

Blackpool Council

16 January 2024

To: Councillors Bamborough, S Brookes, Cooper, Critchley, Ellison, Fenlon, Flanagan, Jones and C Mitchell

Co-optees: Gemma Clayton, Jo Snape

The above members are requested to attend the:

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 25 January 2024 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 9 NOVEMBER 2023 (Pages 1 - 6)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 9 November 2023 as a true and correct record.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

4 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS (Pages 7 - 14)

To consider the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions within the portfolios of the Cabinet Members taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

5 FORWARD PLAN (Pages 15 - 22)

The Committee to consider the content of the Council's Forward Plan January 2024 to April 2024, relating to the portfolios of the relevant Cabinet Members.

6 HEALTH WAITING TIMES AND ACCESS TO SERVICES (Pages 23 - 34)

The purpose of the report is to respond to issues that were raised during the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee in June 2023 that related to access to health services for children and young people with SEND.

7 SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION AND STRATEGY UPDATE (Pages 35 - 62)

The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform Scrutiny of the progress made since the February 2022 Ofsted and CQC SEND inspection.
- Inform Scrutiny of developments in relation to the SEND Strategy.

8 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE (Pages 63 - 112)

To consider progress made against the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan.

9 SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (Pages 113 - 122)

To provide an update on Safeguarding Governance arrangements.

10 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN (Pages 123 - 134)

To note the ongoing workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year and consider the update to previous Committee recommendations. To also consider the outcomes of work undertaken outside of the Committee.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date and time of the next meeting as Wednesday 27 March 2024 commencing at 6.00pm.

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 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING - THURSDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2023

Present:

Councillor S Brookes (in the Chair)

Councillors

Bamborough	Critchley	Hoyle	Mrs Scott
Cooper	Ellison	Jones	

Ms G Clayton and Ms Jo Snape, Co-opted Members

In Attendance:

Councillor Kath Benson, Cabinet Member for Young People and Aspiration

Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Councillor Paul Galley, Chair, Scrutiny Leadership Board

Annette Algie, Strategic Service Manager, Better Start

Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

Victoria Gent, Director of Children's Services

Sara McCartan, Head of Adolescent Services

Paul Turner, Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Improvement and Special Education)

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Mrs Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager noted the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair and sought nominations for a Chair for the meeting.

The Committee agreed to appoint Councillor Shaun Brookes as Chair of the Committee for this meeting only.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2023 be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

**MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING -
THURSDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2023**

5 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

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

6 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee noted the items on the Forward Plan within its remit.

7 BLACKPOOL BETTER START ANNUAL UPDATE

Ms Annette Algie, Strategic Service Manager, Better Start presented the Blackpool Better Start annual update to the Committee. She highlighted the achievements of the previous 12 months including the increase in take-up to the Healthy Start scheme, the Christmas Advocacy event, infant mental health awareness week, oral health and school readiness. A number of schemes had also been introduced and funded by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) which would ensure their sustainability following the end of the lottery funded period such as the Parent Infant Relationship Service.

The Committee was informed that following the submission of a business case to the National Lottery Community Fund, Blackpool Better Start received formal confirmation that the programme underspend could continue into years 11 and 12, two years beyond the original funded period. The additional time would not support a full-scale continuation of Blackpool Better Start's current delivery model but would comprise of £4.5million spend between April 2025 and March 2027. The work would focus on three key identified areas and continue to be supported by the Centre for Early Child Development.

Members praised the work of Better Start undertaken to date and queried how many of the services provided could be sustained following the conclusion of the funding programme to March 2027. It was noted that investment was being made into the workforce to train staff in techniques and models used by Better Start which would ensure some initiatives could be sustained without specific funding. The ICB had also determined to fund some initiatives.

It was requested that case studies demonstrating the work of Better Start be circulated to Members following the meeting.

The Committee agreed:

That Ms Algie provide case studies demonstrating the work of Better Start following the meeting.

8 BLACKPOOL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

Ms Sara McCartan, Head of Adolescent Services presented an update on the Blackpool Youth Justice Service. She advised that the Youth Justice Partnership plan along with performance and resource data was monitored quarterly via the Blackpool's Youth Justice Executive Board providing a multidisciplinary strategic focus on the impact of service

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THURSDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2023**

delivery on children's outcomes. The Executive Board ensured the Youth Justice Partnership was provided with clear and coordinated strategic governance to support with the delivery of high-quality youth justice services. The five priorities of the Youth Justice Services were also highlighted to the Committee.

In response to a question, Ms McCartan advised that those children and young people that were not in education, employment or training and were open to the Youth Justice Service had a specialist worker to advocate and support them. The aim was to ensure access to the most appropriate schooling whether that be in mainstream or special schools.

The details of the case study provided were noted with it queried the number of young people that re-offended. Ms McCartan advised that re-offending was tracked and was broadly in line with national averages. There was a small number of persistent offenders, with local re-offending tracked on a real time basis.

9 STATUTORY ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS UPDATE 2022-2023

Mr Paul Turner, Assistant Director of Childrens Services (School Improvement and Special Education) introduced the update on results and attainment for 2022/2023. He noted that primary and post-16 data had not yet been officially released and therefore further detail would be provided in future reporting on these areas. In regards to secondary school assessment and attainment information it was noted that it was particularly complex to interpret.

Mr Turner highlighted that one secondary school in Blackpool had achieved well and was consistently above national average. From the remaining secondary schools there had been some indications of increased attainment from some schools in some subjects, however, collectively more was required.

The Committee discussed uptake of the English Baccalaureate and the emphasis placed on traditional rather than practical subjects. It was noted that the reading challenge continued with the Literacy Strategy in effect.

In response to questions, the recent poor Ofsted judgement of a local secondary school was noted. Mr Turner advised that the Regional Schools Director was holding the Academy Trust Board to account for the inadequate judgement and failure to improve standards at the school. There were a number of other schools that were currently 'requires improvement' and work was ongoing with the Regional Schools Directors to make improvements.

Members noted the impact of the pandemic on pupils and the gap in data it had created. It was reported that the Government had not yet determined how progress would be measured over the next two years.

10 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE Q1 - Q2 2023/24

Ms Vicky Gent, Director of Children's Services introduced the Council Plan key performance

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data (KPI) relating to Children's Services and highlighted the data relating to the number of children looked after, rates of foster care and Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs).

The Committee queried the details of SGOs and the impact of them on the number of foster carers and it was agreed that a brief training session be provided on SGOs. It was also queried whether previous foster carers who had decided not to foster anymore during the pandemic had been contacted to determine if they might change their minds in light of the new support offer and it was agreed that Ms Gent would clarify this information and report back to the Committee.

The issue of children and young people in foster care remaining in their foster home beyond age 18 was considered. It was noted that it was often good for the young person to remain with their foster parents for as long as possible to provide the stability required for more positive outcomes and it was noted that there had been a significant increase in the number of young people remaining with foster carers beyond age 18.

It was noted that no targets had been provided within the KPI data and that it was not necessarily appropriate to set a target for some of the indicators. It was agreed that this should be reviewed to determine whether an aspiration, a view of the direction of travel or a sense check could be included in place of a target.

The Committee agreed:

1. To receive a short training session on Special Guardianship Orders within the next pre-Committee briefing session.
2. To receive an update from Ms Gent on whether previous foster carers had been contacted since the pandemic to determine if they wished to take up the role again.
3. That Ms Gent consider the 'target' field within the Council Plan Key Performance Indicator data to determine whether an aspiration, a view of the direction of travel or a sense check could be included in place of a target in the next report to Committee.

11 CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

Ms Vicky Gent, Director of Children's Services introduced the Annual Report of the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP). She noted that the report covered the period 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2023 and had taken a number of months to complete. Due to the changes to the CSAP resulting in a return to place-based provision, the Independent Chair of the Partnership for the period of the Annual Report was no longer in post.

She advised that the priorities of the Partnership during the previous term – contextual safeguarding, neglect and domestic abuse would continue to be the priorities going forward alongside other key areas such as the front door and early help. The Child Death Overview Panel would remain at a Pan-Lancashire level.

In relation to the data relating to child deaths, it was queried why there was a significantly

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higher number of deaths amongst males than females. The figures also did not add up to 100% and it was agreed that Ms Gent would investigate this data and provide a written response following the meeting.

The Committee discussed the report in detail, noting the positives of returning to place-based arrangements, highlighting the importance of early help and the right direction of travel in the data.

The Committee agreed to receive a written response on the child death data for Blackpool.

12 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

The Committee noted its workplan, the table of recommendations and the notes of the informal meeting held to consider the Children, Young People and Families Plan.

13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday, 25 January 2024, commencing at 6.00pm.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.56 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 01253 477213

E-mail: sharon.davis@blackpool.gov.uk

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Report to: **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer: Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

Date of Meeting: 25 January 2024

EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions within the portfolios of the Cabinet Members taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Members will have the opportunity to question the relevant Cabinet Member in relation to the decision 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.

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

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

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background and Key Information

6.1 Attached at Appendix 4(a) is a summary of the taken, which has been circulated to Members previously.

6.2 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.

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

6.4. The following Cabinet Member is responsible for the decisions taken in this report and has been invited to attend the meeting:

- Councillor Kath Benson, Cabinet Member for Young People and Aspiration

6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

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

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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DECISION / OUTCOME	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER	DATE	CABINET MEMBER
<p>BLACKPOOL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24</p> <p>To recommend to Council to approve the Youth Justice Annual Plan 2023/24 on behalf of Blackpool Council with effect until 31 December 2024.</p>	<p>To have oversight of the Youth Justice Partnership plan to provide scrutiny, challenge and support to aid development and ensure positive outcomes for children are achieved.</p> <p>Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan and deliver against the priorities set out in their plan.</p>	EX47/2023	11 December 2023	Councillor Kath Benson, Cabinet Member for Young People and Aspiration

<p>EXPANSION OF HIGHFURLONG SPECIAL SCHOOL PHASE TWO</p> <p>1. To agree that Appendix 5a to the Executive report, the Financial Considerations is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it includes detailed costings that enable the scheme to be viable. The publication of such information could prejudice continuing and future negotiations.</p> <p>2. To approve the development, utilising the currently appointed phase 1 contractor (Conlon Construction) who have been appointed following a procurement process via the Procure NW Framework.</p> <p>3. To approve the budget of £1.99 million for phase two of this scheme.</p>	<p>A planning application had been approved to develop The Meadow on Garstang Road West to accommodate a two-storey extension with associated facilities to ensure sufficient local provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). A further planning application had been made to incorporate the provision of a hydrotherapy centre (phase 2) into the development of The Meadow.</p> <p>Highfurlong Special School reached a cohort of over 110 students in the summer term 2022, which is three times the number five years ago. The growing number of pupils in special schools is in part as a result of changes in legislation introduced in 2014, but also due to children surviving with more complex medical needs than historically was the case.</p> <p>Despite additional building works being undertaken during that time to create extra space at the school, the capacity of the existing building is now over stretched. An independent school capacity report dated March 2022 found that Highfurlong's building had a deficit of space equivalent to four classrooms when compared against current pupil numbers. The school had now saturated its existing footplate and would no longer be able to effectively deliver complimentary curriculum activities such as design technology, music and life skills, despite winning the prestigious School of the Year award in 2021.</p> <p>The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient suitable places are available for all pupils across the town. The proposed expansion at Highfurlong School would help to ensure that Blackpool Council can meet the needs of children with complex physical and medical disabilities.</p>	EX48/2023	11 December 2023	Councillor Kath Benson, Cabinet Member for Young People and Aspiration
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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Date of Meeting:	25 January 2024

FORWARD PLAN REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Committee to consider the content of the Council's Forward Plan January 2024 to April 2024, relating to the portfolios of the relevant Cabinet Members.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Members will have the opportunity to question the relevant Cabinet Members in relation to items contained within the Forward Plan within the portfolios of the Leader of the Council relating to Children's Services only and the Cabinet Member for Young People and Aspiration.

2.2 Members will have the opportunity to consider whether any of the items should be subjected to pre-decision scrutiny. In so doing, account should be taken of any requests or observations made by the relevant Cabinet Member.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To enable the opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny of the Forward Plan items.

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 priorities are:

- The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Forward Plan is prepared by the Leader of the Council to cover a period of four months and has effect from the first working day of any month. It is updated on a monthly basis and subsequent plans cover a period beginning with the first working day of the second month covered in the preceding plan.

5.2 The Forward Plan contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be subject of a key decision to be taken either by the Executive, a Committee of the Executive, individual Cabinet Members, or Officers.

5.3 Attached at Appendix 5(a) is a list of items contained in the current Forward Plan. Further details appertaining to each item is contained in the Forward Plan, which has been forwarded to all members separately.

5.4 Witnesses/representatives

5.4.1 The following Cabinet Members are responsible for the Forward Plan items in this report and have been invited to attend the meeting:

- Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 5(a) - Summary of items contained within Forward Plan.

6.0 Financial considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Human Resources considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Risk management considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

10.1 None.

11.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.

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APPENDIX 5(A) EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN - SUMMARY OF KEY

DECISIONS

JANUARY 2024 TO APRIL 2024

*** Denotes New Item**

Anticipated Date of Decision	Matter for Decision	Decision Reference	Decision Taker	Relevant Cabinet Member
January 2024	Update of the Children's Services Medium Term Financial Strategy	12/2002	Executive	Cllr Hobson
January 2024	The Blackpool Children, Young People and Families Strategic Partnership Plan	16/2023	Executive	Cllr Hobson

EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN - KEY DECISION:

Matter for decision Ref N ^o 12/2022	Update of the Children's Services Medium Term Financial Strategy
Decision making individual or body	Executive
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Date on which or period within which decision is to be made	January 2024
Who is to be engaged and how	Subject to consultation with a range of stakeholders...
How representations are to be made and by what date	Not Applicable
Documents to be submitted to the decision maker for consideration	Report Updated Strategy
Name and address of responsible officer	Steve Thompson, Director of Resources, Resources Directorate, Blackpool Council, Number 1 Bickerstaffe Square, Talbot Road, Blackpool, FY1 3AH e-mail:steve.thompson@blackpool.gov.uk Tel: (01253) 478505

EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN - KEY DECISION:

Matter for decision Ref 16/2023	The Blackpool Children, Young People and Families Strategic Partnership Plan
Decision making individual or body	Executive
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Date on which or period within which decision is to be made	January 2024
Who is to be consulted and how	<p>Blackpool partnership agencies leadership teams and frontline workforce practitioners, front line workforce, Schools via the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Elected Members are co-producing the Children, Young People and Families Plan vision, logo and priorities.</p> <p>Children, young people, families and carers are involved in a Children Pictures Competition, so children's pictures can be included throughout the Plan and co-produce a version of the Executive approved final Children, Young People & Families Partnership Plan document, so this can be provided to Blackpool's children and families.</p> <p>The Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board – Data Sub Group are developing a Shared Outcome Framework (partnership performance data) enabling analysis to be undertaken with regard to the future impact of the plan.</p>
How representations are to be made and by what date	<p>A Children, Young People and Families Partnership Plan co-production electronic survey has been shared across the partnership.</p> <p>The electronic survey is being undertaken via the IT system provided by the Council Infusion Service. The survey is ceased on Friday 28 July 2023. And will be analysed by the Children's Services Head of Service – Safeguarding Children and strategic Partnership who is the author of the final plan.</p>
Documents to be submitted to the decision maker for consideration	A report from Director of Children Services, along with the Children, Young People and Families Partnership Plan document.
Name and address of responsible officer	Vicky Gent, Director of Children Services – e-mail: victoria.gent@blackpool.gov.uk

Report to:	CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Mike Chew –Divisional Director of Operations, Families and Integrated Community Care Division, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals
Date of meeting:	25 January 2024

HEALTH WAITING TIMES AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to respond to issues that were raised during the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee in June 2023 that related to access to health services for children and young people with SEND.
- 1.2 Blackpool Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BTH) is a member of the SEND Partnership with Blackpool Council and Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB). The Council and the ICB are statutorily responsible for ensuring the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are met under the Children's Act 2014. BTH is the main provider of health services for these children and young people in Blackpool on behalf of the partnership.
- 1.3 Ofsted and CQC inspected our partnership arrangements for meeting the SEND needs under a joint inspection framework between 28th February 2022 and 4th March 2022. They found there to be areas of concern in the arrangements that were in place and used their regulatory powers to issue a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to mandate improvement.
- 1.4 One of the four areas of significant concern within the WSOA centered on long waiting times for therapies, specifically speech & language therapy.
- 1.5 Through the WSOA work undertaken, BTH have identified three other services where access to services is challenging, which we have alerted the local SEND Partnership to. These are; Blenheim Child Development Centre (CDC), Neuro-Development Pathway (NDP) and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- 1.6 The service areas that we are reporting on have all been impacted by increased demand over a long period of time, this increasing demand has continued to rise in most areas in the time since the SEND inspection. We are committed to working with Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB to ensure that our services for children with SEND are commissioned and resourced to meet the level of demand we are required to respond to.
- 1.7 NHS National Planning Guidance for 2023/24 requires NHS Trusts to ensure that no patient waits longer than 65 weeks for access to treatment. This is expected to change to a target of 52 weeks for 2024/25 financial year.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

3.0 For the Committee to maintain oversight of the WSOA and SEND Improvement Plan with a view to supporting BTH to work with partners to improve access to health services for children with SEND based on the improvement work detailed in this paper. The ICB have committed to supporting this work through the development of business cases for the Neurodevelopmental (ND) Pathway and Speech and Language Services.

4.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

4.1 To improve access to health services for children with SEND.

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

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

5.0 Other alternative options to be considered

4.1 N/A

6.0 Council priority

Priority one: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

7.0 Background and key information

7.1 Speech and Language Services (SLT)

We continue to deliver significant improvement in waiting times in Speech and Language Therapy for Children and Young People in Blackpool, as a consequence of increasing staffing capacity via bench, increasing the number of apprentices/assistants working in our team, better organisation of our waiting list through a coordinator role and reducing the numbers of children who are not brought for appointments or have cancelled appointments. The data below details the improvements made:

Waiting lists for therapies (% waiting more than 18 weeks)
Data as of the end of February 2022
(date of inspection)

	Referrals waiting	Number waiting over 18 weeks	% waiting more than 18 weeks	Max. wait (weeks)	Ave. wait (weeks)
Speech and Language Therapy	650	441	68%	91	31

Waiting lists for therapies (% waiting more than 18 weeks)
Data as of the end of December 2023

	Referrals waiting	Number waiting over 18 weeks	% waiting more	Max. wait (weeks)	Ave. wait (weeks)
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		weeks	than 18 weeks		
Speech and Language Therapy	331	198	60%	69	26

We have made significant improvements in this area, but we need to continue this work to reduce waiting times down to 18 weeks. This improvement would have been greater had our service not been impacted so significantly by Maternity leave of four staff members in the 2023/24 financial year. Currently there are still children waiting over 52 weeks for their initial assessment and BTH are working with the ICB commissioners to support their business case for investment in qualified speech and language therapists.

We are confident that we can reduce the number of children waiting over 52 weeks by June 2024, given the staff that are returning from maternity leave. With further investment from the ICB, will be able to further drive down the waiting times towards 18 weeks and improve access to SLT services for families.

In addition to the delivery of this business case we will need to continue working as a system on effective early intervention in speech, language and communication development. Marie Gascoigne is an external consultant that has been commissioned by A Better Start to support the local area in addressing the speech, language and communication needs of children in Blackpool. Part of this work has included:

- a pre-school triage panel involving the NHS, Better Start and a private SLT provider where children are streamlined into the most appropriate service for their needs.
- Working with family hubs to provide easy access to SLT services in the community.
- ELKLAN training to staff in Blackpool schools.

We have also worked jointly with the Council to develop a Speech, Language and Communication Strategy with Blackpool schools. This strategy document is available online to professionals and contains resources to support the development of speech, language and communication in children. The SLT service has also implemented a risk matrix to identify the level of need of all children on the caseload which has enabled us to stratify our caseload and target resources more effectively.

We have worked with the parent carer forum that identified concerns raised by families whilst they were waiting. As a result of this we have introduced a system where families will get confirmation that their referral has been accepted by the service and then every four months families will receive a further update/communication letter. The service has also improved our Trust website and updated resources available for families to use whilst waiting to be assessed. We have continued to work with parent/carers by the use of surveys and focus groups. Families are on the whole very positive about the service they receive but remain unhappy about the length of time they have waited. As such we need to continue to engage them through the Parent Carer Forum, and learn about how we can improve their experience.

7.2 Blenheim Child Development Centre (CDC)

Waiting times to see a consultant within the CDC remains challenging. Since the inspection BTH have increased staff capacity through the introduction of an Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) to support the consultant caseload and an admin and waiting list coordinator to maximise clinic slots available. However, since this time one consultant has retired, and two further consultants have left, whilst one consultant has now been recruited it still remains challenging and further impacts on waiting times.

Blenheim CDC as a service was also not set up on our electronic systems, reporting of performance has been difficult to monitor and predict therefore work was undertaken with the service in 2022 to build capacity within our community electronic record system. The charts below detail the data available. In February 2022 wait times were exceeding 52 weeks for some patients, and this was reported during the inspection.

Blenheim is not a formerly commissioned service and no specification exists for it. From a manual collection of data we can see that since its inception date in 2008 demand on the service has increased by 151% The increase has continued since the inspection in February 2022 so together with our Consultant vacancies we have had a challenge with regard to providing timely access for children and their families.

<i>Waiting lists for CDC (% waiting more than 18 weeks)</i> Data as of the end of December 2023	Referrals waiting	Number waiting over 18 weeks	% waiting more than 18 weeks	Max. wait (weeks)	Ave. wait (weeks)
Blenheim Child Development Centre	204	137	67%	59	28

We have made improvements in this area through increasing ANP, admin resources and system monitoring, but consultant vacancies have impacted on the good work undertaken so far and the waiting list is not improving as we had anticipated.

Recruitment of a paediatrician is challenging in itself, in particular for one with child development and social-communication experience. The service have managed to recruit one new consultant, and had secured a locum paediatrician for a period of time. We continue to actively seek locum cover for this service, and explore all avenues for substantive recruitment. The Trust have recently engaged BDI Resourcing a specialist recruitment provider to assist with hard to recruit posts, and paediatrics is an area where they are supporting us.

In addition to this we are exploring appointing to a further Specialist Health Visiting post to skill mix this pathway. This model change would support early assessment and access to support workshops for families, whilst they wait to see a consultant; this would provide a vast improvement to the experience of families accessing the CDC service.

We will continue to keep the SEND Partnership and the committee apprised of these developments. We have demonstrated that we can maintain our position whilst demand has increased, with appointment to Consultant roles and an alternative model of delivery being developed we believe we can reduce waits below 52 weeks.

7.3 Neuro-Development Pathway (NDP)

We continue to deliver significant improvement in waiting times in the NDP for Children and Young People in Blackpool, as a consequence of increasing staffing capacity via bench, Consultant waiting list initiatives, improving data intelligence and working with school SENCOs to provide information on the evidence required for a referral.

Prior to the SEND inspection in February 2022, the service had just undertaken a waiting list initiative which saw the waiting time for first consultant appointment improve from an average of 130 weeks to 26 weeks.

Despite these improvements the SEND Parent-Carer Forum have sometimes received negative feedback from families. The service has listened to these comments and made further improvements to include a “parents voice” representative on the panel meetings, peer navigators to support families on their pathway journey and post diagnostic cygnet workshops for families to attend. Furthermore, we are currently working on developing a combined ASD / ADHD / Tourettes pathway for Neuro-Diverse Conditions.

The data below details the waiting list from referral to first consultant appointment.

<i>Waiting lists (% waiting more than 18 weeks) Data as of the end of August 2020</i>	Referrals waiting	Number waiting over 18 weeks	% waiting more than 18 weeks	Max. wait (weeks)	Ave. wait (weeks)
NDP	13	8	61%	Not known	Not known

NOTE: This was the data following an extensive waiting list initiative

<i>Waiting lists (% waiting more than 18 weeks) Data as of the end of December 2023</i>	Referrals waiting	Number waiting over 18 weeks	% waiting more than 18 weeks	Max. wait (weeks)	Ave. wait (weeks)
NDP	49	3	6%	23	9

We have made improvements in this area and are noticeably ahead of colleagues across Lancashire and South Cumbria who are still struggling with this service. We have implemented a NICE compliant diagnostic pathway for these conditions, which provides assurance that our diagnostic process is compliant with nationally established standards. However, we believe we have still not got the service fully right and when talking with families the experience and support on the pathway still needs to be improved.

The NDP is a complex service, longer waits can often be attributed to how quick information is returned from families and partners, setting dates for MDT panels with partners (including

schools) present; it is also linked to speech & language waiting times since an extensive social-communication SLT assessment is part of this pathway and post panel waits - where the panel do not feel there is enough evidence to diagnose and often request further specialist assessment/investigations.

We will continue to improve and develop the NDP service in partnership with Stacey Baines, Chair of the Blackpool Parent-Carer Forum, and other parent-carer forum members and other families that use the service, to ensure as a local area we are better supporting families. We have been encouraged by the positive feedback provided by the Parent Carer Forum at the SEND Partnership and at Ofsted/CQC monitoring visits about the experience of families, but we are not complacent about the need to strive to be better.

We will also continue to work closely with our ICB in the development of these services and with the SEND Partnership. We undertook a specific engagement session with the SEND Partnership Board in 2023, which was vital to the ongoing development of the service, in addition to an event with Blackpool SENCOs led by Professor Morris Gordon. These activities will need to continue to ensure there is a shared understanding of how we support children with neurodevelopmental conditions and their families. BTH as a health provider plays a significant role in the diagnosis of neurodevelopmental conditions, but the holistic support for children with neurodevelopment conditions and their families is a responsibility that we share with our ICB and Council colleagues, and we will continue to engage on this together through the SEND Partnership.

A business case to support priority funding for the ND Pathway redesign is being presented to Lancashire and South Cumbria Children and Young People's Board in February 2024. This is based on the coproduced pathway agreed in 2018, and subsequent work and recommendations from the Niche report. The learning from the BTH ND pathway will continue to be used regionally should funding be agreed and we move to implementation. The proposed pathway includes support for CYP and families once an additional need has been identified to post diagnostic or ongoing needs led support.

7.4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

We continue to work on waiting lists and improvements to our CAMHS services. National benchmarking data (Children and Young People's Mental Health Benchmarking 2021/22) shows that Blackpool are not an outlier and CAMHS is performing better than the national average for the % of patients whose referral to treatment (RTT) was less than 4 weeks for 44% of our patients which is above the national average which is 37%. The % of patients whose RTT was 18+ weeks was in line with the national average of 22%.

The rise in the number of referrals received by CAMHS locally is also reflected in the increase in the number of patients on waiting lists nationally. Since 2020/21 the number of patients waiting for a first appointment nationally has increased to 918 per 100,000 population compared to 528 per 100,000 population in 2020/21.

The access target for children and young people accessing BTH Mental Health Services is 2855, we are currently exceeding this and are reporting an access target of 3020 which is 6% above our expected target. ELCAS (the CAMHS provider in East Lancs) is currently not meeting its

access target -23% whilst LSCFT (the CAMHS provider in North & Central Lancashire) are reporting data quality issues.

Blackpool CAMHS continue to see an increase in demand for specialist support with a 9% increase in referrals since the same period last year (October 2023 YTD Local Position). Between April - December 2023, Blackpool CAMHS completed 5,097 attended appointments. The service has struggled to fill vacant posts which has meant a depletion in staffing numbers for some time now. This is now an improving picture and we have now successfully recruited to most of the vacant posts, all successful applicants are awaiting start dates following completion of checks.

<i>Waiting lists (% waiting more than 18 weeks)</i> Data as of the end of February 2022	Referrals waiting	Number waiting over 18 weeks	% waiting more than 18 weeks	Max. wait (weeks)	Ave. wait (weeks)
CAMHS	171	15	9%	Not known	Not known

<i>Waiting lists (% waiting more than 18 weeks)</i> Data as of the end of February 2023	Referrals waiting	Number waiting over 18 weeks	% waiting more than 18 weeks	Max. wait (weeks)	Ave. wait (weeks)
CAMHS	263	88	33%	47	14

<i>Waiting lists for (% waiting more than 18 weeks)</i> Data as of the end of December 2023	Referrals waiting	Number waiting over 18 weeks	% waiting more than 18 weeks	Max. wait (weeks)	Ave. wait (weeks)
CAMHS	285	131	46%	44	17

For those that are currently on our waiting lists, letters have been provided to all families letting them know who they should contact and when, should they have any concerns or queries, all letters contain information of other services and helplines that can offer support/guidance. Parents and carers can call our Duty team to discuss any worrying changes in their child's condition, where appropriate appointments can be expedited. When a patient exceeds 18 weeks, calls are made weekly to monitor risk and any deterioration of mood and mental state, this is the role of the managers in the service. In the event of increased risk CAMHS will offer additional crisis support and home treatment delivered by our CASHER and RAIS service.

CAMHS has recently seen an improvement in recruitment and we have been able to fill posts that have been difficult to fill historically. We have recruited two additional staff members,

specifically to address wait times and increase capacity, this has enabled us to offer additional appointments in the evenings and weekends have been introduced, not only to address wait times but to offer more flexibility to families that may struggle to attend during working hours.

CAMHS has also had challenges with cancelled appointments and children not being brought to appointments (or not attending, DNA). This year 8% were cancelled and 13% were not attended. The service makes every effort to offer cancelled appointment times to other children, young people, and their families but appointments that are DNA'd cannot normally be filled in the same way. A piece of work is underway reviewing the Did Not Attend/ Were not brought policy and the impact of DNA'S upon the service. The service is working on text appointment reminders. The intention is to bring DNA rates below 10%.

An internal review of services, systems and processes is also underway to address waiting times, this will allow us to move the workforce delivering our low-intensity therapies into the first two quadrants of the Thrive model, (getting advise and getting help sections). This is with a view to creating more capacity for early intervention ensuring children are on the right pathway at the earliest opportunity, resulting in the young people and their families receiving the right intervention, at the right time with the right professional. These changes are in the scope of our existing resources and commissioning requirements.

These changes are intended to strengthen our 'front door' preventing young people going into crisis and unnecessary escalation into our specialist CAMHS and CASHER/RAIS services allowing timely access for children and young people requiring specialist treatment. Specialist CAMHS services will have the capacity to deliver a duty system that will respond to urgent requests for support, allow closer liaison with our paediatric ward, and create a timelier and more accurate triage of referrals. A Team Leader has recently been appointed and further posts have been advertised to increase capacity in the duty team. The response, where necessary will be within 24 hours to urgent presentations.

We intend to keep the committee, the SEND Partnership and other partner agencies informed of the plans and progress made.

We are confident that the above changes will mean our longest waiters will not exceed 18 weeks and anticipate the time frame for this to happen will be approximately 6 months. We are due to provide a more detailed briefing to the SEND Partnership about this work in February 2024.

6.5 **Parent/carer engagement with services:**

The SEND Partnership have set up a Parent Carer Forum who have been supporting us to engage parents in our improvement work. This has been undertaken through a variety of methods and we continue to value families feedback and work to improving their experiences of health services.

6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 **List of appendices**

Appendix 6(a): SEND health data dashboard for December 2023

8.0 Financial considerations

8.1 N/A

9.0 Legal considerations

9.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice.

10.0 Risk management considerations

10.1 N/A

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people

11.1 The purpose of the improvements is to provide fully inclusive and equitable services for children and young people aged 0 – 25 years in Blackpool.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations

12.1 N/A

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken

13.1 A number of patient engagement and/or parent/carer work has been undertaken by services, including with the SEND Parent Carer Forum. Information has been used to inform service delivery and improve patient experiences.

14.0 Background papers

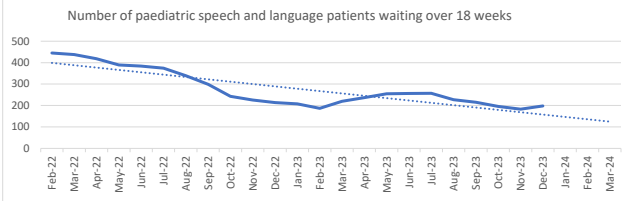
14.1 None.

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BLACKPOOL HEALTH DATA DASHBOARD - December 2023

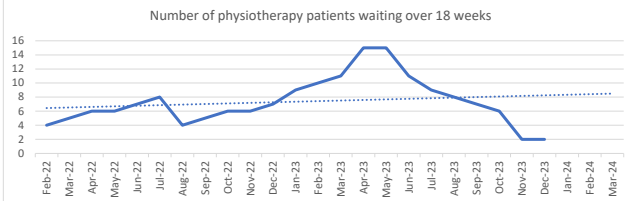
Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy - Blackpool CCG

Average wait: 26 weeks ↓	Longest wait: 69 weeks ↓	>18 week wait 198 ↑	>52 week wait 41 ↑	>78 week wait 0 ↓	Referrals waiting 331 (↑35)
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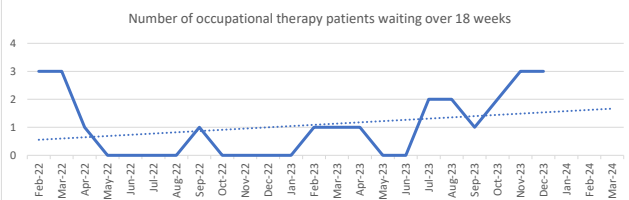
Physiotherapy - Blackpool CCG

Average wait: 10 weeks ↑	Longest wait: 55 weeks ↑	>18 week wait 2 (=)	>52 week wait 1 ↑	>78 week wait 0	Referrals waiting 31 (↓2)
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Occupational Therapy - Blackpool CCG

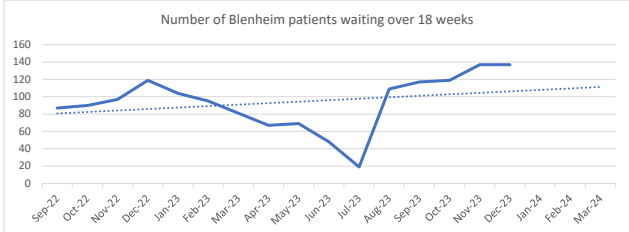
Average wait: 7 weeks ↑	Longest wait: 40 weeks ↑	>18 week wait 3 (=)	>52 week wait 0	>78 week wait 0	Referrals waiting 38 (↑5)
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* Referrals waiting are defined as referrals at month end awaiting first contact (any contact from any practitioner or doctor)

Blenheim - Blackpool CCG

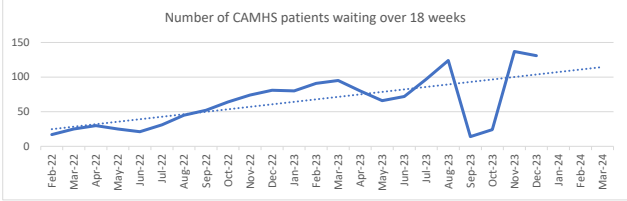
Average wait: 28 weeks ↑	Longest wait: 59 weeks ↑	>18 week wait 137 (=)	>52 week wait 18 ↑	>78 week wait 0	Referrals waiting 204 (↓2)
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BLACKPOOL HEALTH DATA DASHBOARD - December 2023

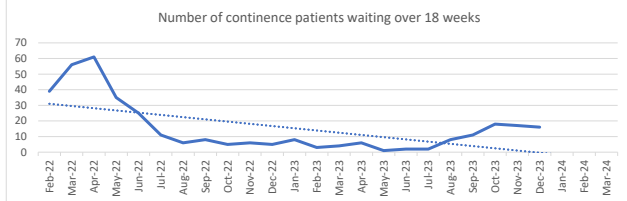
CAMHS - Blackpool CCG

Average wait: 17 weeks ↑	Longest wait: 44 weeks ↑	>18 week wait 131 ↓	>52 week wait 0	>78 week wait 0	Referrals waiting 285 (↓9)
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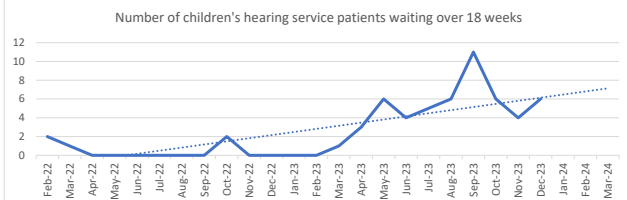
Continence - Blackpool CCG

Average wait: 13 weeks ↓	Longest wait: 45 weeks ↑	>18 week wait 16 ↓	>52 week wait 0	>78 week wait 0	Referrals waiting 70 (↑3)
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Children's hearing service - Blackpool CCG

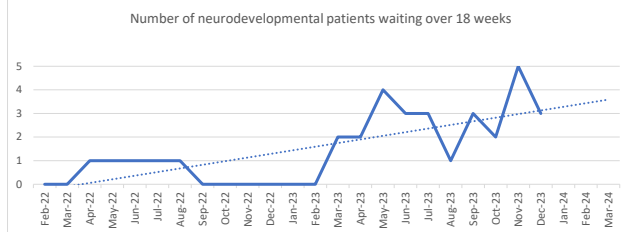
Average wait: 9 weeks ↑	Longest wait: 39 weeks ↑	>18 week wait 6 ↑	>52 week wait 0	>78 week wait 0	Referrals waiting 73 (↓6)
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* Referrals waiting are defined as referrals at month end awaiting first contact (any contact from any practitioner or doctor)

Neurodevelopmental pathway - Blackpool CCG

Average wait: 9 weeks (=)	Longest wait: 23 weeks ↓	>18 week wait 3 ↓	>52 week wait 0	>78 week wait 0	Referrals waiting 49 (↓1)
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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Paul Turner, Assistant Director – Education, SEND and Early Years.
Meeting	25 January 2024

SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION AND STRATEGY UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform Scrutiny of the progress made since the February 2022 Ofsted and CQC SEND inspection.
- Inform Scrutiny of developments in relation to the SEND Strategy.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To review the update and consider if sufficient progress has been made since the inspection and in the implementation of the Strategy.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure robust scrutiny of SEND.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council?

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

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.2 The relevant Council priority is

- The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool
- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

6.0 Background information

Between 28 February 2022 and 4 March 2022, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Blackpool to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

This inspection provides an independent, external evaluation of how well a local area carries out its statutory duties for children and young people with SEND between the ages of 0-25 years. The local area includes the local authority, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) – now Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), public health, NHS England (for specialist services), Early Years settings, schools and further education providers.

The official findings letter was published and made publically available on 26 May 2022. A link to the report can be viewed [here](#).

6.1 Findings and outcome of the report

The outcome of the inspection, though hugely disappointing, was anticipated by senior officers. The inspection feedback recognised that Blackpool’s leaders have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses across the area and that these are accurately reflected in the self-evaluation provided to Ofsted prior to inspection.

The inspectorates’ findings are detailed as strengths and areas for development against each of the key lines of enquiry. The report identifies 15 areas of strength and 18 areas for development.

6.2 Areas of strength

The inspectors did note the following areas of strength:

- Some parents and carers spoke highly of leaders’ efforts to maintain services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools remained open to vulnerable children and young people throughout local and national restrictions. Health services adapted their ways of working so they could continue to identify and meet children and young people’s needs. Parents and carers appreciated the emotional and practical support that they received from front-line professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Parents and carers are quick to sing the praises of many front-line staff who make a positive difference. There are staff who go the extra mile every day to give children, young people and their families the help and support that they need. These individual professionals are a ‘lifeline’ for the families that they work with.
- The area’s well regarded special schools provide an effective service for children, young people and their families. Many mainstream settings also meet the needs of children and young people well.

6.3 Significant areas of weakness

The inspectors identified four areas of weakness that the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) must address.

1. The lack of specificity, ownership and accountability in the areas' improvement strategy for SEND.
2. The duties around preparing children and young people for adulthood, not being fulfilled.
3. The poor communication with parents and carers across the area – model of co-production
4. The long waiting time for some therapies.

Addressing these four areas of weakness has required significant cross-organisation working between Blackpool Council and Blackpool CCG (now ICB) together with a wide range of stakeholders including:

- Children, young people and their families.
- Parent carer forum, other parental children and young people groups
- Information and Advice Services for education, social care and health.
- Education providers – Early Years, schools and colleges.
- Employers, housing and leisure providers.

The SEND Code of Practice 2015, sets out that children, young people and their parents and carers must be involved in planning, commissioning and reviewing services; and in decision making about individual support and local provision/services. The expectation is that this involvement is undertaken through a model of co-production. Co-production is a way of working where providers and users of a service work together to reach a collective outcome. This is now underway.

6.4 **Monitoring and re-inspection**

The local area will be re-inspected by Ofsted and the CQC to decide whether sufficient progress has been made in addressing each of the areas of significant weakness identified. The timescale for re-inspection is eighteen months after publication of the initial inspection. This will be conducted under the new framework, introduced in 2023. A re-inspection is now overdue.

6.5 **Key progress**

WSOA 1: The lack of specificity, ownership and accountability in the areas' improvement strategy for SEND

Our SEND Strategy 2022-2025 was developed throughout 2022 and is the result of our SEND Partnership working together and listening to the views and experiences of parents/carers, children / young people, and professionals across education, health and social care. It was underpinned by a SEND needs assessment and self-evaluation, which provided a robust evidence base to inform the strategic priorities and provide leaders with a shared understanding of the local area's strengths and areas for development. It was finalised and

formally launched in December 2022 with stakeholders and partners across the wider SEND community and has been approved by the Council's Executive, Blackpool Teaching Hospital's and the Integrated Care Board's governance structures.

The strategy has been shared throughout the partnership to ensure that partners are aware and understand how it impacts on their organisations and their role in its delivery. We also worked with our Youth Empowerment Forum to develop a young people's version of the strategy, which has been published on the Local Offer and shared with schools.

As part of the delivery of the SEND Strategy 2022-25, the following infrastructure projects have been agreed and development is underway:

1. £3.8 million of funding to eradicate the school funding deficit and High Needs Block deficit (from the Department of Education safety-valve programme).
2. £6.2 million of funding to build new school sites in Blackpool at Highfurlong Special School, Educational Diversity and Park school.
3. A new post-19 offer at The Oracle, through Valley College.
4. Enhanced Assessment provision at Revoe Primary Academy.
5. A new SEMH Free School for 56 pupils, funded by the Department for Education.

Additionally, an Alternative Provision Academy bid has been submitted to the Department for Education for children with medical needs that prevent them from attending school. The results of this bid should be available before Easter 2024.

To ensure continued focus upon the SEND strategy, the SEND Partnership held its second annual SEND Conference on 3 October 2023, attended by over 250 stakeholders from across the partnership. The keynote speaker was Dr. Pooky Knightsmith, an expert in social and emotional mental health and the topic was inclusive classroom practice. This is also part of our ongoing strategy to raise the profile of inclusion in our mainstream schools and how this can be achieved through small changes.

Leaders from the SEND Partnership also met with Ofsted and the CQC for an engagement meeting under the new SEND inspection framework in October 2023, and completed an updated self-evaluation which was positively received, which further drives forwards the SEND strategy.

In January 2024 leaders undertook an annual review of SEND strategy delivery alongside a range of partners, including young people and parent/carers. Partners identified key achievements and challenges since the strategy was launched in December 2022, as well as priorities for the next 12 months, which will shape the improvement plan for April 2024 – March 2025.

WSOA 2: The duties around preparing children and young people for adulthood, not being

fulfilled

A mapping exercise of Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) provision was undertaken on behalf of the SEND partnership and its sufficiency discussed as part of the development of the PFA strategy. Findings indicate that there are improvements to be made in the following areas:-

- Earlier sharing of information and expectations when transitioning from children's to adults' services.
- Removing barriers to accessing GP services.
- Skills for living – a good offer available in special schools, with improvements required in mainstream secondary schools and further education colleges and sixth forms.
- More flexible employment opportunities – examples included job shares, part-time working and opportunities for Apprenticeships.

These improvements will be incorporated into the Preparation for Adulthood Plan.

In May 2023, our PFA Co-Production 'Act to Innovate' Group developed our Preparation for Adulthood Strategy. This group consists of adults, young people and parents with lived experience of SEND, together with a multitude of SEND professionals from different backgrounds, including the co-production Team. A three month consultation period on the draft strategy took place from July 2023 until September 2023 which led to the completion of our Preparation for Adulthood Strategy 'Living the Life I Choose'. This now reflects the support and provision young people in Blackpool will receive to achieve their ambitions.

The strategy was shared at the SEND Conference held on the 4th October 2023 at the Winter Gardens, where members of the group held workshops to share the strategy with delegates.

Members of the PFA Co-production "Act to Innovate" Group continue to work together to produce a Preparation for Adulthood Plan to deliver the promises set out in the strategy. Progress is monitored by the SEND Partnership Board.

The draft strategy was presented to a special Council scrutiny meeting in November 2023 and young people who have co-produced the strategy spoke to elected members about their experiences and their work, which was praised. The strategy is currently being finalised.

We have had 8 enrolments onto Project Search, our supported internship programme, this is above the England average and an increase of 2 on last year.

Our PFA lead has developed a Transitions Protocol alongside partners entitled 'A life not a service'. This document was launched at the SEND Conference through a series of workshops and has been published on the Preparation for Adulthood section of Blackpool's Local Offer website. The document explains what is meant by transitions, when transition takes place and what is involved together with useful information on where to find help and support.

WSOA 3: The poor communication with parents and carers across the area

Over the last year we have worked closely with the co-production team to establish a young peoples' and parents' SEND Advisory Group. Together they have co-produced the redesign of the Local Offer website and developed the aforementioned PfA Strategy. They have also influenced the design of the SEND data dashboard.

We have redeveloped and refreshed the content in the Local Offer website. As a result the number of users is increasing and to date around 20,000 visits to the site have been made, with over 6,000 new users. General feedback is positive and increased user friendliness is reported. There is a calendar of events on the Local Offer, providing details of a range of regular events and sessions where young people and parents and carers can meet professionals from across the partnership, find out what support is available to them and also have an opportunity to share views or concerns and meet other parents. This is one of many ways in which services communicate with families.

WSOA 4: the long waiting times for some therapies

To enable earlier identification and support for children the SEND service has allocated a lead Educational Psychologist and a SEND Advisory Teacher to each school in Blackpool. This enables our services to intervene at the earliest opportunity and reduces the need to escalate into health services/support families whilst they are waiting for health services.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

SEND Strategy 2022-25

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Some additional resource to support the improvement program has been provided by the CCG / ICB , and additional capacity will be created within existing budgets and funding streams.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 This is an evaluation of the Council's ability to meet the legislative requirements set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, s20 of the Children's Act 2004, and Equalities Act 2010

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 These are published documents so there is risk to the Council's reputation if we do not fulfil our statutory duties.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people::

11.1 The purpose of the improvement plans is to ensure that Blackpool has fully inclusive services for all children and young people 0-25.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None for the purpose of this report.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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Blackpool SEND Strategy

2022–2025



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Foreword

Welcome to the Blackpool Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy which sets out our key priorities and actions to help children and young people with SEND between the ages of 0-25 years and their families, live happy, healthy lives in Blackpool.

This strategy is the result of our SEND Partnership Board working together and listening to the views and experiences of parents/carers, children and young people, and professionals across education, health and social care.

We consulted on the strategy from 4 April 2022 until 22 May 2022 and undertook a number of focus groups with parents/carers and children/young people. As a result of this activity the strategy has been updated to include:

- Support in early years
- Transitions between services
- Greater clarity on what we will do
- Our commitment to ensuring that co-production, communication and engagement with parents/carers, children and young people is central to all changes/improvements in SEND services.

The consultation provided recommendations from parents/carers, children and young people on changes/improvements to services and support currently available in Blackpool. Professionals working directly to deliver SEND services also suggested actions that need to be taken to enable the delivery of this strategy. We would like to express our thanks for this feedback and will ensure that it is considered in the development of the SEND partnership's improvement plan that will drive the achievement of this strategy.



Blackpool in Context

Demographics

Blackpool is a small, densely populated seaside town located in the north west of England. It has a total population of approximately 141,100 people with 30,600 children and young people aged 0-19 years. 21.7% of the population are under 20 years compared to 23.1% nationally.

Blackpool has an extraordinary concentration of social and economic issues in the central third of the town. According to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) the centre of Blackpool has 10 of the most deprived small areas in England – no other town has anything like this level of social challenge within such a small geographical area.

Local Area Inspection

Between 28 February and 4 March 2022, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected services provided by practitioners and professionals who support children and young people aged 0-25 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). During the inspection they assessed how well the local area has worked together to implement the SEND reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

The local area includes Blackpool Council (education, children's and adult's social care and public health), NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, Blackpool Teaching Hospital and other associated partners, parents and carers; and children and young people with SEND.

Some of the strengths identified during the inspection include:

- The most vulnerable children and young people with SEND benefit from the wealth of specialist services available.
- Across the area children in primary schools who require support for SEND attend and achieve well.
- There is a wide range of provision across the area to improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.
- The intended outcomes in recent EHC plans better reflect the aspirations of children, young people and their families.

The inspectors also identified four areas for improvement and His Majesty's Chief Inspector has determined that a Written Statement of Action is required to address these. The four areas are:

1. The lack of specificity, ownership and accountability in the area's improvement strategy for SEND.
2. The duties around preparing children and young people for adulthood not being fulfilled.
3. The poor communication with parents and carers across the areas.
4. The long waiting times for some therapies.

The SEND Partnership, as leaders of the local area, agree with the findings of the inspection and is committed to ensuring that swift action is taken to deliver these improvements. The inspection outcome has provided confirmation of the areas for improvement that we had recognized, as well as providing a renewed mandate to drive forward our plans and deliver progress as a partnership.



Strategic Leadership for SEND

The SEND Partnership Board has overall responsibility for ensuring this strategy is achieved. Members are experienced leaders of special educational needs and disabilities services and hold partners, across education, health and social care, to account for the co-ordination, commissioning and delivery of services and support for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Membership of the SEND Partnership Board is detailed in the following table.

Role	Organisation
Chair	Independent
Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Youth Schools and Transience	Blackpool Council
Director of Children's Services	Blackpool Council
Assistant Director for Education, SEND and Early Years	Blackpool Council
Assistant Director Children's Social Care	Blackpool Council
Head of SEND	Blackpool Council
Adult Services representative	Blackpool Council
Associate Director SEND	NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Head of Commissioning	NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Executive Director of Integrated Care	Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Divisional Director of Operations	Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Chair, Blackpool Parent Carer Forum	Parent representatives
SEND Parent's Advisory Group	Parent representatives
Service Manager	SEND Information, Advice and Support Service
Head Teacher, Highfurlong Special School	School representative
Executive Principal South Shore and Marton Academies, Bright Futures Education Trust	School representative
Public Health Specialist	Blackpool Council
Head of Commissioning and Corporate Delivery	Blackpool Council

Monitoring progress

To enable the SEND Partnership Board to measure progress on the priorities and actions set out in this strategy, a SEND Improvement Plan has been developed by stakeholders that sets out what needs to be done and when it will be achieved. The improvement plan is also aligned to the Written Statement of Action that will address the four key areas for improvement identified from the SEND inspection.

Regular reports will be presented to the SEND Partnership Board who will provide assurance to a range of key strategic partnerships across Blackpool that the SEND partnership is delivering on its priorities.

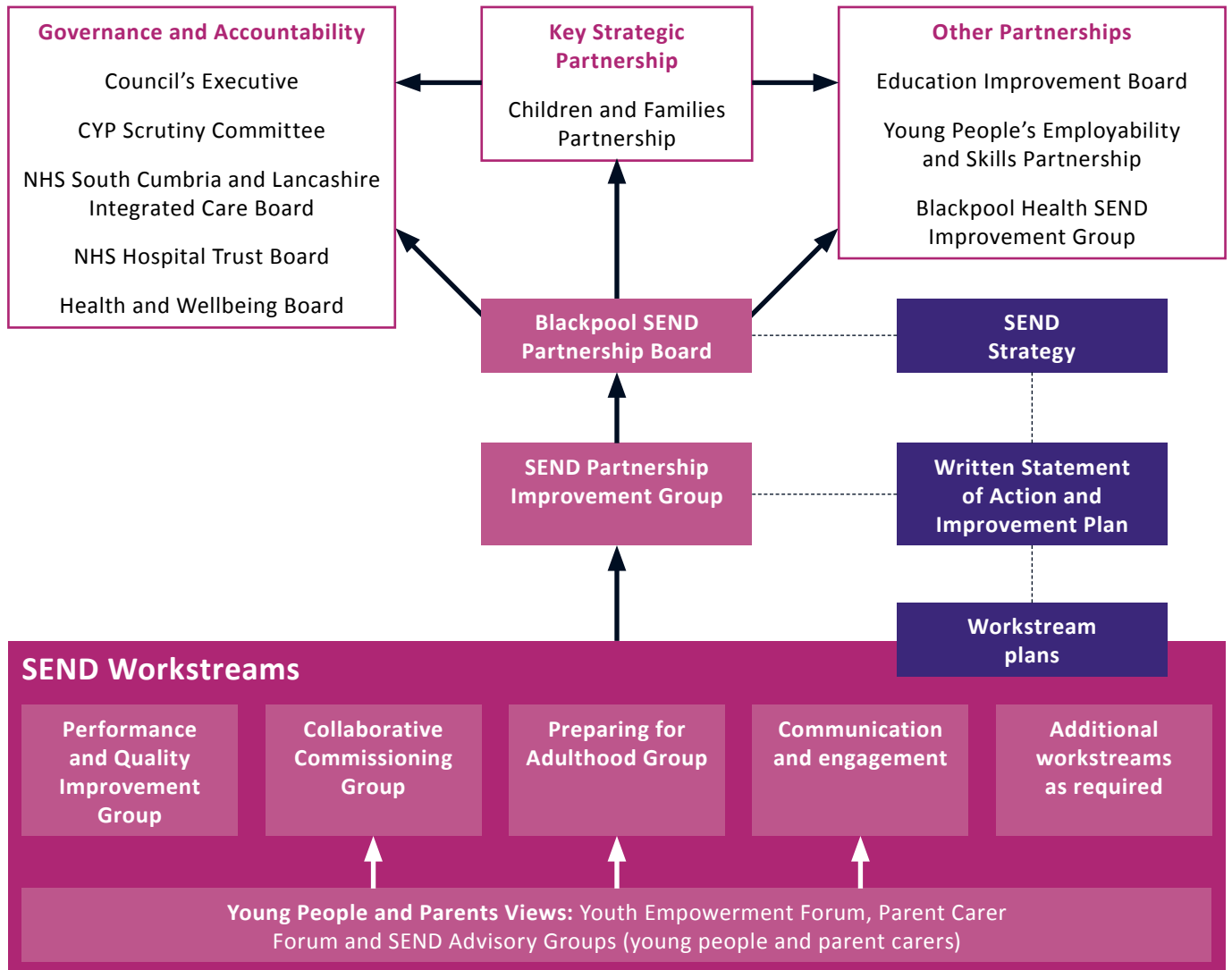
To support the SEND Partnership Board's progress monitoring, a set of key performance measures have been agreed and these are included in a SEND performance data dashboard that is also reported to the SEND Partnership Board.

The strategy will be reviewed and impact evaluated on an annual basis to demonstrate improvement, identify further areas for development and to take account of any local or national policy changes.

The governance structure diagram detailed on the following page sets out the range of partnerships that contribute to delivery of the strategy and the boards that hold the SEND Partnership to account for ensuring that the strategy is achieved. The SEND workstreams are task and finish groups made up of a range of professionals, parents and young people from across the area.



SEND Partnership Governance Structure



Our Partnership Vision

All children and young people with SEND live happy, healthy lives, in a community that is inclusive and supports them to achieve their ambitions.

This vision will determine how, as a partnership, we will most effectively use our resources and expertise to plan and delivery local services and support in the best interests of children and young people with SEND, and their families within Blackpool.

The achievement of this vision will require a commitment from all our partners to make SEND everybody's business. This means all individuals working in education, health and social care services with children and young people in Blackpool Council will consider the needs of the individual and their families in everything that they do. This will enable positive interactions and experiences of all that Blackpool has to offer to our residents.



Working Together

The SEND partnership is committed to working together through a model of co-production. This means parents and carers, children and young people will be involved as equal partners in the design and shaping of services/support alongside those responsible for funding and delivery.

We will all work together and share our experiences to co-design both new resources, services and systems and to improve existing ones that parents and carers, children and young people; and professionals tell us need to be improved.

We know that we have work to do to improve communication with parents and carers across Blackpool so that they can have trust and confidence in what they are told about SEND and SEND services.

We are establishing a Parents' SEND Advisory Group and a Young People's SEND Advisory Group to facilitate co-production with families across Blackpool. These groups will enable parents and carers, children and young people to confidently express their views, wishes and feelings to help them live happy and healthy lives.

Together we will produce a SEND communications charter that describes how our families want us to work together based on our collective core beliefs, values and our practice.

Our goal is to build a SEND community that is based on mutual trust and respect and places parents/carers, children and young people's experiences and expertise at the heart of our decision making.



What children and young people told us is important to them



What parents and carers told us is important to them



The landscape for SEND in Blackpool



Early Years

- 34 group childcare providers (day nurseries and preschools)
- 20 schools with nursery classes
- 44 childminders.



Infrastructure for health

- 1 NHS hospital providing both acute and community services including public health 0 – 19 services
- 1 child development centre
- 1 CAMHS provider



Schools

- 33 primary schools
- 6 secondary schools
- 2 all through schools
- 4 special schools
- 1 pupil referral unit.



Profile of children with SEND

- 1,311 children and young people with an EHC plan (October 2022)
- 3,297 children receiving SEN support (October 2022)
- 160 children with EHCPs aged 16 and 17 years old



Post 16 provision

- 1 FE College
- 1 Sixth Form College
- 1 Specialist College 19-25,
- 3 16-19 special schools
- 1 supported internship provider
- 3 private training providers



Our Partnership Priorities

Working in partnership we have identified four key priorities that help us to achieve our vision.

These priorities have been informed and guided by:-

- Our SEND self-evaluation
 - The outcome of our SEND inspection
 - Listening to the views of parents, carers, children and young people; and professionals through consultation and focus groups.
- 1. Timely identification and access to education, health and care services, well planned transitions and the best opportunities that help children and young people live healthy lives.**
 - 2. Expand our range of education provision to enable children and young people's needs to be met in local settings that provide an inclusive education and support them to achieve their very best.**
 - 3. A range of leisure and social activities that develop children and young people's interests and broaden opportunities to socialise and develop friendships, incorporating respite placements.**
 - 4. Clear routes into further/higher education and training that will provide young people with the skills to secure employment, live independent, healthy lives and reach their potential.**



Priority 1

Timely identification and access to education, health and care services, well planned transitions and the best opportunities that help children and young people live healthy lives.

The importance to our partnership

Timely identification and support enables children to make the best possible progress in their education and in everyday life. Listening to the experiences and concerns of children, young people and their families enables support to be tailored to individual need, and builds a climate of confidence and trust between families and professionals.

Well planned transitions ensures that this support continues whenever there is a change to the child or young person's circumstances or the services/support being provided.

We expect all professionals and services working with children, young people and their families to plan, discuss and agree any changes that may take place to ensure continuity of support and that children, young people and their families have confidence in what is being provided and where they can go for help.



What we need to do

- Adopt a 'right door and tell us once' approach with families so that professionals can support them to access the right services and support at the right time.
- Further develop processes for sharing information between professionals supporting children in their pre-school years so that support is planned for and provided when it is needed.
- Use the model of family hubs to establish co-located, wrap-around services in places close to where people live.
- Improve the local offer website so that families know where they can obtain help and advice when they have concerns about their children's development.
- Review the use of funding to enable more flexibility when meeting needs.
- Co-design and deliver training and support for the whole workforce and families to utilise a graduated approach for SEND.
- Co-produce strengthened graduated approach pathways into health services that provide support at the time when a need is identified.
- Provide timely access to all health services for children and young people with SEND, and resolve the access challenges in Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy.
- Work with families to ensure that EHC plans accurately reflect their child or young person's needs, expected outcomes and are updated in a timely manner.
- Jointly commission/improve services and support across education, social care and health that are based on robust data analysis and what families tell us is needed.
- Co-review the current arrangements for transitions between children's and adults' education, health and social care services based on the experiences of children, young people and their families, and the workforce.
- Ensure that information, advice and guidance is available to professionals, children, young people and their families to enable timely planning and clarity for continuity of support.

Priority 2

Expand our range of education provision to enable children and young people's needs to be met in local settings that provide an inclusive education and support them to achieve their very best.

The importance to our partnership

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.



What we need to do

- Widen and strengthen SEND provision by increasing the numbers of places in Blackpool for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Create an intensive support centre to meet the needs of our most complex children and young people.
- Provide specialist, evidence based training and support to our early years and mainstream educational settings in relation to SEND to underpin our principles of local schools for local children and 'no Blackpool child left behind'.
- Promote quality first teaching in all our educational settings that focuses on high expectations for all our children through the effective deployment of the education service.
- Support the development of SEND provision in all educational settings through a whole school approach to SEND based on NASEN standards.
- Undertake a needs based assessment to identify and strengthen the range of educational provision commissioned to ensure the needs of our most complex children and young people in Blackpool are met.
- Ensure that children, young people and their parents are involved in the planning and delivery of the support their children require.
- Increase the numbers of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan who are educated in a mainstream school to ensure that they have access to a full curriculum that enables them to progress to further education/employment.

Priority 3

A range of leisure and social activities that develop children and young people's interests and broaden opportunities to socialise and develop friendships, incorporating respite placements.

The importance to our partnership

We believe that all children and young people that live in Blackpool should have access to the same range of opportunities and experiences as any other child or young person living in Blackpool.

Evidence tells us that children and young people that are connected to their communities have a sense of belonging, experience better mental health and wellbeing, grow in confidence, build resilience and independence; and develop positive relationships and friendships with others.

What we need to do

- Explore opportunities to expand the range of school holiday care across Blackpool for working parents.
- Co-design and realign existing funding to provide a range of opportunities that enable children and young people to develop life skills, friendships and build confidence.
- Encourage partners to create activities in accessible locations to avoid unnecessary travel.
- Expand provision in before and after school clubs to enable access for children from special schools.
- Support existing leisure and social activities to better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.
- Consult and co-produce with families commissioning priorities to ensure a wide variety of options for respite, short breaks and leisure opportunities to meet a wide range of needs.
- Provide training and support to voluntary organisations to enable children and young people with SEND to access their activities.
- Explore the use of community assets to provide safe, accessible venues and facilities for children and young people with SEND.



Priority 4

Clear routes into further/higher education and training that will provide young people with the skills to secure employment, live independent lives and reach their potential.

The importance to our partnership

We are ambitious on behalf of our young adults with SEND. We want them to have access to opportunities that enable them to achieve their career and life goals.

We recognise that young people and their families need support for this to happen and we are committed to working with young people and their families to understand what their goals are and the support they need to achieve them.

Our intention is to develop a Preparation for Adulthood strategy with young people, their families and a range of stakeholders across Blackpool that provides clarity on the routes, opportunities and support available so that young people and their families can plan and be confident in the decisions they make about their futures.

What we need to do

- Gather the views and aspirations of young people, and their parents to shape the provision provided within Blackpool.
- Work with our further education partners to provide courses for young people that include a quality work experience placement and enable them to gain the skills and qualifications to progress to higher education, access apprenticeships/employment within the Blackpool area.
- Engage with local employers to increase the numbers of opportunities for supported internships and apprenticeships.
- Provide high quality information, advice and guidance to young people and their parents in a timely manner that enables them to make early informed choices about their future career/life pathway.
- Co-develop with young people and our partners a range of provision that will prepare young people for everyday life that develops their independence skills (e.g. managing on a budget, cooking, booking health appointments).
- Create opportunities with local providers for young people to participate in activities such as Duke of Edinburgh awards and volunteering.



Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
Apprenticeships	An apprenticeship is a paid job for anyone over the age of 16. Alongside on-the-job training, apprentices spend at least 20% of their working hours completing classroom-based learning with a college, university or training provider which leads to a nationally recognised qualification
Children and Families Act 2014	The Children and Families Act 2014 brought together a number of changes to legislation around services for vulnerable children and young people and families. The changes cover the family justice system, virtual schools for looked after children, adoption, childcare, shared parental leave and flexible working, and services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). The provisions in the Act which relate to SEND came into force in September 2014.
CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	Blackpool CAMHS service is made up of professionals from a range of disciplines including consultant child and adolescent psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, counsellors, support staff and an admin team. The service offers a range of assessments and therapeutic interventions including 1:1 work, family therapy and group work.
Communications charter	An agreement that sets out how professionals will communicate with parents, carers, children and young people based on a co-produced set of principles.
Co-production	An approach that places parents, carers, children and young people at the heart of decision making by involving them in the design, development and delivery of services that impact on their lives.
CQC – Care Quality Commission	The independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. They make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high quality care and encourage care services to improve. They undertook the SEND inspection in Blackpool jointly with Ofsted.
Data dashboard	An information management tool that helps to track our progress against our key performance indicators.
Early Years	From pre-birth to starting school.
EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan	A legal document that details the education, health and social care support that is provided to a child or young person who has a special educational need and/or a disability. It is drawn up by the local authority after an education, health and care (EHC) needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.
Family hubs	Family Hubs are centres which, as part of integrated family services ensure families with children and young people aged 0-19 receive early help to overcome a range of difficulties and build stronger relationships.
Focus Group	A group of people brought together to have a discussion/provide feedback on a specific service or topic.

Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
Graduated approach	An outline of the provision and support that Blackpool Council expects to be in place in all educational settings which support Blackpool children and young people with SEND and, therefore, forms an important part of the Blackpool local offer for SEND.
IMD – Index of Multiple Deprivation	The Index of Multiple Deprivation is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas ¹ (or neighbourhoods) in England. The Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area).
Improvement Plan	A plan that sets out measurable actions that will be taken with clear accountabilities, measures and deadlines to make improvements identified from the SEND strategy and the SEND inspection.
IAG – Information, advice and guidance support	Services that provide advice and information to children with SEND, their parents and young people with SEND. These services provide advice and support to help families make informed decisions about education, further learning and employment, health and care transitions and support.
Local Offer	The Local Offer is the support and services available in Blackpool for children and young people with SEND aged 0–25 and those who support them.
Mainstream	Any school or setting that is not a special school or non-specialist pre-school provision.
NASEN	The National Association for Special Educational Needs – a charitable membership organisation that exists to support and champion those working with, and for, children and young people with SEND and learning differences.
ND pathway	
(Neurodevelopmental) pathway	The Fylde Coast School Age Neurodevelopmental Pathway is an integrated multi-agency pathway for children and young people aged 5-16 years who are causing parental and professional concern and who require multi-agency specialist consideration of their needs.
NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)	A statutory NHS organisation which is responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the population, managing the NHS budget and arranging for the provision of health services in a geographical area. ICBs have their own leadership teams, which include a Chair and Chief Executive, and also include members from NHS trusts/foundation trusts, local authorities, general practice, and an individual with expertise and knowledge of mental illness.
Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills	Ofsted is a non-ministerial department that inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. They also inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people and undertook the SEND inspection in Blackpool jointly with the Care Quality Commission.
Short breaks/respite provision	Short breaks provide opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to spend time away from their primary carers, and provide opportunities for their parents and carers to have a break from caring responsibilities

Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities	A child or young person between the ages of 0-25 years has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child or young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of education facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or colleges.
Quality First Teaching	A style of teaching that emphasises high quality, inclusive teaching for all pupils in a class.
Supported Internships	Supported internships are a structured, work-based study programme for 16 to 24-year-olds with SEND who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The core aim of a supported internship study programme is a substantial work placement, facilitated by the support of an expert job coach for those young people wanting to secure employment.
Transitions	The moves children and young people make from home to early years education through to further and higher education/employment and the transfers from children's services to adult services for health and social care provision.
WSOA – Written Statement of Action	A document which sets out the actions that are needed to address the significant areas of weakness in a local area identified by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission following a SEND inspection.

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Vicky Gent, Director of Children's Services
Date of Meeting:	25 January 2024

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider progress made against the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To review the update provided, challenging progress where appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure the Workplan is robust and fit for purpose.

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

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

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 A full update is provided within the two appendices to this report.
Officers will present the progress report and respond to questions.

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 8(a): Overview of progress
Appendix 8(b): Final DfE update

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities and Children and Young People's considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

Report on progress made in Blackpool Children's Social Care 2022-2023

Blackpool Council



Overview

The last 12 months following the Ofsted ILACS inspection has seen continued pace and change. This report sets out that work and the changes we have made since the inspection. It will make specific reference to the ILACS inspection (concluded December 2022 and published February 2023) and cover other areas of development to improve the support we provide to children and families in Blackpool – specifically our focus on improving the outcomes of children known to Blackpool Children’s Social Care.

The overall aim of Children’s Services

This year in July we held a whole service event to be clear about the core aims of Children’s Services in Blackpool for our staff, and to help our staff fully understand their roles and collective purpose. As a leadership team and service we are aware of the issues within our town, the deprivation and the challenges in terms of the poor engagement in education. The impact of deprivation and poor educational engagement plays a part in the high level of demand for statutory services in Blackpool. This has led over a number of years to large volumes of children experiencing high levels of statutory intervention, often with limited impact on improving their outcomes.

Consequently, we set ourselves two broad aims which could be clearly understood and articulated by all our staff: **More children in Blackpool supported to remain in their families**, and **more children in Blackpool to engage positively in education**. These two aims are the focus and the foundation of all the work we are doing in Blackpool.

The issues identified in the ILAC inspection

The inspection of December 2022 identified four broad issues:

- The multi-agency response to children suffering domestic abuse or long-term neglect, and to those children with complex needs.
- Work with partners to strengthen their contribution to Early Help and neglect.
- Sufficient placements to meet children’s assessed needs.
- The timeliness of meeting children’s dental and emotional needs.

In addition a number of other areas we identified where we needed to improve:

- Work around Private Fostering
- Work around the Public Law Outline (PLO), pre-proceedings processes
- Further developing our Blackpool Families Rock approach
- Monitoring of unregistered placements and evidencing decisions around such settings

The multi-agency response to children suffering domestic abuse or long-term neglect and to those children with complex needs

There have been significant changes that have occurred in the last 12 months to improve the multi-agency response to children suffering from domestic abuse and long-term neglect and to those children with complex needs.

Since the inspection, we have revised our safeguarding partnership arrangements. We have moved from pan-Lancashire arrangement to a Blackpool specific placed based approach. The pan-Lancashire arrangements did not allow for granular focus on the specific issues and needs of Blackpool as a town. Whilst the changes are broader than a focus upon domestic abuse and neglect, they will have a significant impact upon these two key areas of need in our town.

The DCS has led on setting up these arrangements and bringing partners on board. A partnership development day was held in March 2023 to gain buy in from partners on what the partnership approach in Blackpool needs to look like. We have developed from March, where the arrangements and focus was agreed, to the setting up of direct delivery groups and the initial meeting in July 2023. New governance arrangements, that are significantly more focused, have been developed to drive a shared plan to improve outcomes for children in Blackpool. It was agreed that following a period of transition earlier this year, formal place-based arrangements commenced in September 2023.

Direct delivery groups have been set up and specific focus groups for both neglect and domestic abuse. We have held the first sets of partnership meetings for these groups and been well supported by partners. There is a collective understanding that addressing neglect and domestic abuse is not just the sole responsibility of Children's Services, but requires a partnership effort to improve outcomes for children and families.

We commissioned a wide-ranging audit of the partnership response to domestic abuse and its impact upon children and families. A plan has been developed as a result of this Scrutiny report governed via the new structures for CSAP.



8. Domestic Abuse
Scrutiny Draft Report

Operationally we have already made a number of changes as a result of our own self-assessment, the Ofsted inspection and the audit mentioned above. In the inspection we were rightly criticised for focusing too much on adult needs, and as a result lost sight of the children involved. We have reviewed and implemented a new approach to MARAC. This has involved us developing our role in MARAC that ensures focus on the needs of a child. We have invested in a domestic abuse specialist social worker in our transformation work to improve our response to domestic abuse. One that moves beyond simple responses such as trying to keep away from a partner seen as a risk, but that recognises the complexity in relationships, understands the impact of past experiences and trauma, and importantly is focused on ensuring children's safety not just in the short-term but in the longer-term. There is some early evidence that this approach is working as we have seen a small **reduction** in the number of children supported by a Child Protection Plan due to domestic abuse. Our future challenge is to embed this improved response and have practitioners who respond consistently to domestic abuse.

Our new partnership arrangements have placed a Blackpool focus on our response to neglect. Neglect is the biggest reason for contact with Children's Services in Blackpool and is correlated to the deprivation in the town.

At an operational level we have started to more effectively use tools including the Graded Care Profile to get a more objective measure of neglect and of the impact of that neglect. There are challenges in all partners accepting this tool as useful given its detail. However, having a consistent tool and approach being used across Children's Social Care and

the whole partnership is vital. Consequently, we are exploring a less detailed tool to be potentially adopted across the partnership. This work is monitored through the new CSAP structures.

Our co-produced Born into Care work has continued and been gathering pace. This significant piece of work supported by Lancaster University has been co-produced with care-experienced parents. Whilst not specifically focused on neglect or domestic abuse, the reality is that most unborn children become known to Blackpool Children's Services is due to these factors. There are a number of work streams that are exploring and delivering practical solutions to better support mothers and fathers to reduce the likelihood of their unborn babies entering our care. Part of this is looking at recurrent care and how we can reduce episodes of recurrent care which is high Blackpool. Some work streams are still in early stages, but others have delivered some outputs, such as a map of the Children's Social Care system to help navigate our system, and this map is currently being trialled. We are seeing some early indicators of success, with a slightly **reduced number of unborn being involved with statutory services**. Anecdotally, we are also receiving reports of more positive experiences of parents and positive outcomes for children. Further audit of this work will occur in 2024.

We have invested and developed an All Age Team. This is a piece of partnership work with colleagues in Adult Services. The focus of this team is that it does hands on work with families to improve their physical environment and their response to the needs of their children. It has a practical, yet social pedagogical base and attempts to support parents to improve their situation. The work is long-term but always aims to support families to greater independence. This team can provide up to 120 hours per week to one family or to a number of families.

There is some early evidence of impact with all this work. We have seen a **6%** reduction in the number of children supported by a Child Protection Plan due to neglect. The evidence for both neglect and domestic abuse is that **fewer** Child Protection Plans are lasting over **18 months** indicating that effective work is enabling the Child Protection plan to cease if required, or that we are taking decisive action when there is evidence the plan isn't working. Further evidence from recent audits show a clear improvement in the outcomes we are achieving for children (**previous audit cycle 29% good this is now 35%**).

Further transformative work is required to have greater impact on neglect and domestic abuse. The DfE has supported us with funding to implement a Family Safeguarding approach, this work is progressing well and these teams will go live in April 2024. Substance misuse and mental health issues are often linked to both neglect and domestic abuse and most, if not all the families Children's Social Care work with have multiple interacting issues. Having multiagency teams with the adult professionals and skill set to address these issues will clearly have a positive impact on our response to neglect and domestic abuse. Some of the DfE funding is in the form of support from Hertfordshire's Centre for Family Safeguarding and involves working with experienced DCS Lou Williams to support us in how we bring the partnership along with the changes we are putting in place. There are a set of KPI's that we are agreeing with the partnership to measure success within Family safeguarding.

Children with complex needs are the most vulnerable children we work with. We accept the concerns in our approach that the inspection identified. We have invested in our Children with Complex Needs Team, increasing the capacity to create two teams. We have separated out the functions of each team to allow them to focus on specific areas of work, one team supporting children who have short breaks, and the other team supporting children who require the intervention of statutory services (CIN, CP, or CLA). This has resulted in an initial improvement of assessment timeliness from **55%** in timescales to **76%**. We have invested in an additional Team Manager

In July 2023 an independent audit of the work in our Children with Complex Needs teams looked at 9 children. Two were graded as **'good'** and the rest graded as requiring improvement. The independent audit also noted that **"children subject to safeguarding concerns and/or progression to child protection procedures are managed by the same social worker and there is compliance with procedures, reports are well written and reflective of the broader needs of the child and impact on the child. In this small sample of cases, the threshold for escalation to CPP and PLO was appropriate."** It did however note that there is still work to be done to ensure a greater degree of consistency of approach for children supported in this team.

Work with partners to strengthen their contribution to Early Help and neglect

The review of our safeguarding arrangements and a placed based approach for Blackpool enables us to engage with our partners more effectively, specifically around their roles in supporting children. A key element to this is the importance of Early Help in improving outcomes for children and families in Blackpool.

We have revisited our Early Help Strategy and focused on the importance of Early Help for its own sake, not as a demand management approach, rather as an approach in its own right. This is connecting with our partners as **445 staff from across the partnership have attended an EH Workshop** since implementation in 2022 (83 organisations including 17 nurseries, 28 primary and 9 secondary schools).

In the last 12 months we progressed from submitting a bid for support for our Family Hubs approach in December 2022 to opening the doors in July 2023 and delivering services from three Family Hubs, in the North, Central and South areas of Blackpool. Our Family Hubs are key to our aim to support children and families in a timely manner. We are already delivering services from these Hubs and aim to build upon these locations in the next 12 months. The initial evidence is that these Hubs are seen as an important resource in our communities. We are seeing increased registration rates for Family Hubs: **Q1 – 347 children/368 adults, Q2 July-September – 1039 children/989 adults registered**. In addition there is emerging evidence of families coming to Family Hubs following other parents telling them they are places you can get help, and early data around repeat attendance is showing families are coming back to the Hubs.

Our approach to Early Help and engaging partners to understand they are part of Early Help is slowly starting to pay dividends. We have seen a **260% increase** in the number of Early Help assessments. The number of referrals we receive has also **reduced by 12%** in the previous 6 months compared to the 6 months prior to December 2022. This reduction has not resulted in an increase in re-referrals which is settled at **22%**.

Sufficient placements to meet children's assessed needs

We have worked hard over the last 12 months on developing our placement sufficiency. Firstly, developing a culture throughout our services that prioritises children being placed in family settings if they are unable to remain in their own homes or with immediate or wider family.

This has involved working to increase the number of in-house foster carers that we recruit and retain. Increasing the number of carers within a national context of reducing numbers of carers is challenging. We have managed to stabilise the number of foster carers we have, but we have not yet been successful in increasing the number of carers. We have recently been successful in a joint bid with four other local authorities to develop a Regional Fostering Recruitment Hub. The aim of the Hub will be: to improve the journey from enquiry to application and through to approval; to boost the number of quality enquiries and build evidence of effective marketing strategies; establish a shared Local Authority approach to fostering recruitment; and provide a central 'landing page' for the communications campaign, ensuring a good user journey through the system. There will be clear KPI's to help understand the positive impact on fostering recruitment. The ultimate aim is to increase the number of in-house foster carers with a range of skills that can meet the needs of children who have to come into our care in Blackpool. Our Regional Fostering Hub will be in place by **April 2024**.

We are also working on greater placement stability. We have developed the support we provide to children and their carers: we have increased the amount of clinical psychology hours available to carers; we have developed a placement support pathway; we have a Solutions Focused Therapy team as part of our placement support package; and have support offered through CAMHS colleagues. Our pathway of support is based on regular multiagency care planning meetings for our children, ensuring that we spot issues early and address them quickly. This is already having a positive impact. In-house placements stability has improved over the last 12 months from **67% to 80%**. Year on year placement stability is improving and is currently at **66%** up from **62%** percent in the last 12 months. This is having an impact upon our longer-term placement stability, that is children in the same placement for 2 years which has increased from **51%**

to **55%**. We have also reduced the number of children entering residential care due to placement breakdown from an average of **7** every six months to **2** in the last six months to date. Our overall use of residential placements has reduced **17%** in the last 12 months.

In the last 12 months we have invested in our commissioning team, appointing a new manager to lead the commissioning of Children's Services placements. This has increased the capacity within our commissioning team to build relationships with our providers specifically IFA's, residential providers, and also providers of semi-supported care. Through building more positive relationships with key providers in our area our aim is to ensure more of our children are placed in provision that meets their needs, and continue to improve on the measures above.

A key issue with sufficiency is demand. We are focused on safely reducing the number of children who enter the care of the authority. We have done this through focusing on practice – practice that is supportive of families, that recognises risk, but works to supporting children and families to mitigate those risks where it is safe to do so. Our moves to implement Family Safeguarding teams will reinforce this approach. Our audit findings show a slow but steady improvement in the quality of work we are doing. The quality of our managerial oversight has improved significantly with nearly **50%** of all audits graded as good for management oversight. This is key to driving the improvements in practice that lead to positive impact and outcomes for children. Evidence of this is that fact we have safely reduced the number of children we look after by **5%** in the last 12 months.

We are re-writing our sufficiency strategy so it captures the work we are doing to achieve our aim of more children in Blackpool remaining in the care of their families. Our strategy will be based on current performance data and audit evidence and be clear on our aims over the next three years to: safely reduce the number of children we look after; ensure more of the children we look after are in placements that support their matched needs; and that we achieve increased placement stability for Our Children.

The timeliness of meeting children's dental and emotional needs

To support the emotional needs of Our Children we have invested in the psychological services we purchase to provide greater access to a high level of support. In addition, our new Head of Service for Our Children is working with Health colleagues and internal partners to develop a clear staged pathway of support for Our Children's emotional health needs.

To help drive this and other health issues Our Children face we have developed an Our Children Health sub group through our Corporate Parenting Board. This group involves colleagues from Health services to improve our response to Our Children's emotional health needs.

This group is also playing a key role in improving the access to dental provision for Our Children and this access is improving. **We have moved from 43% of Our Children having an up to date dental assessment in December 2022, to having 71% of Our Children having a up to date dental assessment in December 2023.** This group will continue to drive those improvements, monitored through our revamped Corporate Parenting Board to ensure that this board and the elected members on it hold, not only council officers, but also Health colleagues to account in regards to meeting the health needs of Our Children.

Other areas noted in the inspection

Private Fostering

There were a number of wider issues identified in the Ofsted inspection. One was our response to children who are Privately Fostered. Since the inspection we have developed our response to these children. We have undertaken further training of staff on Private Fostering and identified 'champions' in all branches of our service. We are changing our MOSIAC recording system to more effectively track these children, and to ensure that all statutory checks are

being undertaken. Whilst this systems fix is in development we have a tracker led by a designated Service Manager to ensure we meet our responsibilities around Private Fostering and achieve positive outcomes for these children.

PLO/Pre-proceedings

During Summer 2023 we had an independent audit of our PLO/Pre-proceedings work by Lancashire Children's Services, focused upon our current practice around PLO/Pre-proceedings.

This audit did not identify anything we were unaware of, and hadn't already started to take measure to address. Specifically, it found inconsistent application of threshold at times and that children could escalate quickly through systems and end up in PLO/Pre-proceedings when earlier support may have made a difference. It found our PLO/Pre-proceedings work with babies was better stating that **"care planning undertaken for babies was much more efficient and without any evident delay. Assessments in this area are strong and decisions taken swiftly with good contingency planning."** This gives us confidence that our work around Born into Care is having a positive impact. In addition this audit found a good level of managerial oversight.

We have a PLO/Pre-proceedings improvement pathway as part of our overall improvement plan. We have some evidence that our approach to PLO has become more timely and focused, a **17%** reduction in the number of children supported in PLO, and the length of time children are supported in PLO/Pre-proceedings is **reducing**.

Further developing our Blackpool Families Rock approach

We are implementing multiagency teams based on a Family Safeguarding approach to further improve our response to children and families. We see this as a natural development of our Blackpool Families Rock approach, not a replacement of it, with Family Safeguarding being how we work better with families based on the values expressed in our Blackpool Families Rock approach. Our Blackpool Families Rock approach was fully co-produced and we are replicating this co-production approach in developing our multiagency Family Safeguarding teams. We want parents who have experienced our services play a part in the development of our services and our aspiration is that they will have a role in the actual delivery of our services. We want to consider how we can bring lived experience into the workplace to support good outcomes, which is an ambitious aim we believe we could achieve.

Unregistered and unregulated settings and evidencing management decisions

We appointed a new Head of Service for Supporting our Children in the last 12 months. We have put in place a clear pathway for both the approval of unregistered provision, and the ongoing monitoring of children in these placements, to enable us to support them into a regulated provision. Decisions about unregistered settings are now clearly captured on a specific form and are signed off by the Assistant Director. Unregistered settings are reviewed weekly by the Head of Service. The aim of that review is to ensure the child's wellbeing and all necessary support is in place. In addition, this review is focused on achieving registered provision for that child. The Head of Service reports on that progress weekly to the Assistant Director.

The process involves input from colleagues in our commissioning team. In 2022 we had on average **3** children placed in unregistered settings, since the development of this approach we have had on average only **1** child in an unregistered setting. Given the volume of children we look after and the high number who are in residential settings this is a positive position. However, we continue to aim to have no children in unregistered settings.

Enablers to our improvements

Workforce

A key issue in delivering sustained improvement is our staffing, specifically recruiting and retaining staff. Staff stability remains a real challenge in Blackpool as it is an all local authorities. Our DCS has a clear focus on the importance of our workforce, chairing our Workforce Board and in the last 12 months we have maintained a degree of workforce stability. Our agency use remains lower than the regional average at currently **13%**. This is a regional climate where some authorities have agency staffing rates of over **40%**. Our current vacancy rate is approximately **8%**. We maintain a stable leadership and management team that is permanent.

Recruiting experienced staff is a challenge. Consequently, our focus is on increasing our student numbers and supporting those students into permanent positions with us. As a result we have high numbers of ASYE staff. We remained committed to a high level of support for those staff through our PDL Service. This flexible service provides training and support alongside staff to help them grow into experienced workers who remain in Blackpool.

We actively engage our workforce on the improvements and changes we want to achieve and we are proud of our co-production approach in Blackpool. We have a Transformation Operational Board so our staff are involved at the start and will be all the way through our transformation journey. We have parents as part of our Transformation Board and as permanent staff in our co-production team and using their experience and insight is a key part of developing our services to sustainably deliver positive impact for children and families in Blackpool.

We are undertaking a piece of work through into 2024 which considers the profile of our future workforce, ensuring that it meets and delivers on the improvement work we need to undertake and our priorities.

Managerial Oversight-

Clear and effective management oversight is key to driving our improvements. We have a settled senior leadership team with no agency managers at Head of Service and Service Manager level, and only **one out of 21** at Team Manager level.

This settled team has a shared focus with our aims of **more children in Blackpool supported to remain in their families, and more children in Blackpool to engage positively in education**. Managerial oversight is a clear strength, not only in terms of our own audits, but also of the audits undertaken independently of our Complex Needs Team, Emergency Duty Team, and of PLO/Pre-proceedings work. This oversight is having an impact on the quality of practice in our teams, and in turn improving the outcomes for Blackpool's children and families.

Wider Council commitment

We continue to benefit from wider council support. We are, as are all councils, operating in a very difficult financial climate. However, the commitment of the council to maintaining the improvements in Children's Social Care remains strong. We have been supported to appoint a permanent Head of Service for Transformation that provides us with significant capacity to develop multiagency teams based on the Family Safeguarding approach, but also on wider areas of service improvement. We have significant broader corporate support for the development of Family Safeguarding, specifically from our colleagues in Public Health.

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Blackpool Children's Social Care Improvement Plan

April 2023 to October 2024

Appendix 8(b)

Blackpool Council

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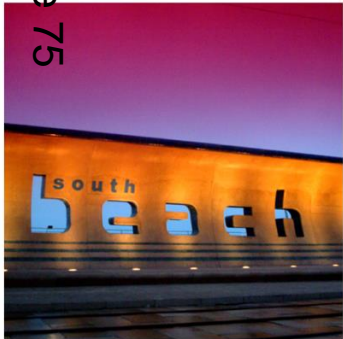


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Introduction

Our journey of improvement over the next 18 months is set out in this document. This is a lengthy document however in reality has two key aims.

- 1. We will ensure more children who we support in Children's Social Care live within family settings. That should be their own immediate families. If that's not safely possible then we will ensure they live in either their wider family or with foster families. Children who live in families achieve better outcomes, have more successful lives.*
- 2. We will support more of our children in Blackpool to be in school and have a meaningful educational career. Blackpool is a town where deprivation is marked, the most successful way to move on from that and for children to build successful lives is for them to have the stability of a positive home life and to be engaging positively in education.*

To achieve these goals, we have developed a plan that is separated into two sections that will drive improvement for children and families in Blackpool.

The first part is focused on **practice**; this is key to improving outcomes for children. We want to continue to drive the practice improvements we have already achieved in Blackpool by our family workers, social workers and PA's. Our Obsessions remain and through our audit framework we will continue to understand our progress and to drive those obsessions.

The second part is the **strategic and operational structures** in which that practice occurs. We need to make improvements in these areas. Whilst our OFSTED inspection had many positive elements there remain key areas that we need to develop these being:

- The multi-agency response to children suffering domestic abuse or long-term neglect, and to those children with complex needs.
- Work with partners to strengthen their contribution to early help and neglect.
- Sufficient placements to meet children's assessed needs.
- The timeliness of meeting children's dental and emotional needs

We have also put in place an outcomes framework that will evidence the improvements to children and families we have achieved through the course of this plan. This outcomes framework will be reviewed to ensure that we are capturing the difference our plan is making to families.

The plan is not a static document. It will be developed and altered as we change and as we progress through the journey of service improvement for children and families in Blackpool.

Monitoring the plan and how we will measure success.

The plan is multi-faceted and the detail will be monitored through the existing governance and oversight structures we have put in place. For example, through our Transformation Board, our CSAP Direct Delivery groups and through the AD's Quality Assurance meetings. In addition there will be a quarterly improvement meeting chaired by the DCS and involving all key stakeholders.

We have adopted the Children's Social Care: National Framework. [Children's social care: national framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/frameworks/children-social-care-national-framework)

Consequently we will be focusing on these four key Outcomes:

- Outcome 1: children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need
- Outcome 2: children and young people are supported by their family network
- Outcome 3: children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes
- Outcome 4: children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

Our improvements and focus upon achieving these four outcomes will be captured through both qualitative and also quantitative data. It is through our practice that we will have the biggest impact and we will monitor our practice through our robust audit work which will look at the quality of the work we are doing with children and with families. It will provide us with insight into our strengths as well as the areas we need to build upon. In addition to this qualitative data we will also develop our approach to how we gather feedback from the children and families we work with, exploring how we did, how we made them feel and the difference they feel we have made. We will gather other data around the outcomes we have achieved and specifically sustained outcomes through the adoption of the Supporting Families Framework outcomes across Children's Social Care. We are undertaking work within the period of this improvement plan to develop our gathering of evidence both in terms of individual children and families, but also in terms of the aggregation of all the children and families with whom we are working. Finally we will collect quantitative data that act as indicators of progress to the four outcomes listed above to further evidence the progress we are making.

1. Improving practice

We know the key practice activity that impacts upon children and families and supports them to keep safe and to improve their outcomes. Our practice obsessions are the elements of our work that we want to continuously improve to ensure we achieve good and outstanding outcomes for children.

We have created a Head of Service for Transformation who is also the Principal Social Worker and who will with our leadership team ensure improvement in practice is at the heart of the changes we will make.

Our performance in these practice obsessions will be captured through the audit cycle and we have a training and development programme that will drive improvements. Our aim in Blackpool as always is to continuously improve. Below outlines the obsessions, where we are now according to our audit work, the training and development we have put in place to drive those obsessions, and where we aspire to be in October 2024.

How audit drives our practice obsessions

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Ref.	Our practice obsessions	Baseline April 2023	% identified as good in Audit in Oct 2023		% identified as good in Audit in March 2024		% identified as good in Audit in Oct 2024	
		Outcome	Target	Outcome	Target	Outcome	Target	Outcome
4	Timely Analytical and Comprehensive Assessments	48%	60%		70%		70%	
6	Timely and Effective Plans	39%	50%		65%		70%	
5	Effective Co-ordination between agencies	55%	60%		75%		80%	
8	Regular and Timely Reviews	39%	50%		65%		70%	
2	Child Centred Work	39%	50%		65%		70%	
10	Improving outcomes for children	34%	50%		60%		70%	
3	Effective Management oversight	30%	50%		65%		80%	
	Overall Grade	29%	50%		60%		70%	

Development work to support our practice obsessions

Our obsessions	January – June 2023
Timely Analytical and Comprehensive Assessments	<p>Understanding Equality, Diversity, Oppression, Discrimination & Anti-Racism (13/6/23-1 & 22/3/23-4)</p> <p>Good Quality Assessments & Analyses <i>for managers</i> (9/3/23-2)</p> <p>Genograms, Ecomaps & Impact Chronologies <i>for managers</i> (7/3/23-2)</p> <p>Domestic Abuse <i>for managers</i> (28/6/23-4)</p> <p>Intra-familial Sexual Abuse <i>for managers</i> (26/6/23-4)</p> <p>Neglect <i>for managers</i> (21/6/23-5)</p> <p>Fostering, Planning for Permanence & Connected Care whole service Development Day (Analysis 17/5/23)</p> <p>SSF whole service Development Day (Neglect 12/5/23)</p> <p>Assessment Learning Circle (05/01/23 3, 02/02/23 8, 29/03/23 8, 02/05/23 5)</p> <p>Child Impact Chronology and Genogram Learning Circle (05/01/23 14, 02/02/23 11, 29/03/23 9, 02/05/23 5)</p>
Timely and Effective Plans	<p>Outcome Focussed Plans & Reviews <i>for managers</i> (7/3/23-2)</p>
Effective Co-ordination between agencies	<p>Management of Allegations, LADO (7/6/23-5)</p> <p>Blackpool Children's Education Conference (Paul leading with partners 27/4/23)</p> <p>Blackpool Partnership Development Day (Vicky leading with partners 15/3/23)</p>
Regular and Timely Reviews	<p>Outcome Focussed Plans & Reviews <i>for managers</i> (7/3/23-2)</p>
Child Centred Work	<p>Direct work with Children Learning Circle (13/02/23 2, 24/03/23 9, 17/04/23 12, 19/05/23 6)</p> <p>Our Children Record Launch - 197</p>

Improving outcomes for children	<p>Foundational Audit Skills (12/6/23-5)</p> <p>Graded Care Profile 2 (16/01/23 9, 21/02/23 7, 23/03/23 4, 27/04/23 10, 22/05/23 4, 30/06/23 5)</p> <p>Safeguarding Blackpool's Children from Neglect (07/02/23 7, 07/03/23 5, 20/04/23 8, 28/06/23 11)</p>
Effective Management oversight	<p>Safe Uncertainty and Defensible Decision Making (5/7/23-2 & 7/3/23-11, 23/1/23-10)</p> <p>Managing Staff Performance (20/6/23-5)</p> <p>Step Up to Management (24, 25, 26/4/23-8)</p> <p>Reflective Supervision (1/3/23, 20/3/23, 19/4/23-7)</p> <p>Frontline Pathways programme (PW1-3, PW2-10, PW3-4)</p> <p>Understanding Equality, Diversity, Oppression, Discrimination & Anti-Racism (HoS 22/5/23)</p> <p>Adolescent Service Leadership Development Sessions (Supervision 29/3/23 & 11/5/23)</p> <p>SSF Team Manager away day (28/3/23)</p> <p>Data Development Day (13/3/23)</p>

2. Strategic and operational improvements.

As previously described, practice with children and families is the foundation to improving outcomes. However, that practice needs to occur in a strategic and operational context, in an environment and a culture that is focused upon achieving positive outcomes for children and families. This is set within our two key priorities of ensuring more children who are known to Children's Services in Blackpool are supported to live safely and well in a family setting and that more children in Blackpool engage positively in education.

To help us achieve this we have developed a plan with cross-cutting themes. Working at the earliest level of intervention is fundamental to our approach; early help isn't about a service, rather it underpins our work across the continuum of need. It means, wherever possible and where it is safe and appropriate to do so we work at the earliest level of intervention. We want to support our partnership to enhance and build upon the early help support they provide to children. It also means that whether it be our targeted early help offer or our statutory services, we support and offer help to children and families as early as possible to improve their outcomes.

Page 82 Improving the lives and experiences of children and families in Blackpool requires a strong commitment to work in partnership, both strategically and operationally; we cannot achieve our aim without working in collaboratively with all of our partners in health, the police, schools and other agencies who come into contact with vulnerable children. Perhaps most importantly it must be in partnership with children, their parents and wider family networks.

The focus is also on how we work with families; and undertaking activity and evidence-based interventions that actually make a difference; working with them not at them as we have described in our Blackpool Families Rock ethos and values. These interventions and this practice must involve partners and focus upon all elements of a child's experience. Including working with parents to support them in their ability to meet their child's needs and keep them safe.

This will be driven by oversight; from the strategic governance that holds us to account, to the direct delivery groups supporting our partnership work, to front line managers supporting staff to support children and their families. This oversight will drive the achievement of better outcomes Blackpool.

The plan below sets out the activity we are undertaking to improve the strategic and operational context, focusing on early help is the best help, working in partnership with children, families and wider partners is key, and the work we do should be focused upon improving outcomes and driven by robust oversight.

Ref.	What are we going to do?	Lead	Key milestones, actions and activities	Completion date	Current position – Is the activity on track? If not, what are the mitigations and when is completion expected?	Status
1. Strategic Partnerships.						
Head of Service Lead Kara Haskayne.						
1.1	Develop a new Children, Young People and Families Strategic Plan	Kara Haskayne – Head of Safeguarding Children & Strategic Partnership Boards	Hold Partnership event to discuss setting a new strategic vision and priorities for children, young people and families in Blackpool	16 Mar 2023	Complete – event held on 16 th March attended by over 80 representatives from partner agencies across Blackpool.	
			Establish task and finish group to meet monthly to develop the priorities and objectives	30 Apr 2023	Complete	
			Share initial consultation feedback and draft strategy with strategic leaders at the CYP and Families Partnership meeting	14 Jul 2023	Complete	
			Consult with the wider partnership on the priorities and objectives and develop draft strategy	31 August 2023	Complete	
			Approve final strategy through strategic and democratic process, sharing with CYP and Families Partnership, CYP Scrutiny Committee and Council’s Executive	30 Nov 2023	This has been delayed and we will aim to confirm in Jan 2024	
			Develop outcomes framework	31 Dec 2023	A draft outcomes framework has been agreed. Further consultation is required.	

1.2	Establish Strategic Partnerships Business Unit	Kara Haskayne – Head of Safeguarding Children & Strategic Partnership Boards	Develop business case and seek approval from corporate leadership team	6 Jun 2023	Complete	
			Work with HR to create new structure and job descriptions	30 Jun 2023	Completed. New structure designed	
			Advertise posts and recruit to new positions	30 Sept 2023	Completed all new staff recruited into posts.	
1.3	Review the function, membership and governance structure supporting the Children and Families Partnership	Kara Haskayne – Head of Safeguarding Children & Strategic Partnership Boards	Agree revised terms of reference, membership and structure with strategic leaders for a new Children, Young People and Families Strategic Partnership	14 Jul 2023	Complete	
			Implement new meeting and reporting structure for boards reporting to the partnership	31 Oct 2023	Complete the board and reporting structure has been agreed.	
1.4	Implement new Blackpool Children’s Safeguarding and Assurance Partnership arrangements	Kara Haskayne – Head of Safeguarding Children & Strategic Partnership Boards	Hold a workshop to establish safeguarding priorities for Blackpool and agree partnership arrangements and workstreams	19 Jun 2023	Complete – the CSAP have agreed to four workstreams or delivery groups.	
			Set up and hold first delivery group meetings for neglect, DA, contextual safeguarding, Request for Support Hub	31 Jul 2023	EH Delivery Group 25 July 2023 RfSH Delivery Group 27 July 2023 Neglect Delivery Group 24 July 2023 DA Delivery Group tbc	
			Agree Scrutineer and assurance process and recruit independent Scrutineer	31 Oct 2023	Scrutineer interviews will occur on 15/01/2024	

			Agree terms of reference for delivery groups	30 Sept 2023	All agreed bar DA and Request for Support Hub. All will be agreed by the end of October 2023.	
1.5	Strengthen the Corporate Parenting role and responsibility so that it can effectively hold all partners to account.	Chris Coyle – AD for Operations Children’s Social Care	Refresh the terms of reference and expand membership to ensure all partners with corporate parenting responsibility are represented.	19 Sept 2023	Terms of reference refreshed. Attendance needs to continue to be monitored.	
			Develop Corporate Parenting dashboard of key performance indicators relating to each of the five promises.	31 Dec 2023	The outcomes framework has been agreed in draft. This needs to be formally agreed and a process of how we report confirmed	
			Further embed and reinforce the whole council approach to considering the impact of all policies and procedures on children and young people	Oct 2024	22/08/2023 Update template for Corporate Decision making now includes a section on the impact for Our Children	

2. Early help and supporting families

Head of Service Lead Joanne Stewart

2.1	Develop Family Hubs in line with government guidance as part of the national Family Hub programme	Joanne Stewart – Head of Early Help and Support Service	Implement the Start for Life offer	31 Mar 2025		
			Establish processes for management information and finance returns	30 Apr 2023	First return submitted in April	
			Identify location for Blackpool South Hub	1 Jun 2023	Complete – Palatine Leisure Centre remodelled to include Family Hub space	
			Formally launch the Family Hubs	13 – 14 Jul 2023	Complete, all three Hubs formally launched.	
			Establish a governance structure including a project board	25 Jul 2023	Complete, the Early Help Strategic Delivery Group will provide the governance oversight for the Family Hubs development.	
			Establish robust processes for gathering family feedback	31 Mar 2024	We have commenced a piece of work led by the Principle Social Worker to ensure we gather families feedback. Draft plan to be provided by Feb 2024.	

			Comply with key deliverables of Family Hubs set out in national sign-up conditions to meet minimum expectations	31 Mar 2025		
2.2	Deliver Supporting Families	Joanne Stewart – Head of Early Help and Support Service	Establish multi-agency Data Board with robust data sharing agreements linking to CYP and Families governance structure	31 Oct 2023	July 2023: Meetings have taken place in March and July 2023 to discuss the scope and remit of the Data Board, which has been broadened from Supporting Families to include consideration of developing a partnership-wide dataset. The next step is to develop draft terms of reference to set out the scope, purpose and suggested membership of the Board, alongside a proposal for establishing a partnership Data Board with responsibility for developing a local area dataset. This will be presented to the CYP&F Partnership in October.	
			Consider wider opportunities to support payment by results claims to ensure we capitalise on funding available through the SF programme – target 506 families by March 2024	31 Dec 2023	12/01/2024 Wea are aiming to extend this into SSF however there are current challenges in terms of capturing the data.	
2.3	Establish Early Help Strategic Delivery Group as	Joanne Stewart – Head of Early Help and	First meeting to take place 25 July to agree terms of reference, membership	25 Jul 2023	Update 25/07/2024	

	part of the new local CSAP arrangements (see 1.4)	Support Service			Complete. The initial meeting has been held, further meetings have been arranged 6 weekly.	
2.4	Review and relaunch the Early Help Strategy	Joanne Stewart – Head of Early Help and Support Service	Undertake early help system guide self-evaluation with the partnership	1 Jul 2023		
			Agree a process for reviewing the EH Strategy	26 Sept 2023	12/01/2024	Agreed that the review of the current strategy will be conducted and that will become the basis of the next iteration of the Early Help strategy.
			Set up a task and finish group to co-produce the draft strategy	30 Nov 2023	12/01/2024	As above.
			Consult with wider partnership	31 Dec 2023	12/01/2024	As above
			Approve and re-launch the strategy	28 Feb 2024	12/01/2024	It was agreed as a multi-agency group on 12/01/24 that updating the strategy will be delayed until there has been a full review of the current strategy

3. Transformation

Head of Service Lead Laura Chadwick.

3.1	Establish Transformation Board to oversee the implementation of new practice model	Laura Chadwick – Head of Transformation and PSW	Agree scope and set up of the new Transformation Board	25 Jul 2023	Initial scoping meeting to take place on 25 July	
			Hold first meeting to agree membership and terms of reference	31 Aug 2023	Delayed first meeting is to be held on 19 th Oct 2023 12/01/2024 Completed.	
3.2	Design, develop and implement children's social care practice model based on Blackpool Families Rock ethos and values	Laura Chadwick – Head of Transformation and PSW	Set up operational transformation group and agree terms of reference	31 Aug 2023	Completed An operational group has been established and is feeding into the strategic group. It is also	
			Develop project implementation plan and agree who, how and outcomes	31 Oct 2023	Complete	
			Design and agree team structures	31 Dec 2023	Team structures agreed in draft however further consultation required.	
			All staff to be trained in Motivational interviewing	28 Feb 2024		
			Recruit to posts	28 Feb 2024	Funding has been agreed and process of consultation and recruitment has been agreed.	

			Launch BFR multi-agency operational model	31 Mar 2024		
4. Neglect						
Head of Service Lead Toni Harrison						
4.1	Establish Neglect Strategic Delivery Group as part of the new local CSAP arrangements (see 1.4)	Kara Haskayne – Head of Safeguarding Children & Strategic Partnership Boards	Develop partnership Neglect wide action plan	31 Oct 2023	12/04/2024 Work has commenced on the neglect action plan as part of the Neglect Strategic delivery plan.	
			Neglect Delivery group to explore the use of Graded Care Profile by partners	30 Nov 2023	Meeting held with BwD to review Graded care profile, further discussions required.	
			Workforce development group to carry out partnership wide training needs analysis	31 Dec 2023	This has not yet been commenced. Revised target timescale of May 2024.	
			Commission a multi-agency audit of neglect	30 Apr 2024		
4.2	Review and refresh the Blackpool Neglect Strategy	Laura Chadwick – Head of Transformation and PSW	Work through the Neglect Delivery Group to review and refresh the Blackpool Neglect Strategy (<i>additional steps to be added</i>)	30 Apr 2024		
4.3	Implement use of Graded Care Profile toolkit to	Toni Harrison – Head of Service	Undertake self-assessment of the use of graded care profile	31 May 2023	Review was undertaken, not all children’s social care staff are trained.	

	ensure a consistent assessment of neglect.	Strengthening and Supporting Families			Roll out of the use of GCP2 to be undertaken.	
			Undertake audit of the use of Graded Care Profile	31 Oct 2023		
			PDL team deliver neglect training	To commence Sept 2023		
			Develop dataset to capture use of GCP.	30 Nov 2023		
4.4	Formalise an approach to working with specific families where neglect is a feature where removal is not the best outcome.	Chris Coyle – AD Operations, Children’s Social Care	Set up a working group to agree the approach to specific children and families where neglect is long term.	31 May 2023	Complete	
			Set up an “In Reach” Team that will work with families experiencing neglect	31 May 2023	Complete	
			Develop the approach and pathways into that support	31 Oct 2023	The “In Reach” Team has been developed. Agreed pathway into this team and the role it plays in staged approach to neglect to be developed.	
4.5	Review the support in place and monitoring of children that are Privately Fostered.	Toni Harrison – Head of Service Strengthening and Supporting Families	Design practice guidance and implement training for all staff around Private Fostering processes and practice	28 Feb 2023	Action complete: Practice guidance and training workshops were delivered.	
			Develop a tracking system and reporting structure for PF children	28 Feb 2023	Tracking system implemented but information not being shared which prevents tracking and monitoring	
			Work with the systems team to develop a MOSAIC pathway for PF	31 July 2023	Update 16/08/2023	

					<p>Awaiting systems team to develop dataset and tracking system</p> <p>Update 12/04/2024</p> <p>Due to capacity challenges in systems team, the Private Fostering Pathway has been delayed. Monthly meeting in place with Systems lead to ensure we have this in place as soon as possible.</p> <p>A spreadsheet based monitoring system is in place to ensure effective tracking.</p>	
			Commission an independent annual audit of private fostering (first audit to be done by 31 Oct 2023)	30 Oct 2023	<p>12/01/2024</p> <p>An independent audit has been commissioned. We are awaiting confirmation of a date for this to commence.</p>	
			Share audit findings with leaders and incorporate learning into the workforce development plan	30 Nov 2023	<p>12/01/2024</p> <p>Delayed as the audit though commissioned has not yet been completed.</p>	
4.6	Redesign the Children with Complex Needs team to distinguish between safeguarding children and supporting vulnerable	Toni Harrison – Head of Service Strengthening and Supporting Families	Review the remit and focus of the CWCNT to identify how the team could function more effectively	30 May 2023	A service review has been completed identifying resource and capacity issues, a need for greater clarity regarding the criteria for accessing support, which family members should be held by the team and a clearer	

families and improve managerial oversight				distinction between safeguarding and support functions.	
	Produce new team model and consult with team	31 Aug 2023	Update 31/10/2024 A new team model has been developed which splits the functions of the team between two team managers, with clear functions and responsibilities agreed for each team and a revised criteria for accessing support. Recruitment has not yet commenced. Update 12/01/2024 The recruitment process has been completed and the new staffing structure is in place.		
	Implement restructure the CWCNT to split the functions of the team	1 Sept 2023	31/10/2024 Proposed structure has been shared with the team and confirmation to proceed with restructure is being sought. 12/01/2024 New structure has been implemented.		
	Develop a bespoke commissioning approach to support families through the CWCN Resource Panel.	1 Oct 2023	12/01/2024 This work has not yet been fully completed. The resource panel is		

					functioning however further adaptations and approaches are required to ensure the linking with adult services is effective specifically in ensuring a positive transition to adult services.	
			Review the effectiveness of new team structure	31 Mar 2024		
5. Domestic abuse						
Head of Service Lead Amanda Lynch						
5.1	Participate in pan-Lancashire scrutiny review of DA to assess the effectiveness of processes and support for families	Amanda Lynch – Head of Service Hub AST and Awaken	External review of the effectiveness of processes and practice to support families experiencing DA undertaken	Commissioned March 2023	31 July 2023 – Final Report has not yet been received. 12/01/24 The report has been received and shared with all partners via the Domestic Abuse Board.	
			Attend feedback session to receive the review findings	29 Jun 2023	31/07/2023 Final report has yet to be received. 12/01/2024 Report has been received and specific findings are being developed in response. However the DA strategic delivery group has yet to commence to drive through the partnership approach specifically around children and families and domestic abuse.	

			Report received and shared with DA Board and DA Delivery Group	25 Jul 2023	12/01/2024 As above.	
			Children's Domestic Abuse Delivery Group to develop an action plan based on the findings and recommendations of the review	31 Oct 2023	12/01/2024 The DA Strategic Delivery group has not yet commenced due to challenges in identifying Police representation. Police colleagues have agreed to chair this meeting however due to restructuring they have not been able to identify the right level of representation to drive forward the partnership approach.	
5.2	Children's DA Delivery Group to review the Blackpool Domestic Abuse Strategy to determine whether the commissioned services meet the needs identified.	Laura Chadwick – Head of Transformation and PSW	Create guidance on the types of interventions to be written into children's plans	30 Sept 2023	12/01/24 This has been delayed and guidance is currently being reviewed.	
		Amanda Lynch – Head of Service, Hub, AST, Awaken	Review the services commissioned for perpetrators, survivors and children and develop guidance on the interventions	31 July 2023	12/01/2024 As above.	
			CSAP Workforce Development Group to develop and deliver training on Domestic Abuse resources available	31 Jan 2024	12/01/2024 This timescale will not be achieved due to the issues highlighted above.	
5.3	Review the role and functioning of MARAC and develop a robust dataset for MARAC to be	DA Strategic Delivery Group	Review the role of children's social care within MARAC to ensure that Children's Social Care contribute to MARAC effectively whilst focusing upon	7 Jan 2023	Completed The role of CSC in MARAC has been reviewed and CSC continue	

	monitored by DA Strategic Delivery Group and reported to the Data Board		safeguarding responsibilities towards children		to engage with MARAC, however the focus is upon ensuring children are effectively safeguarded	
			Identify a set of partnership performance and impact measures that will demonstrate impact of MARAC	30 Nov 2023	12/01/2024 This have not yet been agreed. Data gathering in regards to MARAC, who has not yet been formalised.	
			Audit the MARAC process to ensure the effectiveness of the service.	28 Feb 2024		
5.4	Develop and implement a model of working with families where DA is an issue	Amanda Lynch – Head of Service, Hub, AST, Awaken Laura Chadwick – Head of Transformation and PSW	Identify a standardised model of practice for supporting children where DA is an issue	31 Oct 2023	12/01/2024 A model of practice has bene agreed in draft. Further amendments are required however prior to it being launched.	
			Implement training around that model of practice and ensure staff have a tools and interventions to effectively support children and families where domestic abuse is an issue. (Linked to the transformation of Children’s Social Care work)	31 Dec 2023	12/01/2024 As above.	

6. Permanence and stability

Head of Service Lead Rachel Barnes

6.1	Ensure there is a consistent understanding of thresholds of support based on the Working Well with Families threshold document.	Laura Chadwick – Head of Transformation and PSW	Roll out training to the workforce on Working Well with Families threshold document	31 Aug 2023	12/01/2024 Thresholds training has commenced and evidence within our data shows that it is having a positive impact. There remains a number of staff that have yet to complete the training.	
			Develop and deliver a partnership training package to increase understanding of the Working Well With Families document	30 Nov 2023	12/01/2024 This will be completed via the Early Help and RfSH strategic delivery groups and planned via the workforce board. In addition partnership training will be provided as part of the implementation of Family Safeguarding.	
6.2	Ensure children who require legal intervention to support them and meet their needs experience no drift or delay.	Leanne Harrison – Service Manager Supporting Our Children	Review of PLO processes in Blackpool to be conducted by LCC	21 Jun 2023	13/07/2023 This has been completed.	
			Review and implement the findings of the LCC PLO review.	30 Sept 2023	12/01/2024 An action plan has been developed and changes are being made to practice to improve the effectiveness of our practice in PLO.	

			Develop a data set that tracks the length of time of care proceedings	31 Oct 2023	12/01/24 We have a data set of how long children are subject to pre-proceedings. This and other measures feeds into our pre-proceedings tracker to ensure effective grip on this key area of practice.	
6.3	Improve the experience of children and families where babies are “Born into Care”	Victoria Gent – DCS	Three key strands improving the experience from: 1. Between conception/ identification and the birth 2. Between the birth and the separation 3. After the separation	Mar 2024		
6.4	Improve the experience and support of children and families that are supported through a Supervision Orders	Kara Haskayne – Head of Safeguarding Children & Strategic Partnership Boards	Develop and disseminate a pathway to ensure IRO oversight of Supervision Orders.	31 May 2023	12/01/2024 This is in place.	
			Undertake an Audit of children supported by a Supervision Order to review the effectiveness of IRO oversight in driving the plan.	31 Mar 2024		
	Improve the experience and outcomes we achieve for UASC	Sara McCartan – Head of Adolescent Service	Develop a pathway of support for UASC	31 May 2023	Update 23/08/2023 Completed to be approved by CS SLT on 18/09/2023 Update 12/01/2024	

					This has been completed and added to our Policies and procedures.	
			Draft policy developed to be finalised by 30 September 2023	30 Sept 2023	Update 12/01/24 This has been completed, and shared with all staff.	
6.5	Increase the proportion of our children placed in foster care or returned safely to their immediate or wider family	Rachel Barnes – Head of Supporting Our Children	Move the Family Intervention Team from SSF to SOC in order to support greater placement stability	31 Jan 2023	Complete – Families Together Intervention Team have moved to SOC	
			Develop a fostering sufficiency plan that supports our aims of ensuring that children are cared for in their immediate or wider families and if that's not achievable, that they are cared for in a family setting.	31 Dec 2023		
			Implement a residential panel that focuses on supporting children in residential settings back into a family environment where appropriate and ensures we are achieving positive outcomes for children in these homes.	31 Jul 2023	Update 22/08/2023 Complete. Panel is set up and running every week.	
			Create MOSIAC meeting template and develop process to meet with partners to drive progress in between statutory meetings	31 Oct 2023		
			Develop a structured pathway model of placement support that will support	30 Sept 2023		

			children and young people back into a family environment			
			Implement a structured approach to the oversight of unregistered provision whereby young people placed are reviewed weekly with service managers.	31 Jul 2023	Weekly meetings in place to review. Capturing of information however is not yet as consistent and as robust as required. To be reviewed on 13 Sept 2023	
			Develop a Fostering Association to provide a support network for our foster carers.	31 Jul 2023	Update 22/08/2023 Fostering Association is now up and running.	
			Submit expression of interest to Dept. for Education to work with Blackburn with Darwen and Cumbria to develop a joint approach to Foster Care Recruitment and Support.	30 Jun 2023	Update 22/08/2023 Stage 1 application complete and approved. Stage 2 of application due by 18/09/2023	
			Refresh the Permanence Policy including clarifying the process of ratification of permanence.	31 Dec 2023		
			Develop MOSIAC system so ratification of children being matched for permanence to a foster carer is captured.	31 Jan 2024		
			Connect children who have been looked after with their families and wider networks through the Lifelong links programme.	30 Nov 2023	20/08/2023 update Life Long links work has commenced however further cohort of children need to be identified.	

6.6	Improve health outcomes for Our Children	Rachel Barnes – Head of Supporting Our Children	Create an Our Children Health group as a subgroup of the Corporate Parent Panel to focus on improving health outcomes for Our Children, ensuring that we are effectively undertaking our shared statutory responsibilities in relation to health assessments, and exploring issues around take up and recording	30 June 2023	Completed – Our Children Health group as a subgroup of the Corporate Parent Panel has been set up	
			Undertake an audit of Initial and Repeat Health Assessments	30 Sept 2023	5 Aug 2023 Audit has been completed. Findings to be shared at the autumn Corporate Parenting Board and actions implemented by the OC Health sub group	
			The Our Children Health sub group review and develop a plan to implement the findings of the Our Children Health Assessment Audit	31 Oct 2023	12/01/2024 This is in progress there have been challenges to ensure that the right health colleagues are represented. However this is now in place. Work continues however to ensure that it is having a positive impact upon our children's health.	
			Work with health partners to ensure that Our Children have access to dental care	30 Nov 2023	12/01/2024 Dental pathway has commenced drive through the Our Children Health Subgroup. This has had a positive impact as the number of	
6.7	Support Our Children to ensure that they	Rachel Barnes – Head of	Increase the proportion of children (from a baseline Dec 2022) who remain in	31 Oct 2024		

	experience a positive transition into adulthood	Supporting Our Children Sara McCartan – Head of Adolescent Service	Staying Put arrangements through ensuring that these are discussed and planned through both the My reviews and planning and support to our foster carers.			
			Set up Task and Finish group to evaluate the impact of Positive Transitions and explore alternative housing pathways to independence	30 June 2023	12/01/2024	A working group has commenced. Work continues to improve the experience of our children in accessing housing support.
			Increase LC grant from £2,000 to £3,000 for young people leaving care after 1 April 2023	30 June 2023	Implemented 14 th June 2023	
			Set up co-production group to review care leaver offer and develop new Leaving Care offer	31 Jan 2024		

4. Education and employment for vulnerable children Our Children and those leaving care

Head of Service Lead Sara McCartan

7.1	Review and strengthen the accountability and governance of the Virtual School	Chris Coyle – AD for Operations Children’s Social Care Helen Piggott – Virtual School Head	AD for Operations Children’s Social Care to join the Virtual School Governing Board	31 July 2023		
			Annual report to be presented to the next Corporate Parent Panel on 19 September setting out progress of Our Children for the previous academic year	19 Sept 2023	12/01/2024	Completed. A Our Children Education subgroup has been created as a result. This group is developing an action plan that will drive improvements in Our Childrens Education.

					The work of this group will be monitored through the Corporate Parenting Board.	
			Develop cycle of reporting information and data on children and young people's progress in education	19 Sept 2023	12/01/2024 This is being developed through the Our Children Education subgroup	
7.2	Improve the attendance of vulnerable children at school	Joanne Stewart – Head of Service Early Help Amanda Lynch Head of Service HUB AST and Awaken Rachel Barnes – Head of Supporting Our Children Toni Harrison – Head of Service for SSF Helen Piggott – Virtual School Head	Ensure early years providers and education settings are invited to all Early Help meetings, Assessment, Child in Need Core Group and review meetings. Implement pro-active 6 weekly planning meetings between SW and Virtual School to tie in with regular planning meeting cycle. Schools will be invited to attend half termly or termly.	30 Sept 2023	12/01/2024 This has been briefed to all staff. Monitoring of attendance at review meetings has been developed with systems team and reports will be being provided from Feb 2024.	
			Review tracking processes, increase the frequency of progress reports and improve data sharing between Virtual School, SOC and SSF to improve oversight of school attendance and exclusions for specific children known to Children's Social Care.	31 Dec 2023	12/01/2024 As above.	

7.3	Ensure 100% completion rate for PEP's by SW Teams (currently 63%).	Rachel Barnes – Head of Supporting Our Children Helen Piggott – Virtual School Head	Develop and implement training for FSW/SW/PA's in completing PEP's, supporting the attendance of vulnerable children and their positive transition through educational key stages and education settings. PEP completion will be monitored monthly alongside other KPI's and will be fed into the AD QA meeting.	Termly monitoring		
7.4	Increase the number of our Care Leavers that are in employment, education or training from the baseline of Jan 2023 by Oct 2024	Sara McCartan – Head of Adolescent Service	Deliver the Connected Futures project	Oct 2024		
			Achieve this through the above activity and focusing support on school stability, attendance and attainment on the educational needs for our children specifically in Key Stage 4. Delivery of the Employment and Skills Strategy and Corporate Parenting Strategy.	Oct 2025		

How we will measure success (Quality of our practice)

Ref.	Our practice obsessions	Baseline April 2023	% identified as good in Audit in Oct 2023		% identified as good in Audit in March 2024		% identified as good in Audit in Oct 2024	
		Outcome	Target	Outcome	Target	Outcome	Target	Outcome
4	Timely Analytical and Comprehensive Assessments	48%	60%	42%	70%		70%	
6	Timely and Effective Plans	39%	50%	41%	65%		70%	
5	Effective Co-ordination between agencies	55%	60%	52%	75%		80%	
8	Regular and Timely Reviews	39%	50%	59%	65%		70%	
2	Child Centred Work	39%	50%	47%	65%		70%	
10	Improving outcomes for children	34%	50%	45%	60%		70%	
3	Effective Management oversight	30%	50%	46%	65%		80%	
	Overall Grade	29%	50%	48%	60%		70%	

How we will measure success (outputs)

Outcome	Indicators	Baseline April 2023	Target October 2023	Target March 2024	Target October 2024
Outcome 1: Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need	Early Help Assessment rate per 10,000	384/10,000	400/100000	400/10000	400/10000
	Rate of children with an active Early Help plan per 10,000	292/10000	300/10000	325/10000	350/10000
	Referral Rate per 10,000	833/10,000	825/10,000 Actual 798/10,000	810/10,000	800/10000
	% of referrals which are repeat referrals	21%	20% Actual 20%	20%	20%
	Rate of assessments completed	1008/10,000	1012/10,000		
	% of children supported in an Interim Care Order that's greater than 26 weeks.	39%	35% Actual 43%	30%	25%

Outcome	Indicators	Baseline April 2023	Target October 2023	Target March 2024	Target October 2024
	Improve the rate of attendance for children supported at Early Help/CIN/CP level	82%	85%	87%	90%
	Rate of new entrants to care in line with statistical neighbours	60/10,000	58/10,000 Actual 57/10,000	57/10,000	55/10,000
	Rate of children in care in line with statistical neighbours	184/10,000	184/10,000 Actual 186/10,000	180/10,000	175/10,000
Outcome 2: Children and young people are supported by their family network	Number of families who have had a Family Group Conference.				
	Number of children who have been supported through Life Long Links.				
	Number of children who have been supported to safely return to their immediate or wider family's care.				
	% of children in care living with their family networks	16%	16% Actual 16%	16%	17%
Outcome 3:	Rate of section 47 investigations per 10,000	478/10,000	450/10,000 Actual 422/10,000	400/10,000	350/10,000

Outcome	Indicators	Baseline April 2023	Target October 2023	Target March 2024	Target October 2024
Children and young people are safe in and outside their homes	Rate of section 47 investigations which result in an initial child protection conference	141/10,000	120/10,000 <i>Actual 112/10,000</i>	110/10,000	100/10,000
	Rate per10,000 of children supported by a Child Protection Plan	128/10,000	117/10000 <i>Actual 110/10,000</i>	105/10,000	90/10,000
	% of children who have had a repeat Child Protection Plan	35%	33% <i>Actual 34%</i>	30%	28%
	No of children supported via pre-proceedings.	78	63 <i>Actual 33</i>	50	40
Outcome 4: Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes	% of interim care orders over 26 weeks	39%	35% <i>Actual 43%</i>	30%	25%
	% of children in care living in foster care	66%	66% <i>Actual 68%</i>	67%	68%
	% of children in care living in residential care	14.5%	13% <i>Actual 13%</i>	11%	10%
	Percentage of children living more than 20 miles from Blackpool	14.9%	14.5%	14%	13.5%

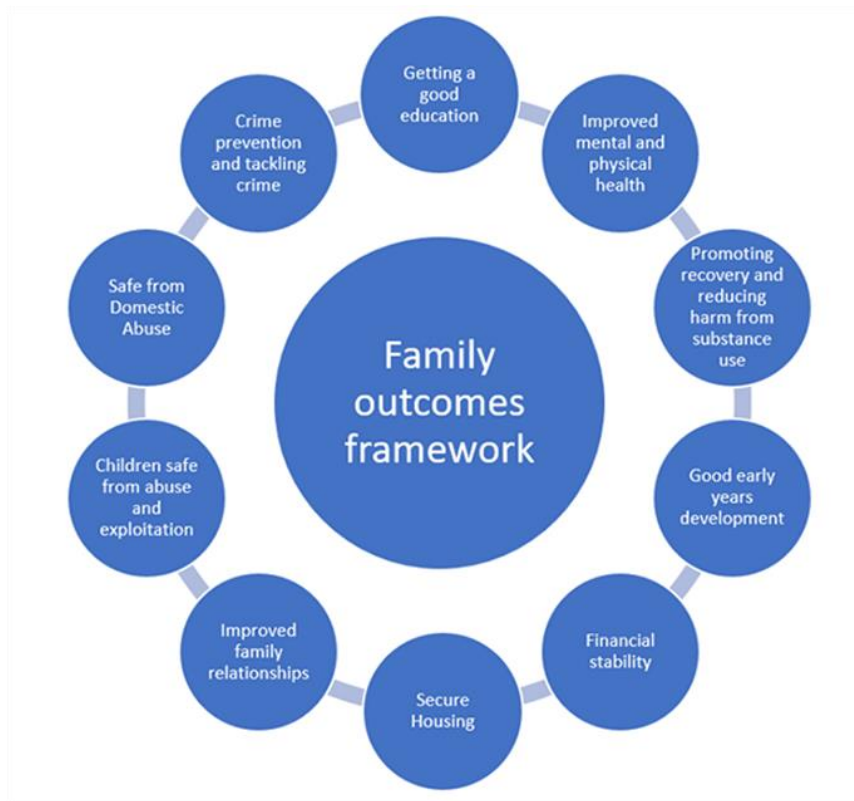
Outcome	Indicators	Baseline April 2023	Target October 2023	Target March 2024	Target October 2024
	Stability of placements of children in care	56%	57% <i>Actual 56%</i>	58%	60%
	% of Our Children with an up to date SDQ score. <i>(Data currently captured yearly however we want to capture more frequently)</i>	50%		80%	
	Average SDQ score in line with England average and statistical neighbours. <i>(Data currently captured yearly however we want to capture more frequently)</i>	16		14	
	% of Our Children within the Concern band to reduce in line with England average and statistical neighbours <i>(Data currently captured yearly however we want to capture more frequently)</i>	40%		35%	
	Progress and attainment in Key Stage results for children in care	Baseline October 2023	Target October 2024	Actual October 2024	

Outcome	Indicators	Baseline April 2023	Target October 2023	Target March 2024	Target October 2024
	Improve the rate of attendance for Our Children	93%	94%	95%	95%
	% of our care leavers with whom we are in touch	89%	92%	95%	100%
	% of care leavers in education, employment or training 17-18 year olds	56%	58% Actual 51%	60%	62%
	% of care leavers in education, employment or training 19-21 year olds	58%	60% Actual 59%	62%	64%
	% of care leavers in sustained education employment and training (need to clarify the measure).				
	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	95%	95% Actual 95%	95%	95%

How we will measure success (outcomes)

Whilst we have the above statistical evidence of the impact we are having we will also look more closely at the sustained outcomes we want to achieve. To do this we will utilise the Supporting Families Outcomes Framework.

We need to undertake work to more effectively capture the impact we are having on individual children and families as well as the aggregation of all the children and families that we are involved with. We are working with our business intelligence team and aim to have information on how we are positively impacting by Oct 2024.



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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Vicky Gent, Director of Children's Services
Date of Meeting:	25 January 2024

SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update on Safeguarding Governance arrangements.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To review the update provided, challenging progress where appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure robust challenge to safeguarding governance.

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

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

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 In Autumn 2022, Safeguarding Partners commenced a review of the Pan-Lancashire Childrens and Adults Safeguarding Governance arrangements, with the aim of improving the governance and front-line practice of local arrangements. As a result, the Child Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) Executive Board agreed to cease the PAN CSAP Lancashire arrangements and move to a place-based model, to ensure focus on the individual Local Authority communities’ needs and enable decision making at a local level.

To develop Blackpool’s children safeguarding partnership governance arrangements, The Director of Children Services (DCS) and statutory safeguarding partners from Lancashire Constabulary and Integrated Care Board (ICB) led a Workshop Development Meeting with wider partnership leaders on 15th March 2023. The partner agency leaders agreed Blackpool strategic safeguarding priorities (as set out in the table below), to ensure our partnership meets families’ needs at the earliest stage, ensure children attend and experience good quality education and ensure all agencies are working together to safeguard children and young people, so children can remain in loving home with their families wherever possible.

The table below sets out the Blackpool CSAP current governance ‘Strategic Delivery Groups’ and the partnership strategic leaders who chair the meetings and report assurance to the CSAP Board.

Strategic Delivery Group	Partnership Chairs
Early Help	Assistant Director Social Care, Children Services
Referral for Support Hub	Assistant Director Social Care, Children Services
Neglect	Consultant, Public Health & Head of Service Strengthening & Supporting Families, Children Social Care
Domestic Abuse – Children and Families (Will also reports to the Blackpool Domestic Abuse Board and BSafe Board)	DI Lancashire Constabulary & Head of Service Request for Support Hub & AWAKEN, Children Services
Contextual Safeguarding – Children Sexual Exploitation, Children	Head of Safeguarding Blackpool Teaching Hospital & Head of Service

Criminal Exploitation & Trafficking	Request for Support Hub & AWAKEN, Children Services
Workforce Development (CSAP, BSafe & Blackpool Safeguarding Adult Boards)	Head of Safeguarding Children & Strategic Partnership Boards
Rapid Review Panel	Head of Safeguarding Children & Strategic Partnership Boards
Voice of the Workforce	Head of Service Early Help, Children Services
Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) – continue current arrangements with Blackburn with Darwen & Lancashire.	CDOP Independent Chair (commissioned by Lancashire Council on behalf the 3 areas)

Blackpool’s Children Safeguarding Partnership Assurance Board (CSAP) commenced to meet in May 2023, several of the Strategic Delivery Group Meetings commenced to meet from the end of July 2023. The only meeting that has not yet commenced is the Domestic Abuse Children & Families Strategic Delivery Group, Lancashire Constabulary have confirmed the DI who will co-chair this in January 2024.

Blackpool Council Executive approved the Blackpool governance arrangements in July 2023. Pan-Lancashire CSAP Executive Board and the PAN Lancashire CSAP governance arrangements subsequently ceased 31st August 2023. From September 2023, responsibility and oversight of Safeguarding formally moved to remit of the 3 individual place-based boards.

During summer 2023 the DfE undertook a national consultation to update the ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ Statutory Guidance, the consultation ended 6th September 2023. The DfE draft ‘Working Together’ Consultation documents were used to inform the development of Blackpool’s CSAP governance arrangements. Blackpool’s CSAP Board commenced to be chaired by one of the ‘Delegated Strategic Leaders’, via an annual rota arrangement between Integrated Care Board (ICB), Lancashire Constabulary and the Local Authority’s Director of Children Services. For the first year of arrangements the Director of Safeguarding for ICB will chair Blackpool’s CSAP Board in the capacity of the one of the 3 Delegated Safeguarding Partners (p5 paras 61 & 62). A separate Independent Scrutineer (pp 26-37 paras 89-97) is currently being commissioned by Blackpool Council on behalf of the 3 Delegated Safeguarding Partners, an Interview Panel is arranged to take place in January 2024 involving; Cabinet Member for Childrens Services Blackpool Council

Chief Executive, Director of Children Services, Director of Safeguarding ICB and Superintendent, Lancashire Constabulary, a separate panel of children, young people and parents will also be undertaken.

From January 2024 the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services will attend the Blackpool CSAP Board, in the capacity as a Non Participation Observer, to have clear oversight of the partnerships work to safeguard children, young people and support their families.

A Blackpool Safeguarding Partnership Executive Board is in the process of being established and will commence meeting from January 2024. This will initially involve:

- Cabinet Member for Childrens Services
- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
- Blackpool Council Chief Executive Officer
- Blackpool Safeguarding Board Independent Chair
- Blackpool Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangement (MASA) Independent Scrutineer
- Blackpool MASA Delegated Safeguarding Partner – in the capacity as the MASA Chair (Yr1 rota - Director of Safeguarding, Integrated Care Board)
- Director of Adult Social Care & Health
- Blackpool MASA Delegated Safeguarding Partner - Director of Childrens Services
- Blackpool MASA Delegated Safeguarding Partner - Lancashire Constabulary Representative.

A subsequent stage would be to also involve the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Street Scene and Neighbourhoods and the Director of Community and Environment Services, so the Blackpool Safeguarding Partnership Executive Board has strategic oversight of the 3 boards responsible for safeguarding children and young people, vulnerable adults and Blackpool’s communities.

On 15th December 2023 the DfE published the revised 2023 ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children - A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children’ [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118282/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_-_2023.pdf) Chapter 2 (pp 23-42) sets out the statutory requirements for Multi – Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. Blackpool’s CSAP arrangements, including the

Partnership Chair and Independent Scrutineer and the roles of the 3 Statutory Safeguarding Partners (DCS, ICB and Police) meets all of the requirements. The only change required is the name of the Board, to ensure this is referred to as a 'MASA' – Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement (p23 para 36). There is a statutory requirement to publish the new arrangements, Blackpool's arrangements, in accordance with this new Statutory Guidance, will be published in January 2024. The CSAP website will be updated and a monthly online newsletter will be developed, so leaders and frontline workforce practitioners across Blackpool Partnership are aware of the role of Blackpool's MASA, governance arrangements and the MASA Multi-Agency Workforce Development Offer. The Blackpool MASA logo and branding will be co-produced with representatives of Blackpool's children, young people and parents. A new Blackpool MASA Business Plan will be launched by the end of March 2024.

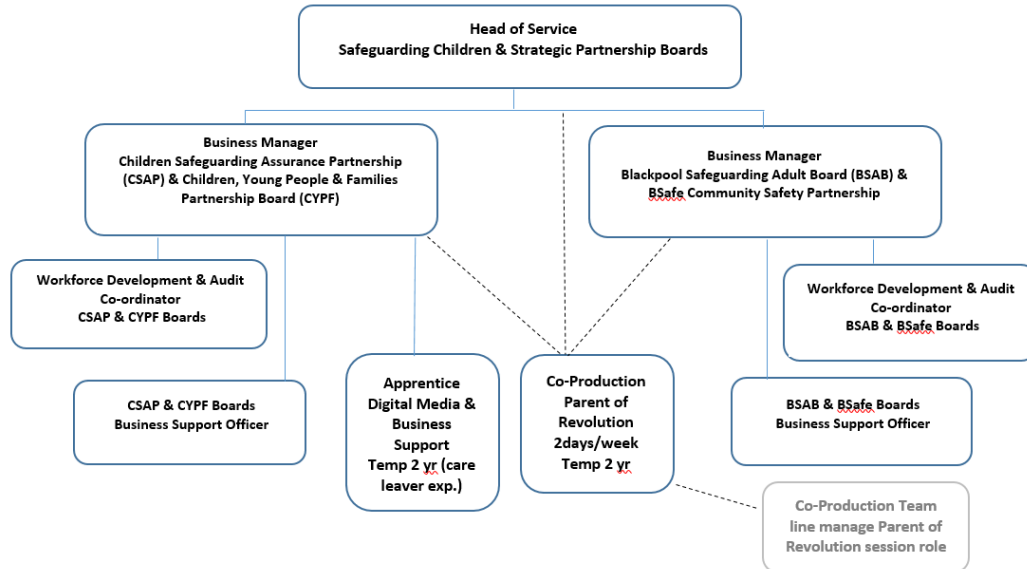
Alongside these Blackpool 'CSAP' to 'MASA' developments, a review has been undertaken with partners in Blackpool, to ensure our wider safeguarding partnership governance is brought together, supported via a Blackpool Partnership Business Unit. These joined up governance arrangements, involving the 3 Boards set out below, will provide assurance that partnership agencies are working effectively together to safeguard children, young people, vulnerable adults and Blackpool communities:

- Blackpool Children Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP)
- Blackpool Safeguarding Adult Board (BSAB)
- BSafe – Community Safety Board (BSafe)

Blackpool's Safeguarding Adult Board has appointed an Independent Chair. A BSAB Development Meeting has been held (25th September 2023) to agree a BSAB Strategic Plan, Business Plan, revised governance arrangements been launched. The 3 strategic priorities are:

1. Safeguarding Effectiveness – SAB Governance and Operational
2. Learning and Development
3. Making Safeguarding Personal

To support the 3 Boards, a Blackpool Partnership Business Unit has been developed, this is funded by the 3 statutory partnership agencies (Local Authority, ICB and Police). The diagram below sets out the Partnership Business Unit staffing structure which will provide Business Manager Capacity for the 3 Boards, lead multi agency training and quality audits, develop and launch Multi Agency Safeguarding Procedures, design and update a Safeguarding Children, Young People, Vulnerable Adults and Communities website and a monthly online newsletter and support undertaking Local Safeguarding Children Practice Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews.



The Blackpool Partnership Business Unit also involves a Care Experienced Young Person, undertaking the role of a Apprentice Digital Media Officer role, to develop the website and online newsletters, as well as a Co-production Parent, which evidences Blackpool’s commitment to co-produce strategic developments with the people we serve. Staff who worked in the previous PAN Lancs Joint Partnership Business Unit have been supported to move across the 3 placed based boards Business Units. Staff who chose to work for Blackpool are commence to work for Blackpool from 1st Jan 2024.

Previous budget partnership allocations are being sustained to support the work of the 3 Partnership Boards work including:

- Commissioning a CSAP Independent Scrutineer & Independent Chair Safeguarding Adult Board.
- Commission i) Local Child Safeguarding Case Reviews (CSPRs), ii) Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) iii) Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) Independent Scrutineer / Report Author, in the event a case review is required to be undertaken following a child or vulnerable adults death is due to neglect or abuse, or domestic homicide take place and partners consider there is learning for Blackpool’s partnership practice.
- Support Partnership Launch events, as new strategic partnership plans, multi-agency pathways or procedures are developed.
- Deliver Multi-Agency Workforce Development activities for the 3 Boards, to ensure we communicate learning from reviews and audits and national procedure developments, to have a positive impact on front line partnership workforce.

- Ongoing website development, fund Tri-X Multi-Agency Online Procedures and a monthly online newsletter for the 3 Boards.

The annual partnership financial contributions, together with the returned reserves, will fund Blackpool's 3 Partnership Boards arrangements and the work of the Partnership Business Unit, for the forthcoming three year period until 2027.

Upon publishing the updated Working Together 2023 Statutory Guidance, the DfE announced £6,480,100 one off grant funding being provided to 137 multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, to support areas to transform local systems, and deliver the reforms set out in Chapter 2 of Working Together and embed the practice described in the National Framework.

General questions / comments

Councilors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member's portfolio.

Glossary of Terms

PAN CSAP **PAN Child Safeguarding Assurance Partnership** - Previous reference term used to reflect the multi-agency Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool government arrangement overseeing partnership safeguarding practice and Local Safeguarding Children Practice Reviews.

MASA **Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement** – new term in National Statutory Guidance Working Together (p23 para 36) *'The way in which these organisations and agencies work together is known as multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASAs). Robust arrangements help to ensure that information about a child and their family is shared effectively, risk of harm is correctly identified and understood, and that children and families receive targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way.'*

SAB **Safeguarding Adult Board** - The overarching purpose of an SAB is to help and safeguard adults with care and support needs. It does this by:

- assuring itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance
- assuring itself that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused
- working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible

- ensuring agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred
- assuring itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area.

LSP **Lead Safeguarding Partner** Working Together 2023 (p26 paras 47-48) sets out the requirement that in relation to the Police, the LSP is defined as the Chief Officer of Police, for local authorities, the LSP should be the Head of Paid Service, also known as the Chief Executive and for ICBs the LSP should be the Chief Executive.

DSP **Delegated Safeguarding Partner** Working Together 2023(page 28 paras 56-56) sets out the requirement that each LSP should appoint a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) for its agency who should be named in arrangements. 57. DSPs²³ should be sufficiently senior to be able to speak with authority, take decisions on behalf of the LSP and hold their sectors to account.

RRM **Rapid Review Meeting** – Is held when a Significant Notification to the National Case Review Panel is submitted by the Local Authority when a child has died in the local authority area, or is significantly harm with long impact and there is partnership learning.

LSCPR **Local Safeguarding Practice Review** – A multi-agency case review undertaken when a child had died and there is partnership practice learning. Overseen by a LSPR Multi Agency Panel, chaired by one of the partnership leaders or a Independent LSCPR Panel Chair and the LSCPR Report is written by and Independent Reviewer commissioned by the Board.

CDOP **Child Death Overview Panel** – Working Together (p146 & p150 flowchart) sets out that partners must make arrangements to review all deaths of children normally resident in the local area and, as indicated, of any non-resident children who have died in their area. This should be done via a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP).

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities and Children and Young People's considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager.
Date of Meeting:	25 January 2024

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To note the ongoing workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year and consider the update to previous Committee recommendations. To also consider the outcomes of work undertaken outside of the Committee.

2.0 Recommendations:

- 2.1 To confirm the workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year.
- 2.2 To monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations/actions.
- 2.3 To note the ongoing work of the Committee in regards to visiting the Family Hubs and the meetings held on the new safeguarding arrangements and the Preparation for Adulthood Strategy.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

- 3.1 To ensure the Workplan is robust and fit for purpose.
- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No
- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

- 4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

- 5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 Scrutiny Workplan

The Committee's Scrutiny Workplanning Workshop was held on 18 July 2023 and considered items for inclusion on the Committee's workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year. The workplan is a flexible document that sets out the work that will be undertaken by the Committee over the course of the year, both through scrutiny review and Committee meetings.

Committee Members are also invited to suggest topics at any time that might be suitable for scrutiny review through completion of the Scrutiny Review Checklist. 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 outside of the workplanning workshop.

6.2 Implementation of Recommendations/Actions

The table attached at Appendix 10(a) has been developed to assist the Committee in effectively ensuring that the recommendations made by the Committee are acted upon. The table will be regularly updated and submitted to each Committee meeting.

Members are requested to consider the updates provided in the table and ask follow-up questions as appropriate to ensure that all recommendations are implemented. The table also includes the work and recommendations of the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

6.3 Visits to Family Hubs

In November 2023, representatives of the Committee took the opportunity to undertake guided visits to the new North Shore Family Hub. Feedback from the visits was very positive with Members expressing their thanks for the opportunity to see the work of the family hubs in action.

6.4 Place-Based Safeguarding Arrangements

An informal meeting of the Committee was held on 21 November 2023 to receive an update on the transition to Place-Based Safeguarding Arrangements from the previous Pan-Lancashire arrangements. The Committee received an overview of new structure and assurance that plans were in place and work ongoing to ensure the new structure was in place by deadlines.

6.5 Preparation for Adulthood Strategy

The Committee met with relevant officers, young people and parent representatives who had been involved in developing the strategy. An overview of the comments made and findings of the Committee is attached at Appendix 10(c) for approval.

6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 10(a): Scrutiny workplan
Appendix 10(b): Implementation of Recommendations/Actions
Appendix 10(c): Preparing for Adulthood Strategy Meeting

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities and Children and Young People's considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee - Work Plan 2023/2024	
25 January 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's Social Care Update focussing on improvement plan progress 2. Education, Health and Care Plans – raised at the July 23 Committee meeting – a presentation by the health provider on wait times and access 3. SEND Progress – implementation of the strategy and to consider the response to the recommendations made to the Council and NHS in the Ofsted inspection in 2022. 4. Update on Safeguarding Governance Arrangements
27 March 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's Social Care Update including improvement, transformation and key subject areas such as neglect, permanency of placement, family hubs, financial performance of the service against the MTFs 2. Young Inspectors Team update including detail of the resources allocated to the team 3. Blackpool Families Rock – how the money has been spent and what has been achieved, how to ensure sustainability 4. Placement Stability for Foster Carers To consider the specific issue of placements stability and the impact on children, families and foster carers.
June/July TBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's Services Performance data – update on performance against the Council Plan Key Performance Indicators 2. CSAP Annual Report
September 2024 TBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Safeguarding Model a report on the implementation and initial impact 2. Annual Children's Services Complaints report 3. Corporate Parent Panel Annual Report
November 2024 TBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better Start – to receive an annual update on the work of Better Start. Additional two years funding, links to the family hubs, creating sustainability. 2. Educational Attainment – an overview of attainment for 23/24 3. Children's Services Performance data – update on performance against the Council Plan Key Performance Indicators

Scrutiny Review Work	
2 October 2023	Children, Young People and Families Plan - Completed To consider and input into the development of the plan.
21 November 2023	Place Based Safeguarding Approach - Completed To receive information on the new approach to the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership. To then review the effectiveness of the approach in a further 12 months.
28 February 2024	Sufficiency Strategy To feed into the development of the new strategy. To potentially cover viability of Council run children's homes.

TBC	Effectiveness of Partnership working across services To hold a general meeting with all partners to discuss partnership working, whilst also considering the issue of partnership working through individual issues at Committee meetings such as Early Help and Youth Justice.
TBC	Looked After Children in Blackpool – Children’s Homes Consideration of the viability of Council-run children’s homes. To potentially be included within the Sufficiency Strategy meeting.
TBC	Young People Classed as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) To review the progress and impact of the work outlined at the NEET Review Panel held 26 September 2022. To also include Young People Aged 16-18 referral from the SLB, to look at what the law says, the options for young people at this age and what support is provided to those that are NEET by the Council.
TBC	Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools To review the provisions within schools to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils. Potential link to SEND target of: <i>‘Children and young people with SEND to enjoy good physical and mental health and wellbeing emotional health.’</i>
TBC	Community Engagement in Schools – To consider work to engage with local communities in schools (Referred by 15 September 2022 Audit Committee)
TBC	Early Help Strategy Development

CYP Scrutiny Training	
TBC September 2023	Journey of the Child
18 September 2023 (at the start of the pre Committee briefing)	15 minute briefing on: Legislation in Education
6 November 2023 (at the start of the pre Committee briefing)	15 minute briefing on: the role of the LADO
23 January 2024 (at the start of the pre Committee briefing)	15 minute briefing on: Special Guardianship Orders
12 March 2024 (at the start of the pre Committee briefing)	15 minute briefing on: Interpreting high school attainment data

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
1	09.12.21	That further consideration be given by the Committee to the findings of the 'Child of the North' report and the potential impact on Blackpool.	TBC	Vicky Gent	Vicky has requested that Members revisit this action due to the wide ranging nature of the Child of the North report. To be discussed at the next Committee meeting.	TBC
2	08.12.2022	To include an item on the work programme to look at the resource capacity of the Young Inspectors Team.	April 2024	TBC	To be added to workplan during consideration of Municipal Year 2023/24.	Ongoing
3	22.06.2023	The Committee agreed to request a presentation from the health provider on the issues regarding waiting times and access to services in relation to EHCPs, speech and language therapy and any other service for special educational needs.	January 2024	TBC	Added to workplan for 2024.	Not yet due.
4	21.09.2023	To receive the domestic abuse review report when available. To consider the improvement plan progress in early 2024. To receive an updated copy of the improvement plan following the meeting once it had been updated to include the missing detail.	March 2024	Chris Coyle	Members may wish to confirm when the improvement plan will be circulated.	Not yet due.

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
5	21.09.2023	To contribute to the development of the new early help strategy in due course.	TBC	Joanne Stewart	Timescale needs identification.	Not yet due.
6	21.09.2023	That a report on the implementation and initial impact of Family Safeguarding model be received in approximately 12 months with further reporting following in order to measure success.	September 2024	Vicky Gent	To add to workplan.	Not yet due.
7	9.11.2023	That Ms Algie provide case studies demonstrating the work of Better Start following the meeting.	30 November 2024	Annette Algie	Case studies circulated by email as requested.	
8	9.11.2023	To receive a short training session on Special Guardianship Orders within the next pre-Committee briefing session.	January 2024		To be provided as part of the January 2024 pre-Committee briefing session.	
9	9.11.2023	To receive an update from Ms Gent on whether previous foster carers had been contacted since the pandemic to determine if they wished to take up the role again.	December 2023	Vicky Gent		

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
10	9.11.2023	That Ms Gent consider the ‘target’ field within the Council Plan Key Performance Indicator data to determine whether an aspiration, a view of the direction of travel or a sense check could be included in place of a target in the next report to Committee.	31 July 2024	Vicky Gent		
11	9.11.2023	The Committee agreed to receive a written response on the child death data for Blackpool.	December 2023	Vicky Gent		

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Preparing for Adulthood Strategy Informal Scrutiny meeting notes

Officers: Sarah Wells, Chris Smith, Charlotte Baron, Jodie Stephenson

Councillors: Jones, Critchley, S Brookes, Flanagan (Chair)

Co-opted Member: Jo Snape

Cabinet Member: Councillor Benson

Young people representatives: Mia, Kieran and Amy

There were no declarations of interest.

Sarah Wells, Co-Production Practice Lead gave an overview of the draft Preparation for Adulthood document. The plan was developed to help young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve their ambitions.

The document was co-produced with young people, professionals, parents and adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to help those aged 14-25 who have SEND to live the life they chose. The strategy followed the same format and language as similar strategies nationally.

Elected members asked the young people representatives what barriers they felt were in place with regards to employment opportunities, and what Scrutiny Members could do to support them.

Mia, Kieran and Amy raised the following concerns:

- Gaps in knowledge with regards to what the different types of further education were, what courses were available to them, what employment opportunities were available;
- Lack of support with completing applications;
- Whilst they acknowledged Progress Mentors were available to support them to write personal statements, they felt that the number of mentors was not enough to spend sufficient amount of time with each individual.

A discussion regarding the offer from some of the Council Owned Companies provided with regards to apprenticeship / Internship places and asked whether this could be across the board of all the companies in the future. Chris advised that there were currently 12 places available annually for internships, which would be increased to 20 places in 2024, and whilst this provided amazing opportunities, it was still not enough.

With regards to employment, it was acknowledged that the main barrier for employers stemmed from lack of understanding of the needs of the SEND person. At the Work Readiness Conference it was identified that employers were nervous of doing something wrong or offensive with regards to perception and understanding of the individual's SEND. In June 2023 the Council ran a free training session for employers centered on Asperger's which received phenomenal feedback, a series of additional training sessions would be available in 2024.

Chris Smith updated Members on 'Project Search' and explained that this was a one-year work placement program for students with an EHCP who were seeking a pathway into employment. Staff

members acknowledged that there was a stigma attached to Project Search and more would be need to promote the service and break the stigma.

There were currently 1,472 people aged from birth to 25 years old with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) in Blackpool, of these there were:

- 99 in year 11
- 98 in year 12
- 89 in year 13

However, when the young person attended college they often fell away from the statistics, this was due to the fact that colleges were independent and used different data systems. Discussion took place with regards to GDPR and data sharing.

Recommendations:

- Members requested additional information regarding Social Enterprise solutions be included in the document;
- Members asked for colleges to be approached with regards to data sharing of students with EHCPs;
- Members were offered the opportunity to shadow the team and attend site visits at the SEND Schools; and
- Request the CYP Scrutiny Committee carry out a review or Deep Dive in to the area concerning 'Transition for Young Adults with SEND'.