.
- There had been a change in culture, there was enthusiasm demonstrated for the 'forward thinking' approach undertaken by the Service and having the confidence to change.
- With regards to partners, the concerns previously raised to the Committee by the Director of Children's Services were echoed, however, improvement was reported in respect of partners understanding more about their role and taking responsibility where appropriate.
- There was a good knowledge of Occupational Health and the Employee

Assistance Programme and what both services could offer to staff.

- It was felt that there had been a reduction in those off sick, however, also considered that the recording of sick leave and returns to work had improved. If a member of staff was off long term then work would be divided and shared causing an increase in workload.
- The Shadow Improvement Board felt that teams were very supportive of each other, and, despite differences in personality and therefore management style, managers were generally supportive to staff and had created a supportive culture.
- Examples were given of circumstances outside of normal working hours where managers had offered immediate support when dealing with complex and distressing cases.
- In an ideal world, a few additional social worker posts would be created to allow staff to produce higher quality work. Additional professional and clinical supervision regarding dealing with deaths would also be useful for many staff.
- All staff were being supported well in relation to the Ofsted Inspection being carried out of the Service at the time of the meeting.

5.5.5 Members considered that the meeting with the Shadow Improvement Board had been very positive and invaluable to getting to know more about the Service and the support on offer to the workforce. The representatives at the meeting were enthusiastic, committed and passionate and spoke about doing their best with limited resources, being at the beginning of a process of transition and the desire to get started.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

None.

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 Contained within the report.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 Any additional workforce would need to be budgeted for.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.

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