

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

Friday, 8 June 2018

10.00 am

Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford

NB. Members are requested to ensure that their Laptops/Tablets are fully charged before the meeting

John Tradewell
Director of Strategy, Governance and Change
31 May 2018

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 24 April 2018** (Pages 1 - 8)
4. **Staffordshire's Children's Centres** (Pages 9 - 30)
Report of the Cabinet Member, Children and Young people
5. **Elective Home Education Review** (Pages 31 - 56)
Report of the Safe and Strong Communities and the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committees Joint Review Group
6. **Work Programme** (Pages 57 - 62)
7. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:-

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

nil

Committee Membership

Ann Beech	Jason Jones
Mike Davies	Natasha Pullen
John Francis (Chairman)	Paul Snape
Syed Hussain	Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)
Trevor Johnson	Mike Worthington

Note for Members of the Press and Public

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Recording (including by the use of social media) by the Press and Public is permitted from the public seating area provided it does not, in the opinion of the chairman, disrupt the meeting.

Scrutiny and Support Manager: Tina Gould Tel: (01785) 276148

**Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Meeting held on
23 April 2018**

Present: John Francis (Chairman)

Attendance

Syed Hussain	Paul Snape
Trevor Johnson	Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)
Jason Jones	Victoria Wilson
Kyle Robinson	Mike Worthington

Also in attendance: Matthew Ellis (Police and Crime Commissioner), County Councillor Bryan Jones (Hednesford and Rawnsley), Gareth Morgan (Chief Constable Staffordshire Police) and David Williams (Chairman, Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel)

Apologies: Natasha Pullen

PART ONE

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the Select Committee meeting held on 5 March 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 5 March 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

3. Questions to the PCC and the Chief Constable

At their 15 January 2018 Select Committee concerns were raised over a perceived rise in crime and lack of both Police Officers and/or PCSOs. After that meeting Members considered the issues within their areas and the details included in the 6 February PCC's Public Meeting. The concerns raised were included in a list of questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Chief Constable (CC). The Chairman now welcomed the CC Gareth Morgan, and the PCC Matthew Ellis, and thanked them for agreeing to address the concerns raised by Select Committee Members.

The PCC felt that most of the questions raised were operational and therefore more appropriately addressed by the Chief Constable.

Before addressing these questions the Chief Constable informed Members that the responses needed to be seen in the current context that there were 27% less police officers in 2018 than in 2010. The PCC reminded Members that since 2013 the loss of police officers had been less and that an extra 70 new police officers were being introduced. However the Chief Constable wished Members to note that there were

currently a quarter less police officers than in 2010 and felt that to judge policing on visibility was unfair and didn't take account of the many other areas of work they necessarily undertake.

The questions were then taken in turn and answered by the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner as follows:

Contact Services

Call Handling - why has there been a decrease in the number of non-emergency calls?

Answer: There were a range of reasons for this, but most likely as a result of call back arrangements for 101 calls, which reduced the numbers of repeat 101 calls and consequently gave a reduction in 101 calls.

Emergency 999 calls - 1.2% of emergency 999 calls were recorded as having been abandoned and Members requested an explanation of what 1.2% represented in figures.

Answer: 1.2% represented 1860 calls a year.

101 calls - what percentages of 101 calls were abandoned and, of this total, Members asked how many were re-contacted using the Netcall system.

Answer: This was 8.6% which equated to 30,000 calls a year.

Incident Resources (where officers had attended) – changes had been made to the Forces' graded response system and Members asked what these changes were.

Answer: The change referred to the establishment of a resolution centre.

Overall Crime Performance

Other Theft – 22% of all crime was from "other theft" which showed there had been increases in all Borough Councils except East Staffordshire. Members asked for clarification on the reasons for this.

Answer: The figures were a snapshot at that time. In East Staffordshire the figure primarily related to shop lifting where better working relationships had been established with retailers and targeted work undertaken to tackle prolific offenders.

Acquisitive Crime – Members asked what was being done to address the increase in acquisitive and violent crime.

Answer: Staffordshire was in line with the rest of the Country in this increase. This was mainly due to changes to the way in which crimes were recorded and therefore a technical issue. However there was also an increase in confidence in reporting crime. There were some real time increases of violent and acquisitive crimes, with some of this relating to issues around drugs and alcohol.

Violence against the Person - figures indicated a sharp increase in violence against the person and Members asked the reasons contributing to this rise and how this would be tackled.

Answer: Interestingly nearly 50% of these crimes related to on-line offending, with much of this being around on-line threatening behaviour. The challenges presented by this relatively new on-line offence were recognised. There was also an increase in the number of domestic abuse cases which evidenced the growing confidence in reporting such offences.

Public Order - there had been a rise in anti-social behaviour of 33% and Members asked what was being done to tackle this.

Answer: This rise largely related to changes in methods of recording, where as previously one offence was recorded and any subsequent related incidents were included as "sub-matters" to the original offence, each separate incident now had to be recorded as a new crime.

Drug related ASB – Members asked if there had been a reduction in stop and search and if there had been fewer arrests as a result.

Answer: There was a national conversation taking place around Stop and Search. The Chief Constable had gone on record to say he was happy with the appropriate use of Stop and Search. Records and video footage was vital in evidencing this. The PCC explained that this work combined with that of the Safe and Able Panels, working well in Staffordshire. Stop and Search, when done properly, was an effective tool.

Body Cams

As there had been less police assaults since the introduction of body cams from the 12 month period following their introduction to the previous 12 months and similarly, more guilty pleas compared to the previous 12 months, Members asked if a cost benefit analysis been done in regard to their use.

Answer: The Chief Constable was looking to build an evidence base on this. The use of body cams was a personal issue for all officers in Staffordshire. They were expected to utilise these when using Stop and Search and they were also used in training. Their use had seen a reduction in the number of complaints against officers. Equally officers were aware their behaviour was being recorded. This was a very positive and well utilised tool in Staffordshire. The PCC indicated that he had introduced these in 2013 following a pilot two years before. The trigger for this had been the number of complaints made against the Police by individuals who were being arrested. The use of body cams had seen a dramatic reduction in such complaints.

Visibility

Members were aware that there were concerns regarding police visibility in Staffordshire. And asked the Chief Constable how he would define 'visibility'.

Answer: The definition came from data uplift from personal radios of both PCSOs and Police Officers that showed they were away from the station. From this there was a variation of visibility from 55% to 70%. However where witness statements were taken,

or members of the public seen, these invariably happened in the Station. Efforts were continually made to use officer time better, including effective use of technology such as the use of tablets to enable Officers to complete paperwork whilst away from the Station (although this was also dependent on radio coverage availability).

The Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel, Mr David Williams, felt there was a perception problem with regard to community policing. There were many different types of crime and some of these necessitated the Officers working from the Station rather than in the community.

Members asked for the number of police officers employed on neighbourhood policing.

Answer: 220 Police Officers were currently on neighbourhood policing. In June/July this year there would be an uplift to 270. Over the next three years there was a move to have 340 Police Officers working on neighbourhood policing. There were also 240 PCSOs and further police staff supporting this work. There were now 10 neighbourhood teams to cover each of the district/boroughs, with two in Stoke-on-Trent. Each team was headed by a Chief Inspector and a Sergeant. There were 240 Community Support Officers and 20 investigating officers.

Members asked for the number of police engaged in response policing.

Answer: Currently there were 700 Police Officers working on 24/7 emergency response policing. To accommodate the increase in neighbourhood policing there would necessarily be a reduction in other areas. There will be a reduction to 350 emergency response officers going forward. Non-emergency response does not need 24/7 emergency officer support and with changes to the type and number of emergency response calls this would be a more appropriate deployment.

Members asked what was being done to reduce bureaucracy.

Answer: Much of the bureaucracy was outside of the Chief Constable's control. However there was an increasing move towards online reporting which helped, as well as a move to streamline supervisory structures to help in its reduction.

PCSO powers

Members asked what powers PCSO's had in regard to the issue of fixed penalty tickets for parking offences and whether he would reconsider reinstating the traffic powers that were taken away from the PCSOs as Members felt this affected the credibility of the police to act.

Answer: The Chief Constable confirmed that PCSOs no longer had powers to issue fixed penalty fines and he was comfortable with this and had no plans to re-instate the use of these traffic powers as he felt their focus was better elsewhere.

Police Staffing

Members asked the number of officers who were fully restricted and what actions were being taking to address welfare/get those officers back to front line duties.

Answer: There were currently 51 officers on restricted duties. The restrictions were normally health related. 35 officers were on limited restrictions and 16 were restricted but with no limit on what they did. Staffordshire Police had a good occupational health team and it was important to support and manage colleagues through difficult health issues. A new People Strategy was also being developed to look at staff wellbeing.

Members asked for clarification over the special constabulary establishment and the recruitment process.

Answer: There were currently 290 Special Constables. Testing had in fact taken place this week of a further 16 and a new senior leadership team was being recruited.

Mutual Aid

Members asked if enough officers were trained to provide mutual aid and how often they had been deployed to offer mutual aid to other forces.

Answer: Mutual aid was a requirement placed on all 43 Chief Constables to help deal with national and local emergencies. This could also include mutual aid for pre-planned events. The Chief Constable offered to send details of mutual aid deployment after the meeting. In essence Staffordshire was a net donor of mutual aid. 2017 had been an exceptional year for mutual aid in the UK, particularly following the Manchester terrorism incidents.

Members sought assurance that enough police officers were left behind to deal with day to day operations during incidents of mutual aid deployment.

Answer: The Chief Constable was comfortable that enough officers were left behind to deal with day to day operations.

Members asked whether the Force had been reimbursed with the cost of delivering mutual aid and whether Staffordshire had requested mutual aid and the cost to us.

Answer: The costing model for mutual aid was nationally agreed and coordinated.

Cross Border Crime

Members asked how cross-border crime was dealt with.

Answer: Staffordshire made a contribution to the work of the Regional Organised Crime arrangements, including cross boarder burglary. As with other Counties Staffordshire had an issue with cuckooing, where vulnerable individuals were targeted and their homes used for illegal activity which was often cross border. Staffordshire had close working relationships with forces in the Midlands, East Midlands and North West.

Motorway Policing

Members asked if Staffordshire intended to remain in the Central Motorway Patrol Group and if there were any plans to work with neighbouring forces to share resources. Answer: Three forces had collaborated on this, these being West Mercia, West Midlands and Staffordshire. However, West Mercia had now withdrawn. Staffordshire had no plans to withdraw. In fact policing and road safety on the motorway was being extended to the strategic road network, including the A500.

Crewing of Police Vehicles

Members sought clarification on the policy and justification for single crewing police vehicles and asked if this was having an impact on officer safety.

Answer: The Chief Constable felt it was clear that not every response required a double crew just as it would be inappropriate for all responses to be single crew. It depended very much on the nature of the response required which experienced control room staff should be able to make a judgement on. Emergency responses were primarily double crews, however all responses would depend on the variables of the time of day, the place and the type of call.

Local issue

Specifically what resources were being put in to Police Mill Green in Cannock, this query was as a result of concerns regarding an increase in thefts.

Answer: A range of developments were in place in Mill Green. These included proactive consideration of appropriate resources for the new development. This was one of a number of developments currently being considered.

The PCC informed Members that he had been in talks with all local council leaders to request the addition of a sum for policing to any new development as part of planning applications. All council leaders had declined.

The Chief Constable informed Members that he undertook work with developers around crime prevention for any new developments. Where such new building developments were completed, on average this would result in an up-lift of between 12-17 calls a day.

The PCC informed Members that once the work on Fire had concluded there would be savings to be made on elements of that service. These savings had not yet been allocated but some of those savings may be redirected.

Members were informed that whilst there would be more neighbourhood police officers following the proposed changes, the nature of the work they do would necessarily change. A large proportion of their work was expected to be around early intervention, working with partners to help prevent crime. There would also be a focus on offender management and visibility in communities.

Members asked whether there was any expectation of extending PCSO powers to enable them to take witness statements.

Answer: The Chief Constable felt that PCSOs and Police Officers had a very different role to play. PCSOs did provide statements in cases where they were acting as a witness, but they were not trained to take witness statements generally. However police staff investigators were able to take statements.

Members reiterated their concerns over the increase in inconsiderate parking and their wish for PCSO powers to be extended to include the issue of fixed penalty fines. Whilst understanding the Chief Constables' earlier answer Members remained concerned at the disruption and safety concerns created by poor parking. They also felt strongly that the role of the PCSO was undermined without this power and created a credibility issue for

them. They also had concerns that Local Authorities (LAs) had powers limited to parking on yellow lines, which failed to account for the majority of inappropriate parking. However whilst the Chief Constable understood these arguments he felt that he didn't have the resources to prioritise parking. He also felt that PCSOs had an education role around parking and closer working with partners to combat this rather than an enforcement role.

The PCC informed Members that two years ago cross agency work had been undertaken with PCSOs linking with schools over this issue. This work had been very helpful. However it was important to consider parking availability in any school development. He also informed the Committee that he had used his People Power Fund to develop parking availability where pockets of land were available as drop off points near schools.

Members asked whether PCSOs could be reassigned where necessary from shopping centres to streets within hard to reach communities.

Answer: The Chief Constable informed Members that PCSO assignment was intelligence led, with a need to ensure that resources were deployed where they were most needed.

The Chief Constable also reminded Members that the incidence and types of crime had changed considerably over the past five years. In particular he informed Members that the incidents of serious sexual assault and rape had increased significantly, from less than 900 to 4,000. Whilst much of this was due to increased confidence in reporting, each incident took a large amount of resource and time to deal with.

One Member commended the PCC for his use of funding to support Youth Zone which had resulted in a reduction of crime in the Newcastle area.

Members also asked what type of response residents should expect from reporting a burglary.

Answer: This would depend on whether it was a crime in action, where the response should be immediate, or reported after the event, where the response should be within hours rather than days. Depending on the nature of the burglary it may be that the most appropriate first response would be from a forensic officer. The Chief Constable accepted that at the moment non-emergency calls took too long to answer. There was work to be done on recognising priorities to response and ensure early contact.

Members had heard of examples where extra funding had been made available from borough/district, town or parish councils towards extra PCSO provision and asked whether this was something that could be considered in Staffordshire.

Answer: The PCC explained that it became complicated when funding was provided from different organisation and post-code policing would not be equitable.

Members asked what consideration was being given to widen communication with the general public to help avoid misperceptions of policing in Staffordshire.

Answer: The Chief Constable informed the Select Committee that a wide range of communication channels were used, including open Facebook sessions where he answered questions directly from the general public. Local Policing Commanders also attended a variety of events and meetings to highlight the work of local forces. There is a continuing commitment to raise the profile and improve communication; however this needed to be balanced with the resources available.

The Chairman thanked both the Chief Constable and the PCC for attending the meeting and answering the questions so frankly and in such detail.

RESOLVED – That the discussions with the Chief Constable and the PCC be noted and that details of mutual aid deployment be circulated to Members after the meeting.

4. Work Programme

The Scrutiny and Support Manager informed Members that their 8 June meeting would look at Child Sexual Exploitation and an update on the Children's Centres following a review in 2014.

Members also received an update on the work of the two ongoing review groups from their Chairman:

- Elective Home Education (EHE): Mr Paul Snape, Review Group Chairman, informed Members that after a considerable amount of work the Review Group was now putting together its report and would meet again shortly to agree the body of the report and draw together their conclusions and recommendations. He thanked all those involved who had assisted with this work, including the EHE parents, head teachers, advisors and SCC Officers who had taken the time to share their knowledge and experience;
- Edge of Care: Mr Conor Wileman, Inquiry Chairman, updated Members on progress with the Inquiry into children on the edge of the care system and work undertaken to safely avoid them coming into the system. Whilst a considerable amount of work had been undertaken, more evidence was needed before the analysis could be completed. The headline so far from this work was that Staffordshire do extremely well to prevent our children coming into the care system, with many initiatives developed to ensure children are able to stay safely in their home environment. He thanked all those who had given their time to inform the work of the Inquiry. The Group will meet again soon to discuss their final report and recommendations.

The Select Committee Chairman thanked the Members and Chairmen involved in these reviews.

RESOLVED – That the update on the work programme and progress with the review/inquiry group work be noted.

Chairman

Children's Centre's Position Statement

INTRODUCTION

Every Local Authority in England is required to deliver Children's Centres. Staffordshire has 11 children's centres and is delivering a unique model. We operate the buildings themselves, but fundamentally the model of working is about the delivery of integrated working around the family through greater collaboration across a partnership to meet the needs of families and their young children more effectively.

We have worked hard over the last three years to deliver this new model of working and there have been significant improvements most notably;

- More families in Staffordshire are accessing children's centres and the services available both from the centre, within the community and in the family home.
- Governance within Newcastle, East Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands has improved significantly and is operating effectively offering both support and challenge to deliver more effective outcomes for families locally.
- Over 140 volunteers have been recruited and supported the centre's through the delivery of administration support, community communicators, administration support, data collection, caretaking, event planning and marketing.
- The quality of the district and borough is reviewed annually, we do this using Ofsted grades and all have increased to good and requires improvement.
- The Good Level of development in Staffordshire continues to rise and is above the national average where the majority of children are now starting school ready to learn with 75% achieving a Good Level of Development.

CONTEXT

Cabinet agreed to establish a new, integrated approach to early years in Staffordshire on 21st January 2015. This was based on a reconfiguration of the previous commissioning approach to meet the needs of Staffordshire's most vulnerable families through integrated early intervention, whilst working more effectively with partners to raise aspirations for all families and to give their child the best start in life by ensuring communities have the skills and resilience needed.

This was informed by a stakeholder engagement exercise and full public consultation, as well as a report from the Safe and Strong Communities Committee exploring issues in each district relating to the previous approach.

Following on from Cabinet approval, a programme of work has been undertaken in order to reconfigure the approach. This report sets out the progress to date of this work, and the next steps moving forward for consideration by the Committee.

Ensuring that there are sufficient Children's Centres is a statutory duty and aim to deliver improved outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in: child development and school readiness. This needs to be supported by improved: parenting aspirations, self-esteem, parenting skills and child and family health and life chances.

They were developed to be a way of the partnership delivering a coordinated approach to families in the earliest years and as such there are strong links between this area of work and the Building Resilient Families and Communities programme.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

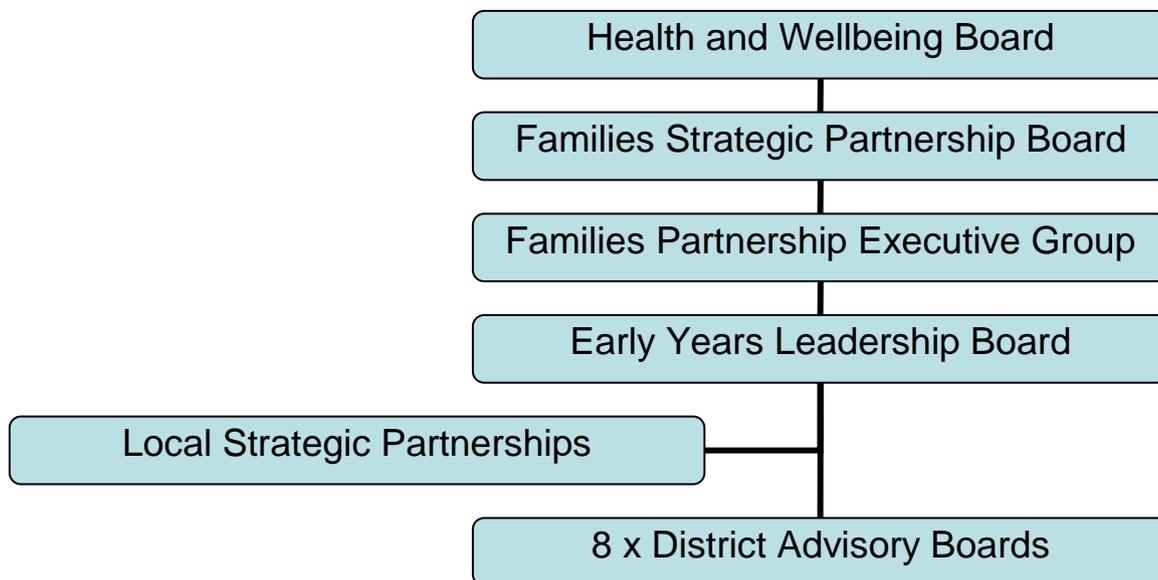
Best Start has set out a clear vision to ensure Staffordshire's children have the best start in life, by improving outcomes for young children and their families with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families in order to reduce inequalities in; child development and school readiness, supported by improving; parenting aspiration, self-esteem and parenting skills and child and family health and life chances.

The Children's Centres have a governance board within each of the eight districts and a countywide board to oversee the district developments. These boards have specific terms of reference and have oversight for the delivery. The board's membership has to ensure that links between the district and county boards are good to ensure communication and progress is achieved. They oversee a development plan that ensures the effective delivery and continuing improvement outcomes for families and their youngest children.

The county and district board interfaces with the Families Strategic Partnership arrangements (illustrated in the diagram below). In September 2015, the Families Strategic Partnership Board (FSPB) agreed to lead on:

- Setting the strategic direction and vision around children, young people and families.
- Championing a culture of working together in partnership around the needs of the child and their family/ carers.

The other role of the FSPB is leading on system co-ordination and integration, collaborative commissioning and early intervention and prevention.



In addition, the FSPB will be key in delivering the following H&WBB priorities:

- **Starting Well:** give every child the best start possible to reduce health and wellbeing inequalities.
- **Growing Well:** children, young people and adults who are supported to reach their potential can have greater control over their lives and their health and wellbeing.
- **Living Well:** children, young people and adults are making good lifestyle choices.

The early years county and district boards are key in delivering the 'starting well' priority so the closer alignment to the families partnership arrangements will further enhance partnership working.

Working with partners via the governance board and in developing the Best Start Pathway has enabled us to better understand and respond to any gaps which the Children's Centre should seek to deliver. Currently two services are commissioned across Staffordshire to address these areas these are Early Years Coordination Service and the Family Support Service. Further information can be viewed in Appendix 1.

HOW MANY FAMILIES ACCESS SERVICES?

We look at how many families engage in the early years offer. This allows us to compare our performance with other centres and understand the general trends. The table below outlines the population, the engagement by all children and those who we consider to be most in need.

District	0-5 years Population			% 0-5 years engaged in services				% 0-5 years engaged in services from the most deprived communities (0-30% LSOA's)			
	Mid 2014	Mid 2015	Mid 2016	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	% Reach Change 2014/15 to 2016/17	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	% Reach Change 0-30% LSOA's 2014/15 to 2016/17
Cannock Chase	5,711	5,582	5,465	47%	62.5%	66.4%	19.4%	46.4%	73.0%	68.1%	21.7%
East Staffordshire	7,297	7,306	7,405	39%	52.8%	59.7%	20.7%	46.1%	71.7%	72.6%	26.5%
Lichfield	5,208	5,201	5,071	39%	53.5%	60.4%	21.4%	53.4%	89.9%	70.2%	16.8%
Newcastle	6,359	6,481	6,319	45%	69.0%	72.7%	27.7%	49.6%	75.4%	86.4%	36.8%
South Staffordshire	4,994	5,004	4,987	39%	46.5%	50.0%	11%	50.9%	67.2%	77.1%	26.2%
Stafford	6,627	6,569	6,722	39%	55.2%	56.7%	17.7%	49.5%	73.5%	76.9%	27.4%
Staffs Moorlands	4,573	4,480	4,323	45%	55.2%	62.8%	17.8%	51.6%	59.9%	88.3%	36.7%
Tamworth	4,850	4,721	4,683	44%	65.6%	73.8%	29.8%	45.5%	69.5%	76.7%	31.2%
Staffordshire	45,619	45,344	44,975	42%	57.6%	62.7%	20.7%	48.0%	71.8%	76.3%	28.3%

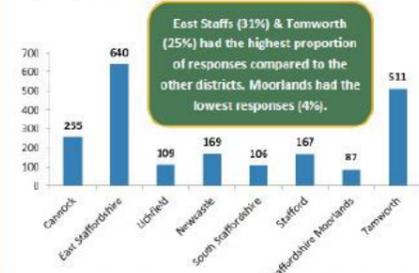
All areas access has increased since 2015 despite the number of centres reducing. This means there are more people making use of early years services in 2017. Currently there are five districts/boroughs in the outstanding range (using Ofsted grade descriptions) with the highest overall reach being Tamworth at 73.8%.

WHAT PARENTS TELL US

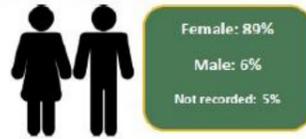


County Children's Centre's Annual Satisfaction Survey Results

During the time the survey was run (January 2017 - December 2017) a total of **2044** responses were collated

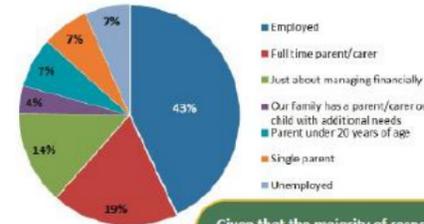


The responses split by gender across the county indicated that the majority of individuals who completed the survey were female



57% of Families/Individuals confirmed they use the Children's Centre either **Very Frequently (42%)** or **Fairly Frequently (15%)**, with a further 26% confirming they use the Children's Centre **Occasionally**.

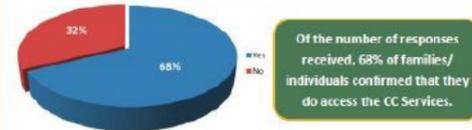
The below chart represents the percentage of the total number of responses recorded by **Circumstance**. It's worth noting that an increased number of total responses (2339) were recorded for this category. This may indicate that more than one response (from the below) was recorded per individual/family.



Given that the majority of responses came from individuals or families who were employed could indicate that the children's centres are being used as a childcare resource in order to balance the work/home life of the individuals using them.

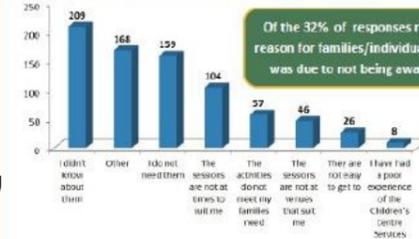
According to the results gathered, the main reason for Families/Individuals attending the Children's Centres was to **meet other parents/children (35%)**. 18% stated they attended to **support their children from a development and interaction perspective**. 17% indicated they attended to **learn new skills**.

The chart below shows the percentage of families/individuals who confirmed that they accessed Children's Centre Services.



Of the number of responses received, 68% of families/individuals confirmed that they do access the CC Services.

The chart below shows the reasons the families/individuals did not access Children's Centre Services.



Of the 32% of responses received, the most common reason for families/individuals not accessing the services was due to not being aware of the services existing.

96% of individuals who responded are satisfied with the services that are on offer at the Children's Centres countywide.

95% of families/individuals felt they had enough info, advice and guidance to help their family.

57% of families/individuals found out about the Children's Centres and the services via a Midwife or a Health Visitor.



The majority of families/individuals discovered the children's centres and the services on offer via Midwife (32%) or Health Visitor (25%). 17% were made aware by a Family member or Friend, where a further 11% found out via a form of social media.



County Children's Centre's Annual Satisfaction Survey Results

The results of the survey (Countywide) indicate that the majority of responses came from female individuals (89%), rather than male individuals (6%). The remaining 5% of the results, the gender was not recorded.

43% of the individuals who responded at the time were employed in some capacity, however it is not specified whether this is full time or part time employment. Only 7% of the individuals who responded at the time were not in employment.

14% of the individuals who responded at the time indicated that they were just about managing financially.

19% of the individuals who responded at the time were either a full time parent or full time carer.

7% of the individuals who responded at the time were a single parent.

7% of the individuals who responded at the time were a parent under 20 years of age.

4% of the individuals who responded at the time indicated that their family had a parent/carer or child with additional needs.

From this we can see the majority of the individuals who responded to the survey (countywide) were in full time employment at the time the survey was carried out. This could be a potential indication that the children's centres are being used as a childcare resource in order to balance the work/home life of the individuals using them.

68% of the individuals who responded confirmed they accessed the children's centre services which are on offer.

The main reasons for not accessing the children's centre services included:

Not knowing about what was on offer at the children's centre (27%).

Didn't need the services which were on offer (21%).

Not at suitable times (13%).

Other (39%)

There may be some scope here for some wider communications to go out regarding the children's centres and what they can offer families.

57% of the individuals indicated they had learned about the children's centres from either Midwives or Health visitors. Whereas 17% learned about the children's centre from a family friend. Only 4% of the individuals learned of the children's centres through the Staffordshire County Council website. Again there may be some scope here to carry out an exercise to divert more people to the website OR given that it is one of the lower accessed options, maybe focus the resource on one of the more popular areas instead.

42% of the individuals who responded confirmed they use the Children's Centre very frequently. Combine that with the 15% who visit fairly frequently this means the Children's Centres are being regularly accessed across the county.

35% of the individuals who responded confirmed the main reason they started using the children's centres was to meet other parents and children, giving them a more encouraging social life. A further 17% indicated they attended was to learn new skills. 18% indicated their attendance was to support their own child or children.

58% of individuals who responded rated the services available in the children's centre as Excellent or Good. However 26% rated the services as poor. Some of the comments received indicated that there is sometimes a lack of communication when sessions get cancelled, meaning parents would turn up to a session only to find out it's been cancelled. There were also comments about how there should be more of certain sessions as the individuals who attend don't feel as though the number of sessions is enough.

In terms of being involved in shaping the Children's Centre, 49% of individuals who responded confirmed that questionnaires would be the way they would like to be interacted with. 31% said they would rather help shape the children's centres via Parent forums. There is a strong cohort of parents who would like to be involved in shaping children's centres going forwards.

LOCAL PRIORITIES

District	Target Groups 2017 to 2018	Priorities 2017 to 2018	Strengths	Areas For Improvement
Cannock	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Families eligible for the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme with a child under 5 years. 2. Children who are identified in need of additional support through the 2 year integrated review. 3. Families with a Child In Need under 5 years. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decrease reception age obesity in Cannock North & Cannock South from 42.5% to 35% by April 2020. 2. Increase the attendance of families from the 0-30% Lower Super Output Areas from 68.1% to 72% by April 2019. 3. Ensure that 90% children who are identified in need of additional help and support via their 2 year old check are supported through professionals sharing information by 1st April 2020 4. Ensure that tracking systems effectively demonstrates the impact made by 1st April 2019 5. Pathway of services available to support families with young children is developed and implemented by the partnership by April 2019. 6. Increase the number of families actively engaged through the question of the month from 85 per month to 150 per month by April 2019. 7. Increase the proportion of targeted families who actively volunteer with the children's centre and wider community from 0 to 10 by 1st April 2019. 8. Increase the proportion of targeted families who are accessing training and vocational courses by 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannock District has developed an excellent partnership approach, for example with Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (Grow up Great), Library Service and West Chadsmoor Family Centre. A joint membership is now in place between these services. • Other examples are: LST hold weekly parenting sessions within the Children's Centre and additional sessions are to be delivered at Western Springs in the near future. Courses have been mapped out for the next 12 months between the District Lead, Family Support, Children's Centre and ACL provider to ensure there is no duplication or gaps in provision. Early Years Coordinator also meets monthly for Tier 2 Triage. LST & SSU have access to a children's centre noticeboard within their place of work at Springvale to enable instant access of information. One of the LST led stay and play sessions will become led by the parents as an exit strategy from the service. • Cannock District offers a wide range of activities with around 40 sessions consisting of voluntary run groups, private providers and other non- commissioned providers such as health and DWP. • Promotion of our services proves popular via our Facebook page. Over the last 28 days we have reached 6,327 people and post engagements of 2,416. • Support and funding from County Counsellors has enabled the district to address some of our priorities such as obesity and increasing attendance from 0-30% areas. The funding was used to develop information packs using the Grow up Great/County Council branding which contains a variety of information to support the priorities such as breastfeeding, healthy recipes for weaning, contact details for HV Hub and clinics, Staffordshire Healthy Hub. In addition the funding sourced free passes for postnatal exercise class, parent & toddler swim sessions and free were available throughout the month of March. Fresh fruit and veg boxes were also available to Think 2 families along with weaning recipes. Two targeted events were held in Cannock North and South to promote healthy lifestyles. A wide range of partners supported this with involvement from Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, Health Visitors, Library Service, West Chadsmoor Family Centre, SCYVs, Special Needs Adventure Playground and Family Support. The idea was to encourage families of under 5's to who do not access and engage in services. • 0-30% reach has risen from 61.6% in Quarter 3 to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals sharing information for children identified as requiring additional support remains a priority for 2018 to 2019. Discussions are taking place with Entrust, Health Visitors and the Early Years Coordinator to progress this. . • We need to ensure that we support our voluntary and private led sessions to deliver a good service to maximise the outcomes for families. • Pathway of services is taking shape through the Grow up Great Website which is a central point of information for families of under 5's in the district. This includes information from Health Visitors and Family Support. This is working progress and through the placed based approach we hope to extend the website to meet the needs of the district. In addition localised pathways are being developed through this partnership which supports professionals and families to understand what support is available to access independently or by referral. • is everyone clear about the plan? It's too early at this stage to measure any impact. A well-coordinated plan is required to make this work. It's a huge task just to keep levels the same. • It was agreed to remove Breastfeeding as a priority in order to focus on other priorities. Levels have been the same for years and the ability to change is a difficult task with reduction in services. We need to look at other ways to support this.

			<p>70.2% in Quarter 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our volunteering programme has been successful with a total of 17 volunteers recruited since 2015. The majority of referrals have been received by DWP and Support Staffordshire. We are currently supporting 7 volunteers with 2 awaiting DBS checks. The roles vary from delivering or supporting Stay & Play Sessions, providing admin support for the centre, assisting and planning of events, promoting the centre and producing a welcoming environment. These opportunities have enabled the volunteers to grow in confidence, learn new skills and give them a purpose. For volunteers who are seeking employment this has given them the confidence and skills to seek employment. As a result 5 volunteers are now in employment 2 are participating in training, others have either left the area or have left for personal reasons. The Centre has seen a huge benefit from the support of the volunteers and value their dedication, perseverance and commitment. 	
East Staffordshire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Families with a Child In Need under 5 years. Families eligible for the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme with a child under 5 years. Families that reside in the 0-30% Lower Super Output Areas with a child under 5 years 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the 0-30% Lower Super Output Areas from 72.6% to 76% by 1st April 2019. Ensure that 90% children who have been identified as needing additional help and support via their 2 year old check are supported through professionals sharing information by 1st April 2020. Ensure that tracking system effectively demonstrates the impact made by 1st April 2019. Increase the number of children accessing Think 2 by the family's home address from 75% to 80% by 1st April 2019. Increase parent led groups from 2 to 10 by 1st April 2019. Increase the number of families benefiting from a community led group from 12 to 60 by 1st April 2019. Increase volunteering opportunities from 2 to 30 by 1st April 2019. Maintain the 80% of families that are actively involved with the decision making in the centre until 1st April 2019. Maintain high standards of leadership through the transition with the new Early Years Coordinator through robust governance arrangements and delivery against priorities set by 1st April 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A well delivered family support outreach service, through Harvey Girls that supports people and helps them to live independently. Partners recognised that the Early Years Coordination Service has provided strong leadership. This has made a huge difference to the district and partners now feel there is a clear focus and drive. Parent participation is well established and families are actively involved with decision making of the centre. 98% of people thought that the views and feedback was valued and listened to and we have a parent volunteer is now attending the Family Improvement Board. The volunteer programme is well embedded within the district. 10 volunteer groups are being delivered within the district by volunteers at no cost to Staffordshire County Council. Volunteers have now started their own support group. The volunteers have started to help change the demographic attending sessions and are starting to support their own needs within groups and the community. Some of the Children's Centre Volunteers have been nominated for an award of which one won. Partners feel that the East Staffordshire Family Improvement Board is an asset to the district. It was made up of key partners within the district who all had a common goal and aim to achieve better outcomes for families. We continually have requests from new partners to join and attend the meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think 2 up take is still low within the district and needs to remain a priority. 0-30% LSOA has dropped due to closure of Winshill due to flood damage. Integrated review has not progressed due to changes within the Health Visiting Service, this needs to be a focus next year. Steering group to be developed to explore pathways into services.
Lichfield	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Families that reside in the 0-30% Lower Super Output Areas with a child under 5 years and areas Armitage 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the Early Years reach from 64.3% to at least 70% and 0-30% Lower Super Output Areas from 80.4% to at least 85% by 1st April 2019. Develop a pathway of information sharing to ensure the PVI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017 to 2018 - Targeted reach for 0-30% = 80.4%, global reach is now majority = 64.3%. Reach targets have been increased for 2017-18 due to achieving 2016-17 targets (80% & 65%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is still work to be completed on the 2 year assessments and improving links with PVI settings and health with better integration. We have more work to do to raise the profile of the

	<p>with Handsacre, Chasetown and Summerfield wards currently showing exceptionally low outcomes at EYFS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Families eligible for the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme with a child under 5 years. Families with a Child In Need under 5 years. 	<p>sector are aware and kept updated of all services locally. To ensure all services complement one another and improve outcomes for families countywide showing evidence by 1st April 2019.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improve targeted children's GLD from current figures (72.8%, 2016) by least 12% by 1st April 2020. Ensure that 90% of children who are identified in need of additional help and support via their 2 year old check are supported through professionals sharing information for April 2020. Decrease the obesity rates from the current 13.9% in Boney Hay & Central and 13.4% in Chasetown to 9.3% by 1st April 2020. Increase breastfeeding prevalence from 36.3% to 40% by 1st April 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 volunteers have engaged within the Children's Centre Volunteer Programme. 2 volunteers have now secured permanent employment, 1 of these attributed this to the skills learnt as a result of volunteering with us. Referral based Family Support showing 100% of families reached their goals at case closure. Early Learning show positive impact on families as 79% now feel confident to support their child. GLD for 2017 at 76.3% which is higher than the Staffordshire average. We have delivered progressive adult learning courses such as an English course where attainment was good at 13 individuals. Data shows that 92% completed the course, 85% went on to do more training, 23% now volunteer and 7.7% are now back into work. The cost of running the centre is covered through income generation and therefore is free to run to SCC. Governance arrangements are well embedded and provide effective changes to drive the centres continuous improvement. DAB incorporates BRFC to improve joined up working. 	<p>Children's Centre's and create greater connectivity between partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage parent participation on FIB as current member has now left. Obesity rates have increased from 13.9% in Boney Hay to 24% and also increased in Chasetown from 13.4% to 28.4% which is higher than the national average. With a neighbouring ward Chase Terrace also now showing issues as data is showing they are at an alarming 29.2% the highest in the district.
Newcastle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Families eligible for the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme with a child under 5 years. Children under 5 in a family where Domestic Violence has been reported. Families with a Child In Need under 5 years. Families with a child under 5 who reside in Knutton & Silverdale and Holditch. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the reach for BRFC Families from 36% to 65% by 1st April 2019. Increase the access for BRFC Families from 2% to 51% by 1st April 2019. Decrease reception age children who are overweight and obese from 22% to 20% by 1st April 2020. Ensure that 90% children who are identified in need of additional help and support via their 2 year old check are supported through professionals sharing information by 1st April 2020. GLD for CIN is currently 36.8% to increase by 12% for 1st April 2020. GLD for BRFC is currently 52.0% to increase by 12% for 1st April 2020. Increase parent led groups from 1 to 5 by 1st April 2019. Increase the number of families benefiting from a community led group from 6 to 45 by 1st April 2019. Increase volunteering opportunities from 8 to 30 by 1st April 2019. Embed the Place Based approach way of working within the Children's Centre service delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Support Team Staff now have a presence within the centres which has been very beneficial. 2017 to 2018 Targeted reach for 0-30% = 86.4%, global reach is now large majority classed as outstanding = 72.7%. This shows that the services are valued by the local community. Social media continues to be a success with families using this as the main form of communication with the centres. Oral hygiene data is continuing to decrease in 2008 it was 41.5% and decreased to 31% in 2015. Maryhill Children's Centre is self-sustainable and the income generated covers the premises costs. The centre is well used by the local community, this is reflected within the 0-30% reach data for the wards around the centre= Kidsgrove 91.7%, Butt Lane 96.0% and Talke 96.0%. Contact room bookings within the centre have also increased with 3 regular bookings every week. Volunteering programme is a success, 18 volunteers have been engaged so far. The midwives being based on site at Newcastle Children's Centre has made a huge impact with awareness and attendance to sessions. Newcastle District has secured a full and varied timetable of activities at no cost to the local authority. The Family Improvement Board is well attended with a wide variety of partners engaged. This has enabled us to share good practice, create workforce development opportunities between partners. Partnerships now see the value of the centres and feedback from partners is positive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare setting assessments need to integrate so that the children most in need of support are identified and supported. Barriers have been changes to the Health Visitors contract which has resulted in a delay with this priority being progressed. Develop a process to ensure that the voluntary led and privately provided services are supported to deliver a good quality service to maximise the outcomes for families. Secure an Early Years Coordinator for Newcastle through recruitment to ensure that the good leadership and management is maintained.

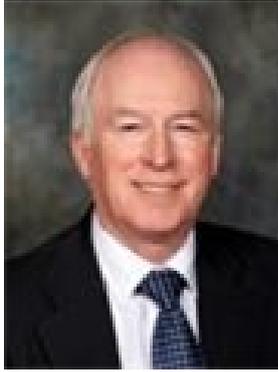
South Staffordshire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Children who are eligible for Think 2 but have not taken up their placement. Families that reside in the 0-30% Lower Super Output Areas with a child under 5 years particularly Huntington and Hatherton. Families eligible for the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme with a child under 5 years. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the 0-30% Lower Super Output Areas from 77.1% to 80% by 1st April 2019. Ensure that tracking system effectively demonstrates the impact made by 1st April 2019. To improve breastfeeding initiation and prevalence in 0-30% areas. To contribute towards improving overall obesity rates from 10.6% to 9% through work with target groups. To contribute towards improving excess weight levels from 26% to 24% through work with target groups. Increase the number of children accessing Think 2 by the families' home address from 67% to 75% by 1st April 2019. Increase parent led groups from 2 to 4 by 1st April 2019. Increase the number of families benefiting from a community led group from 10 to 30 by 1st April 2019. Increase volunteering opportunities from 2 to 10 by 1st April 2019. Improve the numbers of families actively involved in decision making process to 60% by 1st April 2019. To improve the membership of the DAB by October 2018. To have a strong DAB who can take forward the priorities of the service by October 2018. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think 2 take up has increased from 77% - 83% due to increased partner work and through the pro-active home visits. 0-30% engagement has increased each quarter in comparison to last year. Established Breast Feeding groups in two locations (Landywood and Bilbrook) to help increase support across the district. Both supported and promoted via health visitors Healthy snack and health promotion in the Children's Centre is good. Start for life information and change for life information is also promoted. Physical activity groups promote children to be active from an early age. Also dance and physical activity is now incorporated within the play and stay sessions. Currently one well established Parent Led group Comments box and feedback forms used every quarter to ensure quality of service Entrust Quality support visits have shown session planning and delivery is a particular strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and Management needs to be more focused, Family Improvement Board Members need to feel the meetings are beneficial to them Stronger links with family support and BRFC will help engage the more targeted families. Linking in the BRFC into the Family Improvement Board meetings will help this Volunteer opportunities need to be increased. More Parent led groups would prove beneficial especially in the south of the district where they are furthest away from the Children's Centre Parental engagement could be used/displayed in a better way to show users have a voice and impact Tracking needs improvement. Stronger links between families referred through LST, BRFC and Family support. Stronger links needed between settings and Health visitors around 2 year checks
Stafford	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Families eligible for the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme with a child under 5 years Families that reside in the 0-30% Lower Super Output Areas with a child under 5 years. Families with a Child In Need under 5 years. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of targeted families from the LSOAs attending services from 29.4% (2016/17) to 45% by 1st April 2019 Increase the number of regularly active volunteers, especially from target groups, from 7 to 10 by 1st April 2019 Ensure that 90% of children who are identified as in need of additional help and support via their 2 year check are supported through professionals sharing information by 1st April 2020. Improve Partner engagement in Governance by April 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large majority of target groups are registered with the centre giving them access to early childhood services, information, advice and guidance. Strategies are in place to promote early childhood services and engage families A very large majority take up free entitlement to early education. The centre is now beginning to be a hub for the community. The 'eggstravaganza' held in March attracted 53 children between the ages of 0-13years and 90 adults, the majority from the Penkside area. Parents now call in or ring for information and advice. Verbal feedback on services and Social media in particular, continue to be a success with families using these as the main form of communication. A good balance of universal and targeted services engages a large majority of families from the district. More groups have been sourced to meet the needs of parents requests. The majority of groups are being provided by private providers, parents and volunteers, at no cost to the local authority. Two volunteers engaged within the Children's Centre volunteering programme have won awards from the Pre-school Learning Alliance for their contributions at the Centre running stay and messy play sessions. These volunteers have now secured full time employment, one at a pharmacy and the other into a private sector childcare setting. The experience they gained through volunteering at the centre, rebuilding of their confidence and dealing with families helped them to achieve this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership requires improvement and is an area of focus. Assessment at age two has been identified as a priority area. Barriers have been changes to Health Visitors contract which has resulted in a delay with this priority being progressed. Further work is still required to ensure outreach work and communication with partners is embedded and is effective. Children in Need – 40% not achieving Good Levels of Development compared to 70% of peers. Provide home learning/role modelling/talking – there is a lot of evidence that this has an impact on the EYFS. BRFC data does not show how many families who do not have BRFC involvement are escalated to Tier 4 Improve partnership engagement in governance arrangements. Lost volunteers this year due to children taking up their early education entitlements; we are struggling to fill volunteer places in order to meet our priority to increase volunteers from 7 – 10 .. More involvement from our families in decision making is required– need more feedback in order to inform decisions. – looking at other ways and methods of gaining and recording feedback that is given other than from social media, which not all may have access to. Tracking needs to be more robust and carried out over a longer period of time to ensure a full picture is captured and ensure that children from target areas are reaching a GLD and parents before and after parenting programmes.

Staffordshire Moorlands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Families from 0-30% LSOA specifically Leek North, Biddulph East and Cheadle 2. Families eligible for the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme with a child under 5 years 3. Families with a Child In Need under 5 years. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase breastfeeding prevalence from 40.7% to 43% by 1st April 2020. 2. Decrease reception age children who are overweight and obese from 24.8% to 22.8% by 1st April 2020. 3. GLD for BRFC is currently 44.3% to increase by 12% for 1st April 2020. 4. GLD for EHA is currently 33.3% to increase by 12% for 1st April 2020. 5. Ensure that tracking system effectively demonstrates the impact made by 1st April 2019. 6. Ensure that 30% of families are engaging in decision making within the centre by 1st April 2019. 7. Ensure that 90% children who are identified in need of additional help and support via their 2 year old check are supported through professionals sharing information by 1st April 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial resources used effectively and efficiently. • Increase in Early Years reach from 55.2% to 62.8 % an increase of 7.2%. Majority of families are accessing children centre services. • Early years reach in 0-4 years LSOA from 59.9% to 88.3% an increase of 28.4% a very large majority. • Families in Cheadle show an increase in early years reach now in the majority at 62.8% and very large majority in 0-30% reach at 88.3% • Secured one free venue within Biddulph East and one free storage facility with a half day time slot at a venue in Biddulph East. • Secured one free venue within Cheadle at Bishop Rawle C of E for 37 hours per week. • Through supporting a community toddler group within Cheadle this has increased parental engagement with an average of 31 families attending. • Think 2 take up is at 93%. • GLD is at 77.1 % an increase of 4.1% • Breastfeeding initiation currently at 70.7% shows an increase of 8.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare setting assessments need to integrate so that the children most in need of support are identified and supported. Barriers have been changes to Health Visitors contract which has resulted in a delay with this priority being progressed. • GLD at reception age for EHA and BRFC are not meeting expected GLD. EYCO to work together with the DL to identify services that are being accessed outside of the children centre. • The voice of parents is required to filter into the governance. • Links to be renewed with organisations to better promote place based approach work for earliest help. • Need a process in place to ensure that the voluntary led and privately provided services are of good quality to maximise the outcomes for families • Beresford memorial First School Leek is no longer able to accommodate Children centre services within the Family Hub. • The EYCO service now needs to seek alternative community venues within the area for continuation of service.
Tamworth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children who are eligible for Think 2 but have not taken up their placement with a particular focus around boys. 2. Families eligible for the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme with a child under 5 years 3. Parents under the age of 21 years who need additional support. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the 0-30% Lower Super Output Areas from 76.7% to 82% by 1st April 2019. 2. Increase breastfeeding prevalence from 19.3 % to 21% by 1st April 2020. 3. Decrease childhood obesity children aged 4-5 from 10% to 8% by 1st April 2020. 4. Increase the proportion of targeted families who actively volunteer with the children's centre and wider community from 2 to 10 by 1st April 2019. 5. Increase number of active volunteers from 5 to 20 by 1st April 2019. 6. Increase parent led groups from 2 to 4 by 1st April 2019. 7. GLD for BRFC is currently 43% to increase by 12% for 1st April 2020. 8. GLD for LSOAs is currently 68.9% to increase by 12% for 1st April 2020. 9. To integrate the DAB and BRFC meeting and review board members to ensure key partners are attending by 1st April 2019. 10. Ensure that 30% of families are engaging in decision making within the centre by 1st April 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Access and Reach – Currently Reach 83.3% & 0-30% Reach 83.8%. • A variety of sessions and full timetable are offered at the centres in Tamworth, which are all non-commissioned. • Total number of volunteers this year = 10. We currently have 6 active volunteers that attend on a regular basis. • Midwives and Health Visitors have increased their usage at the centres. The midwife having more clinics 4 days a week at both centres and the Health visitor increasing the number of development clinics at the centres, this has helped to increase attendance and awareness at the centres. • Social media continues to be a success with families using this as the main form of communication with the centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrust to work with PVI setting to cascade GLD with a focus on boys and childhood obesity, so the settings can work with parents to improve GLD and childhood obesity through workshops. • PVI Settings and Health visitors to work together for completion of Assessments so that families and children most in need are identified and supported Barriers have been changes to Health Visitors contract which has resulted in a delay with this priority being progressed. • Need a process in place to ensure that the voluntary led and privately provided services are of good quality to maximise the outcomes for families. • Process needs to be in place to improve the way of working with local groups in the community. • FIB to work with other areas where there FIB is well attended to mirror for the Tamworth district to improve attendance.

NEXT STEPS

At present we are committed to the partnership plans to seek to deliver the identified priorities. However overall we have identified four key areas of work for us centrally to support this ongoing delivery, these are;

- Look at the role played by Families First and the Early Years Coordination Service. We have for the first time commissioned a countywide coordination service however what we would like to do is ensure that the support provided by Families First is maximised and working as efficiently as possible with the coordination service.
- Improve the offer to volunteers to ensure that they are well supported to maximise their time volunteering but also to ensure the effectiveness of their volunteering time.
- Conduct a deep dive to look at the Early Years Foundation Stage to assess the impact of different interventions to establish what are the interventions that are having an impact on a child's GLD. This will look at a number of areas and groups who may be potentially vulnerable.



Cabinet Meeting on 21st January 2015

Best Start

Michael Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Children and Community Safety said,

“We know the quality of a child’s development up to the age of five has a huge bearing on all aspects of the rest of their life, therefore we owe it to every child to do all we can to ensure they have the best start possible.

Most parents do a good job taking care of their children and do not need our assistance beyond help accessing the right information to make positive choices for their families. However, despite intensive effort and investment by many different agencies in recent years, we are not reaching all the young families who need us most.

We need a new approach to early years, including how we work with schools and other partners, which involves providing the right information and advice, refocusing our resources on those in need and reconfiguring how we use our Children’s Centres in future.

We are proposing to change the philosophy of how we deliver services for maximum impact to benefit those most in need of support and to ensure every Staffordshire child is safe, healthy and ready to take advantage of all that a good education has to offer.”

Report Summary

There is an overwhelming amount of evidence that shows the profound importance of the first five years of a child’s life to their emotional, social and cognitive development and their ability to do well in school and lead happy and healthy adult lives¹.

¹ Department for Education, 2012. *Supporting families in the foundation years*. <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare/early/a00192398/supporting-families-in-the-foundation-years>

¹ Allen MP, G (2011) *Early Intervention: Smart Investment, Massive Savings – The Second Independent Report to Her Majesty’s Government*

¹ Tickell, C (2011) *The Early Years: Foundations for Life, Health and Learning*. An Independent Report on the Early Years Foundation Stage to Her Majesty’s Government

¹ Munro, E (2011) *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report – A child-centred system*

¹ Marmot, Sir Michael, 2010. *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*.

Ensuring that families therefore have the opportunity to provide their children with the best start in life is critical, particularly to the development of prosperous and safe communities and making Staffordshire a great place to live.

In September 2014, Cabinet agreed to consult with residents, individuals, partners, interested organisations and other key stakeholders in order to help shape a new approach to ensuring that all young children in Staffordshire will have the opportunity to get the best start in life.

This report brings back to Cabinet for approval a summary of the findings of the 8 week consultation and the final proposals for a new approach to giving children the best start in life. The report outlines our plans which are built upon what we consider to be the key components to the best start in life and are based on an integrated model of commissioning and delivery with partners in the future. The report also makes recommendations relating to the future configuration of Children's Centre premises.

It should be noted that this phase of work contributes to the County Council's longer-term Best Start Strategy as part of the Council's Business Plan for 2015/16 and which will include the transfer of the Health Visitor commissioning responsibility to the Council in October 2015.

Should the recommendations be agreed by Cabinet then it is planned that the new arrangements will be put in place for 1 April 2015.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that Cabinet:
 - a. Endorses the content of the report and the proposal for a new way of working for under-5s in Staffordshire.
 - b. Notes the contents of the Public Consultation Report and Community Impact Assessments for each district.
 - c. Gives authority to the Director for People, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Community Safety, to take all such steps, decisions and actions as are necessary to give effect to the proposals as set out in paragraphs 25-45 of the Cabinet report.

Local Members Interest

N/A

<http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>

¹ A Cross Party Manifesto: *The 1001 Critical Days*

¹HMCIP Education, Children's Services and Skills *Early Years* Ofsted (2014)

Cabinet – 21st January 2015

Best Start

Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Children and Community Safety

2. I recommend that Cabinet:
 - a. Endorses the content of the report and the proposal for a new way of working for under-5s in Staffordshire.
 - b. Notes the contents of the Public Consultation Report and Community Impact Assessments for each district.
 - c. Gives authority to the Director for People, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Community Safety, to take all such steps, decisions and actions as are necessary to give effect to the proposals as set out in paragraphs 25-45 of the Cabinet report.

Report of the Director for People and Deputy Chief Executive

Introduction

3. Staffordshire County Council has three priority outcomes to build a better Staffordshire. These priorities are that the people of Staffordshire will:
 - a. Be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth;
 - b. Be healthier and more independent; and
 - c. Feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.
4. The first five years of every child's life are critical for positive future health and development. Evidence strongly suggests that high quality support for pregnant women and new mothers, as well as good parenting skills and growing up in a caring environment, has a profound influence on virtually all aspects of development, including educational attainment, future achievement and wellbeing. Ensuring that families are able to give their children the best start in life is fundamental to the County Council's priority outcomes.
5. At the beginning of 2014 the Commissioner for Families and Safety was asked by Cabinet to undertake a review of the efficiency and effectiveness of Children's Centres and related services. This review suggested that the current system is not functioning well and, despite considerable investment by the County Council

and its partners, we are not making enough of a difference to the lives of vulnerable families.

6. This included a first phase of engagement which commenced in April 2014 and began the conversation with communities and stakeholders as to how we can change the way we commission early years services to better serve the needs of our most vulnerable families. The findings from this exercise contributed to the development of initial proposals.
7. As a result, a report was brought to Cabinet in September 2014, suggesting a new model which includes a more integrated approach for under 5s: connecting all families to what they need in the community and bringing together our resources with those of other organisations to increase efficiency, reduce waste and improve outcomes for children and families based upon two key principles:

A quality offer for all accessed through:

- a. Information, advice and guidance
- b. Good universal services

Extra support for those who need it by providing:

- c. Effective early help for those at risk
 - d. Protection for the most vulnerable families
8. The Cabinet agreed to a full countywide public consultation taking place on these proposals running between 8th October 2014 and 3rd December 2014. It was agreed that the findings of this consultation would be used to inform a final set of proposals that would be brought back to Cabinet in January 2015. This report brings back to Cabinet:
 - a. A full and summary analysis of the findings of the county-wide consultation.
 - b. Final proposals for a new early years' delivery model, including future commissioning intentions, for approval by Cabinet.
 - c. Property proposals based upon the proposed delivery model; and
 - d. Eight Community Impact Assessments (CIAs) outlining the potential impacts on each district and proposed actions to mitigate any potentially negative implications on any particular groups.

Context:

9. There are approximately 46,099 children under five years of age living in Staffordshire today. The majority of these children will live in families that provide them with the best start in life, needing only information, advice and guidance and

access to the universal services that everyone receives such as GPs, Midwives, Health Visitors, and quality childcare, and good schools.

10. However, a small number of families need extra support. The following are some key headlines for Staffordshire:
 - a. As of the end of June 2014, 569 children under 5 were subject to a Common Assessment Framework (now termed an Early Help Assessment). There were also 1,237 under 5's with an open case with a social worker².
 - b. Between October 2013 and September 2014, on average there were 228 children under-five subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) across the County³.
 - c. Between October 2013 and September 2014, there were on 87 Looked After Children aged under-five⁴.
 - d. Analysis of Child Protection Conferences and Reviews held for under-fives between September 2013 and February 2014 identifies the top three predisposing factors as domestic violence, mental health of carer and substance misuse, including alcohol.
 - e. Despite improvements in levels of development and school readiness (an increase of 10% from 54% to 64% from 2013 to 2014) this still leaves 36% of children in the County who are not considered to be school ready by age 5.
 - f. There is also inequality, with a gap of 22 percentage point in levels of attainment between those children who are eligible for free school meals and those that are not⁵.

Legislative and Policy Drivers

11. Staffordshire County Council has a number of statutory duties regarding early years, in particular childcare, early education and safeguarding. A list of these duties can be found as Appendix A to this report. We believe that these proposals fulfil the County Council's Statutory Duties in relation to Early Years and have made a submission to the Department for Education.
12. The Government has set out its vision for early years⁶ which includes greater focus on early intervention, emphasizes the critical importance of early years in

² Staffordshire Early Years Performance Dashboard (October 2014)

³ Data obtained from Families First – 08/05/14

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Staffordshire Early Years Performance Dashboard (October 2014)

⁶ Department for Education, 2012. *Supporting families in the foundation years.*

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare/early/a00192398/sup>

the development of the child and the importance of the role of the family. Recent policy initiatives have focused on the importance of good quality childcare to enable parents to work and help to identify children's needs earlier to reduce gaps in educational attainment, the increased role of schools and the introduction of the Early Years Pupil Premium for disadvantaged families.

Ofsted

13. The Children's Centre Ofsted Framework changed significantly from April 2013 and there is now a much greater emphasis placed on the impact of children's centres on targeted young children and their families. They make three key judgments that contribute to a judgment on the overall effectiveness of the centre. The three key judgments are:
 - a. Access to services by young children and their families
 - b. The quality and impact of practice and services
 - c. The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management.
14. However, the four recent inspections of Children's Centres by Ofsted have shown that the current model of delivery is fragmented and complex and that we are not reaching those families who are in need and that there is an absence of robust performance management. Going forward local authorities will be inspected on the basis of their 'Early Years Offer' rather than individual Children's Centres.

Findings of the public consultation

15. The public consultation took place between 8th October and the 3rd December 2014. The approach undertaken was based on a consultation plan that included multiple methods, targeting different groups of interest in different ways in order to reach the widest audience and secure maximum involvement. This approach has delivered successful results, achieving a total of 1,605 responses to the survey and over 400 also engaging in a wide variety of public meetings and organised events. In addition feedback was also received via letters, emails, stakeholder meetings and social media.
16. As part of the consultation a third-party market-research company was also commissioned to determine the views of the parent population at large, in order to help ensure the views of parents who do not use children centres are reflected in the findings. A total of 400 surveys were secured through this exercise and are included in the total response of 1605.
17. Respondents almost unanimously supported the vision and priorities for the early years offer set out in the consultation, which included focusing on early help for

families that need it, ensuring children are ready for school and promoting positive parenting.

18. In terms of the proposals 32% of respondents agreed that the proposals would help to ensure that all children get the best start in life, while 36% disagreed, 24% neither agreed nor disagreed and 9% did not know.
19. Accessibility was a key concern, particularly in relation to residents of rural areas and low income families, and the need to ensure that parents who cannot travel to other venues are not isolated.
20. When asked what types of information parents of a child under 5 would need and when they would need it, comments reflected the importance of specific information at key milestones. Information, advice and guidance on raising a baby and how to cope was regarded as important, as well as information on child health over time. As children continue to grow, advice on how they could be best supported to learn and develop was critical, followed by information on preparing for and choosing a nursery or school.
21. Respondents were also asked how they would prefer to access information and advice on children and family services, with 53% stating that they would prefer to access information via the Staffordshire County Council Website. Future plans for a robust online information, advice and guidance system to signpost parents to local and universal services is a key priority for the County Council.
22. As part of the consultation the County Council engaged with Ofsted, the Department of Education, and 4Children (who are funded by the DfE to support local authorities around early years), as well as local stakeholders including Schools, SSOTP and Families First, to gauge the impact of the proposals. The DfE has written back to the Local Authority, acknowledged our proposals and indicated that if the proposals are approved then they will work with Staffordshire following the Cabinet decision to help ensure that premises continue to predominantly provide early years service.
23. Undertaking a full consultation has provided a meaningful mechanism for individuals, communities, members/scrutiny, employees, partners, interested organisations and other key stakeholders to consider and comment on the proposals prior to any decisions being made.
24. As a result we have amended the original proposals to take account of issues raised in relation to rurality and outreach support, property and premise management, which are outlined within the proposed new model.
25. A full analysis and summary report on the findings of the public consultation can be found in Appendix B.

Proposed Best Start Offer

26. Taking the consultation findings, current performance and MTFs pressures into account, it is clear that we need to make changes in order to ensure that every child in Staffordshire is being given the opportunity to get the best start in life. This needs to be in done in a way which makes best use of resources, delivers a universal offer alongside targeted support for those who need it most, and can demonstrate improved outcomes.
27. As part of its work programme Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee undertook a review into the Council's early years offer and the its findings and recommendations were endorsed by the Committee on 8 September 2014. The key recommendations, which have been taken into full account in the final proposals, included:
 - a. Creation of a clear vision and strategy for early years
 - b. A focus on empowering communities
 - c. Robust and integrated commissioning arrangements
 - d. A new framework for monitoring and evaluation
 - e. A review of Children's Centre facilities
 - f. Continued consultation with the Committee
28. As part of the consultation process we have also worked closely with partners across the Children's Strategic Partnership, including commissioners and providers, who are committed to delivering an integrated 'Best Start' offer for Staffordshire's families (See Appendix C and D).
29. As part of our contribution to that integrated offer Staffordshire County Council will:
 - a. Promote access to information, advice and guidance (IAG) to all families across Staffordshire using a combination of applications, including telephone, web links, and the Staffordshire E-Marketplace.
 - b. Ensure there are sufficient, high quality childcare places for all parents through our partnership with Entrust, and delivery of the Think 2 Programme.
 - c. Work with learning providers, including schools, to ensure that Staffordshire parents can access what they need to provide their children with early learning and family learning opportunities.
 - d. Continue to work with NHS England to manage the Health Visitor Transition programme, and ensure that all children receive development

health checks, and that vulnerable families are flagged for additional support within the new arrangements.

- e. Ensure that the use of the Early Help Assessment is embedded across Staffordshire and used appropriately to flag individual families in need of additional help before problems escalate within the new arrangements.
- f. Target support towards those families in localities of need and deliver a co-ordinated range of activities including family support, parenting programmes and early learning where our data is telling us there are significant gaps in attainment and there is high demand on the children's social care system.
- g. Continue to commission Families First to deliver assessment and support to meet the needs of complex and vulnerable young families in each district, as part of the Best Start offer.

Proposed Governance, Leadership and Management

- 30. As noted by Ofsted, the current governance arrangements for Children's Centres in Staffordshire is complex with both a County Children's Centre Board, Management Advisory Boards and Locality Groups in existence which vary in quality and attendance and appear to fulfil the same legal functions. Moving forward we need to ensure that there is a more robust governance structure engaging partners to deliver an integrated Best Start offer for Staffordshire in line with our statutory duties.
- 31. It is therefore proposed that the County Children's Centre Partnership Board is dissolved and replaced with a County Early Years Advisory Board, chaired by the Lead Member for Children, which reports into both the County Council Children's Improvement Board and the Children's Strategic Partnership, as well as linking to the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board. This Board would broaden out its agenda beyond the Children's Centre Core Purpose and include a broader range of key topics including childcare sufficiency, health visitor transition, performance, safeguarding and commissioning. Its role would be to set SMART targets and to provide challenge, support and scrutiny performance at a county level.
- 32. The existing District Management Advisory Boards should be rationalised and merged with other district forums where appropriate. This could be taken forward by the District Commissioning Leads, supported by the Commissioning Delivery Hub, to ensure it is handled effectively and that there is clarity in the terms of reference to ensure compliance with statutory duties and the Ofsted framework.
- 33. With effect from 1 April 2015 Families First would no longer be commissioned to take on the Leadership and Management role of the Children's Centre Core Purpose. The accountability would transfer to the Commissioner for Families and Safety and be delivered at an operational level by contracted providers within each district, overseen by the Commissioning Delivery Hub. Families First would

retain premise management responsibility for those buildings where this is the current arrangement.

34. The Commissioner for Families and Safety will become the accountable officer for Ofsted inspections, supported by the Commissioning Delivery Hub. In line with statutory guidance each Children's Centre will need to have a named registered Centre Leader. It is proposed that this is the commissioned District Co-ordinator on behalf of the Commissioner for Families and Safety.

Proposals in relation to efficiency savings

35. Like most Local Authorities the County Council is facing funding reductions which inevitably mean that services are asked to achieve efficiencies, and as part of the 2014/15 MTFs, a savings target of £1.5m in 2014/15 rising to £3m in 2015/16 was agreed.
36. A full review of all areas of expenditure has been undertaken and to date on-going savings of approximately £1m have been realised. The balance of savings to achieve the MTFs target for 2015/16 will be achieved through a combination of additional premises savings and a further review of services that are commissioned in order to target those Children and Families most in need. In addition, in order to deliver a more coordinated approach to the delivery of Early Years services and achieve even better value for money, it is planned to align available resources with other key early year's activity such as Think 2 and Building Resilient Families and Communities.
37. Within the new model we will continue to commission key activities, as part of our statutory duties, and we intend to commission key services using the Children's Centre Service Framework until April 2016. The priority for the Commissioner for Families will be early learning and family support, including parenting programmes. In addition, we will continue with the current arrangements for the spot purchase of co-ordination to include some premise management.
38. These changes, along with the reconfiguration of premises, aligned commissioning intentions and budgets will allow us to achieve MTFs targets for 2015/16. Moving forward, as part of the development of the overall Best Start Strategy we will seek to further align commissioning intentions with partner agencies to further develop the district offer as part of the commissioning arrangements for 2016/17.

Proposals in relation to Property

39. Our initial review showed that not enough families, including those who are most vulnerable, are accessing the facilities we are currently using to provide early years services from. There are currently 26 designated Children's Centres grouped into clusters with additional 'link sites'. We propose to reconfigure our premises in order to deliver what is required in a different way, allowing others to take on the management of the resources and releasing capacity to focus upon delivery where it is needed most.

40. These proposals are based on a rigorous analysis of indices of multiple deprivation, the number of 0-5s reached (including those in the areas of highest deprivation), the running cost, the viability of partnership working and the outcomes achieved. For a full list of the final proposals for how our buildings will be used in the early years offer moving forward see Appendix E.
41. In summary we are proposing the following changes:
 - a. In the majority of cases, schools to take on the management of facilities on their site and, subject to a transfer agreement, use the resources to support Best Start agenda and contribute to school readiness, for example through the Think 2 programme.
 - b. Retain 11 facilities as Family Hubs with a broader remit to promote integrated working and deliver the local 'Best Start' offer but aligned to the broader Building Resilient Families and Communities agenda, and provide a facility for multi-agency co-location, programme delivery and co-ordination functions.
 - c. Transfer the management of facilities within library buildings to the Culture and Library Service to use for the benefit of the community, as part of their contribution to family learning as part of our Best Start agenda.
 - d. Retain two designated Mobile Centres for deployment in rural locations to address concern raised during the consultation.
42. The 11 retained sites would provide a facility for co-located Family Teams and a venue for delivery and co-ordination functions and provide a presence in key localities, as well as meet our statutory duties in line with the Core Purpose for Children's Centres.
43. It is proposed that partners will continue to have access to the buildings, including Families First and SSOTP, although dialogue regarding access will need to be managed locally in accordance with the needs of users. Families First will continue to be resourced to manage those premises which are retained including caretaking, reception and health and safety.

Staffing

44. The County Council employ 4 staff (2.95 full time equivalent), that work within the South Staffordshire District, that are directly affected by the proposals. Subject to the decision, the proposal would have an impact on the post holders currently providing the service. If the proposal is approved by cabinet, formal consultation with relevant Trade Unions would be undertaken by the service lead, supported by HR in respect of staff employed within the establishment.

Community Impact Assessment

45. Eight Community Impact Assessments (CIAs) have been completed on the proposals outlined in this report. These assessments consider the impacts of these proposals on residents in each district and the needs based on demographic trends, in line with the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010. These reports can be found as appendix F to this report.

Next Steps

46. If approved by Cabinet, the Director for People and the Commissioner for Families will be given authority, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Children and Community Safety, to begin to work with our partners to put in place the early year's model as set out in this report.

List of Background Documents:

- Appendix A – Local Authority Statutory Duties
- Appendix B – Best Start Consultation Report
- Appendix C – Best Start Pathway Model
- Appendix D – Best Start Commissioning Plan
- Appendix E – Property Plan
- Appendix F – Community Impact Assessments

Report Commissioner:

Janene Cox, Commissioner for Tourism and the Cultural County
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Local Members' Interest

**Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee
8 June 2018**

Review of Elective Home Education

Final Report

Recommendation of the Review Group

That the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee consider the final report of the Review Group on Elective Home Education, with a view to endorsing the recommendations and agreeing its submission to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People for his for Executive Response.

Report

Report of the Scrutiny and Support Officer

Reason for recommendation

The investigation by the Review Group (which was conflated with members of both the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee and the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee) into the issue of elective home education is now complete and the Review Group has produced a final report and recommendations. The Select Committee is asked to consider the report and determine whether they endorse it for submission to the Cabinet for the provision of an Executive Response. If forwarding the report the Committee are invited to consider if they wish to make any accompanying comments.

Report

Background

The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) made a referral to both the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee and the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee in respect of their concerns over the potential vulnerability of Elective Home Education (EHE) pupils in Staffordshire. Following this referral the Chairman and Vice Chairman of both Select Committees gave consideration to whether there was value in considering this issue again after elements of EHE had been considered as part of the Children Missing Out On Education Working Group in 2014. As a result of the significant increase in EHE numbers, changes to many of the reasons for pupils becoming EHE and changes to the EHE Policy they felt a review would be beneficial.

Summary

The Review Group held an inquiry session where they met with a range of Staffordshire parents who had elected to home educate their children, as well as head teachers and officers, to help establish the level of EHE in Staffordshire and the reasons for becoming EHE, specifically why the number of those becoming EHE has risen so significantly.

The most significant rise in EHE numbers is around poor school attendance and avoiding prosecution/exclusion. The Review Group has concerns over the reasons behind this rise, which is mirrored nationally, and hopes that this report highlights their concerns whilst suggesting ways to mitigate them.

Next Steps

Subject to the endorsement of the Committee, the final report, together with any accompanying submission that the Committee may wish to make, will be submitted to Cabinet for his Executive Response.

Link to the Strategic Plan

Ensuring that Staffordshire's children and young people feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

Implications

The equalities and legal; resource and value for money; and risk implications are set out in the attached report.

Contact Officer

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Appendices/Background papers

- Final Report of the Working Group

Joint Review
by the
Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee
and the
Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee

on
Elective Home Education
(EHE)

Final Report
May 2018



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Chairman's Foreword

This review was undertaken following a referral from the Corporate Parenting Panel and an awareness of the significant increase in the number of children becoming home educated.

During our investigations we have become conscious of the incredible breadth of styles of home education as well as the differences in the reasons for becoming home educated and for children being taken out of mainstream schooling. We have been impressed by the commitment and dedication shown by the home educators we met and by the head teachers, advisors and officers who have contributed to this review.

One of the most significant concerns we identified is around the notable increase in the numbers becoming home educated as a result of poor school attendance and/or to avoid prosecution. This report sets out our methods of investigation, findings, conclusions and recommendations to mitigate the concerns identified.

I would like to pay tribute to all who have given their time to share their views and experiences with the Review Group and to the Officers who have supported us with this work. We have benefitted from their expertise and I am grateful for their involvement.



**Mr Paul Snape,
Inquiry Chairman**

1. Conclusions and Recommendations

We have been impressed by the level of commitment and dedication shown by the home educators we met. The difference in their approaches to delivering this education is extraordinary, and whilst we may find some of the more radical approaches quite alien to us, their passion for home education is remarkable. The incredible amount of time, resource and funding all the parents we met committed to home educating their children and the successes they shared with us were estimable. In fact having met these parents we have the greatest admiration for the work they undertake and are reassured by their complete commitment to ensuring the effective education of their children.

However, the numbers choosing to home educate for lifestyle/cultural/philosophical reasons, like the home educators we met, has reduced over the last three years (1.9%). At the same time the number home educating to avoid risk of prosecution as a result of poor attendance has increased significantly, seeing a 27.4% rise over the last five years. There has also been a rise in the number home educating resulting from near exclusion (1.2% increase) and from emotional or behavioural difficulties (1.6%).

Ofsted's National Director (Social Care) has indicated that for too many children and families home education is not a positive option and leads to children not receiving an effective education. And for some children, it increases the risk of harm. She went on to say that whilst Ofsted want to support the rights of those parents who enable their children to thrive through home education they also recognise that the cohort of children being educated at home is changing. The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) survey suggests that at a national level increasingly some parents allege that EHE is 'suggested' to them as an 'option' to avoid attendance fines or further exclusions. These parents invariably say they do not know what EHE entails.

Whilst we know the majority of Staffordshire schools act for the best interests of their pupils, we have heard anecdotally of parents being coerced into "choosing" to home educate to avoid prosecution and/or exclusion. We have also seen Staffordshire case studies which evidence instances where coercion has been used, and in one instance where it has been successfully challenged to re-instate the pupil. In their work with families who off-roll their children to home educate, the EHE Officer and the County Manager, Targeted Services, both shared instances where coercion had been used. In fact they were increasingly frustrated that vulnerable families were coerced into removing their children from the school roll without understanding the implications for them or their children. This academic year 39 children have been taken out of Year 11 to be home educated. This equates to 13% of all those de-registered from school roll to be home educated this academic year. There seems no logic to removing your child just before their GCSE examinations and our concerns are that schools may be encouraging this in an effort to avoid adverse league table results.

Ofsted school inspections now focus strongly on children who are not being educated in school. This includes: reasons for exclusions; action taken by the school when children are missing education; pupils taken off roll; and the quality of

education that pupils receive in alternative provision. We feel Ofsted have a key role to play in identifying children who have been coerced into home education and particularly that there needs to be a mechanism by which they take account of the number of de-registered pupils and the reasons for this. If a school has a disproportionately high number de-registered for elective home education Ofsted should be looking more closely into the reasons for this. We therefore **RECOMMEND** that the Cabinet Member supports representation being made to Ofsted with regard to the mechanism in place to take account of the reasons for de-registration and, where there is a disproportionately high number de-registering for EHE, consider more closely the reasons behind this.

Unregistered schools remain a concern, and whilst we are not aware of any unregistered schools in Staffordshire at present, we are aware that there is a need to remain vigilant to the possibility. The LA does not routinely look for unregistered schools, however they do undertake checks to establish where children are reported to be educated when they move schools. Where indications are that this education is being provided in an un-registered setting, the LA informs the appropriate regulatory bodies. We feel strongly that everyone has a role to play in this, with a responsibility to report any concerns of possible unregistered schools so that these can be appropriately checked.

We are aware of the immense work undertaken by both schools and the Gypsy/Roma/Traveler (GRT) Advisory teachers in supporting the education of children from the GRT community. We acknowledge the challenges schools face in accommodating children and young people from a community that is transient and the effects this can have on their Progress 8 figures. We would like to commend their work and the commitment they show to supporting their education. We are aware of the concerns the GRT community have around their children being included in sex education, and that proposed Government changes are expected to result in the de-registration of their children earlier than the current trend. We feel sex education is extremely important to ensure pupils are taught the knowledge and life skills they will need to stay safe and develop healthy and supportive relationships, particularly dealing with the challenges of growing up in an online world. We note that it will be mandatory for schools to teach sex education, however it is likely that parents will retain the right to withdraw their child from these lessons at secondary school. In primary schools, however, parents will not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education. Whilst supporting the importance of relationships education we find it somewhat illogical that parents will now be unable to withdraw their children from these lessons in primary schools but they are able to take their children out of the mainstream education system altogether.

We also wish to applaud both the EHE Officer and the County Manager, Targeted Services, for their dedicated work under difficult circumstances. The significant increase in EHE numbers combined with the decrease in EHE Officer numbers creates a strain on the work undertaken and the type of services they are able to offer. Despite this, proactive work has been undertaken to develop good relationships with the EHE community, gaining support from EHE providers in redrafting the EHE parental handbook and in providing staff training. Alongside this is the development of an annual event to celebrate the achievements of the EHE community. We applaud this initiative and the opportunity it presents to highlight and

celebrate successful EHE. We therefore **RECOMMEND** the Cabinet Member consider how this event can be supported and facilitated.

When it is done well we feel that EHE fits well with the Council's people helping people approach. However we feel greater resource is needed to ensure that, as a minimum, parents are offered help and support if they feel they need it. We therefore **RECOMMEND** the Cabinet Member consider how staffing can be increased in recognition of the significant increase in the numbers of EHE and the consequent implications to work load and resources.

In the report of the 2014 Select Committee Working Group on Children Missing Out on Education, Members had supported the Badman report which recommended the establishment of a compulsory national registration scheme, administered locally, for all children of statutory school age who are, or become, electively home educated. Registration of home educated children is currently part of the Private Members Bill in the House of Lords. The reasons for registration being proposed include the fact that there is no clear information on children educated at home. Better information would enable issues such as schools putting pressure on parents to home educate, or parents using home education to circumvent admissions arrangements to be better understood.

The Local Government Association "Home Education Briefing" (January 2018) to the House of Lords raised the need for additional powers suggesting there should be a "duty on parents to register home-schooled children with their local authority" to help Council's monitor their education. Whilst we are aware that the idea of a registration scheme is not supported by most of the EHE community in Staffordshire we feel strongly that such a scheme would help clarify the numbers of EHE and identify those that have found themselves home educating without necessarily understanding the implications this has for them or their children. It would also help address the worrying levels of alleged coercion that have a detrimental impact not only on those families involved but also potentially a consequential reputational impact on the more traditional EHE community. We feel registration is in everyone's best interests and hope that those who are passionate about EHE from a philosophical/life choice point of view will support this through their desire to protect the integrity of EHE. We therefore **RECOMMEND** supporting the introduction of a registration scheme for all children of statutory school age who are, or become, electively home educated and ask the Cabinet Member to make representations and lobby in support of the current Private Members Bill introduced by Lord Soley on Home Education.

Should a registration scheme be brought in we are aware that there will be significant resource implications for the LA and wish to ensure that Central Government are aware of the resource implications such a scheme will create and will provide appropriate levels of funding to enable effective delivery, including the consequential staffing resource required to "follow-up" concerns where appropriate education is not being provided.

2. Setting the Scene

The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) made a referral to both the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee and the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee in respect of their concerns over the potential vulnerability of Elective Home Education (EHE) pupils in Staffordshire.

A Working Group of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee had previously considered the issue of EHE as part of their wider review on Children Missing Out on Education (CMOOE) in 2014. This working group had been established following concerns raised by Ofsted on the number of children missing out on education across the country.

The Working Group identified concerns about the number of children who may be resident in Staffordshire but of whom the Council is unaware. There is no requirement on a parent to register their child with the local authority. However under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 a local authority must make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as they are able to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age but: a) are not registered pupils at a school, and b) are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Should parents elect to educate their child at home, or indeed to educate them through the private school system, the local authority could easily be unaware of that child's existence within the County, yet they are still legally responsible for ensuring all children resident within their borders are receiving a satisfactory education. They also have a duty to identify children not receiving an appropriate education and to address this. This presented a dichotomy for the local authority, on the one hand they respect the right of parents to choose how their child is educated whilst on the other they need to ensure all children are safe and receiving appropriate education provision and be able to evidence this.

The Graham Badman report on elective home education in England recommended the establishment of a compulsory national registration scheme, administered locally, for all children of statutory school age who are, or become, electively home educated. The CMOOE Working Group had sympathy with this recommendation. As a result the Chairman of the Working Group, Mr Martyn Tittley, wrote on their behalf to the Children's Commissioner, the Minister for Children and Families, the Secretary of State for Education and various members of her team, explaining their concerns around the need for a national registration scheme to ensure authorities were aware of the children living within their area and were able to monitor their education and welfare. Unfortunately the replies received, whilst in the most part sympathetic to the issues highlighted, did not help in addressing the concerns raised.

Following the CPP referral the Chairman and Vice Chairman of both the Prosperous Staffordshire and the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committees gave consideration to whether there was value in considering this issue again. As a result of the significant increase in EHE numbers, changes to many of the reasons for pupils becoming EHE and changes to the EHE Policy they felt a review would be beneficial.

3. Scope of the Work / Terms of Reference

The Review Group sought to identify:

- the level of EHE in Staffordshire;
- the reasons for becoming EHE and specifically why the number of those becoming EHE has risen so significantly;
- the infrastructure around managing EHE;
- the recent changes to the EHE Policy, why these changes were made and the implications they will have on the service; and
- whether there are any safeguarding issues and address the concerns raised by the CPP.

4. Membership

The following Select Committee members participated in this Review Group:

Mrs Ann Beech (Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee)
Mrs Julia Jessel (Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee)
Mr Bryan Jones (Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee)
Rev Preb Michael Metcalf (Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee)
Mr Kyle Robinson (Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee)
Mr Paul Snape (Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee)

5. Methods of Investigation

The Review Group met initially on 12 January 2018 to: establish the level of EHE in Staffordshire; the range of reasons for EHE; the changes to EHE policy; the infrastructure around monitoring EHE; and, the role Ofsted play in respect of schools and EHE.

The Review Group met again on 31 January to prepare for the inquiry. They then held the Inquiry Session on 21 March 2018 with the following representatives attending to share their expertise and experiences:

- parent representatives who choose to educate their children at home
- Jenny Dodd, EHE Officer and representative on the Association of EHE Professionals (AEHEP)
- Mr Haywood, Headteacher, St Andrew's C of E Primary School, Weston
- Mrs Hedar, Headteacher, Longford Primary Schools, Cannock
- Caroline Escott, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) Advisor
- Tim Moss, County Commissioner for School Quality Assurance and Intervention

During our investigation we also met with the following officers:

- Karl Hobson, County Manager, Targeted Services

The Review Group then met on 18 May to consider their findings.

6. Findings

EHE in Staffordshire

As part of our inquiry we wanted to understand the reasons parents elect to home educate, how they undertake this, and learn from their experiences of EHE in Staffordshire. The breadth of EHE approaches is remarkable and so we met with parents who represented very different models of EHE. We are very grateful to those parents for sharing so openly with us and for giving up so much of their time to explain their rationale and share their experiences. All those we met left us with a sense of the enormous challenge they had undertaken, the remarkable commitment they had shown, the great sense of responsibility they felt in ensuring their children received an appropriate education and their dedication to the concept of home education.

The broad spectrum of methods and philosophies to EHE of those parents we met ranged from “home schooling” to “radical schooling” or “whole life unschooling”. In the main home schooling recreates school at home, with a structured day, breadth of curriculum covered and levels of progression. The more radical approach is much less structured and supports and facilitates learning led by the child, learning through real life experiences.

The reasons these parents chose to home educate had both similarities and differences. In all cases at least one of their children had attended school and dissatisfaction with this schooling had triggered their move towards home education.

Reasons for choosing EHE included:

- concern that their child was left to “coast” and overlooked;
- ensuring the right level of understanding to any learning;
- more opportunities for learning outdoors, educational visits etc;
- no corners cut to fit in with school targets;
- no bullying;
- less distractions;
- less likely to succumb to peer pressure leading to inappropriate behaviour;
- the ability to provide 1 to 1 tuition when home educating;
- greater flexibility;
- no wasted time/teacher training days
- greater number of subjects taught, including music and languages;
- can take exams if they wish to but are not forced to;
- they are our children and therefore we have the greater personal interest in their learning;
- a lifestyle choice, enabling the family to be at the centre of all they do;
- provide a stable rock-like platform for their children whilst giving them the flexibility needed to meet their needs;
- support the development of emotional maturity;

- the parent should always be the primary educator of their children, and home education is an extension of this;
- lack of imaginative play in mainstream schooling;
- lack of real life experiences and relatable context within mainstream school learning.

A variety of very good resources were readily available on line. Whilst it often took a great deal of time to source the most appropriate resources and to plan lessons for the more traditional home schooling, these parents were committed to finding appropriate resources and taking the time to plan lessons to support effective learning.

A range of approaches also existed amongst these parents towards the type of qualification their children took. The American High School Diploma was taken in one instance. Other parents considered their children returning to school and/or college to take GCSEs or vocational qualifications as appropriate. Other parents who followed the more radical approach had children who were “divers” in that they studied one subject in depth to the exclusions of others. This gave an opportunity for them to develop expertise in that subject area and examples were shared of success achieved through this method.

All parents were aware that their children could re-join mainstream schooling at any point and three of the parents we met had one or more children who now attended a school setting. This return to a traditional school setting was for some as a result of the child’s wish to go to school, in other cases it was to enable access to examinations/qualifications and in all cases it was felt to be the right thing for the child at that particular time.

None of the parents we spoke to felt that their children had been disadvantaged socially by being home educated. All parents ensured their children were part of wider social groups through involvement in a variety of clubs and/or activities. In fact parents mostly felt that they were more sociable rather than less so, being more able to confidently socialise outside their peer group. They also felt that in general their children had a lower tolerance for unpleasantness whereas the school environment sometimes made children immune to, or accepting of, unacceptable behaviours.

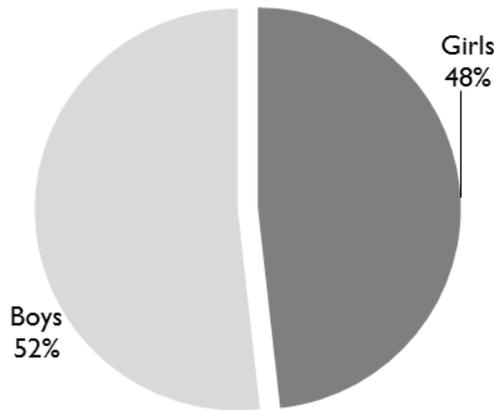
Size and scope of EHE in Staffordshire

The number of EHE in Staffordshire has risen significantly, from 258 in 2006 to 887 in 2016/17. In 2014, when the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee undertook their review of CMOOE there were 490 EHE. The number of EHE in Staffordshire has more than doubled in the last 5 years, with an increase of 15% between 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The number of Staffordshire children that are EHE represents 0.8% of the total school population. Whilst this is a small number it is an increase on the previous year and is now at the highest level since recordings began in 2005.

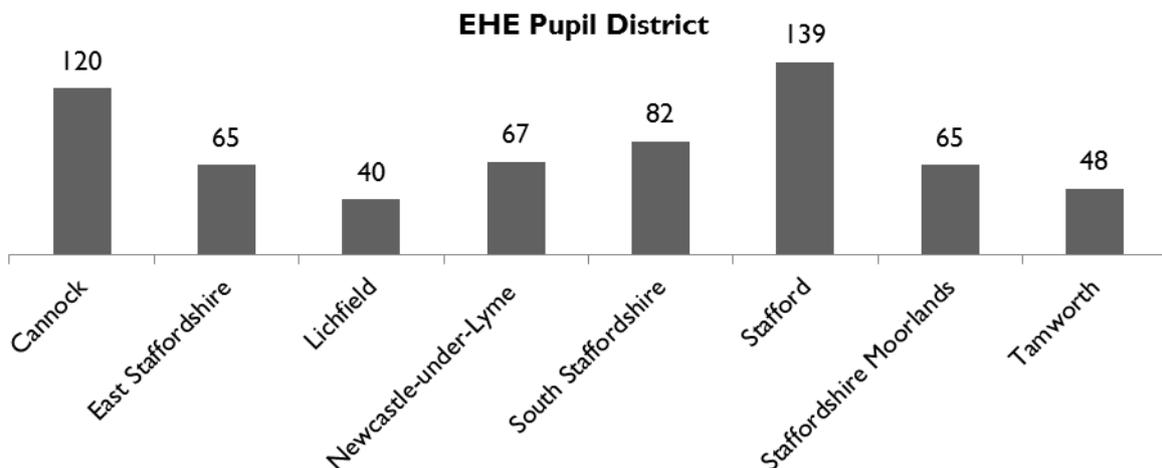
Split by gender

2016-2017



Since 2014, the number of boys in the EHE cohort is greater than the number of girls. Proportionally, there is a 3.5% difference between the numbers of boys and girls, this represents a small increase on 2015/16; however the gap between the number of boys and girls has increased by just over 1.0% since 2013/14 (2.4%).

Within the EHE cohort 626 pupils have their addresses and previous school data recorded. The district of Stafford makes up the highest proportion of EHE pupils with 22.2% (2,220 pupils per 10,000), second is Cannock with 19.2% (1,920 pupils per 10,000) and third is South Staffordshire with 13.1% (1,310 pupils per 10,000).



The majority of EHE pupils have previously been attending a Staffordshire school, with 257 Staffordshire schools attended prior to individuals choosing EHE.

Of the current EHE cohort that we are aware of, 13.6% (85 pupils) have never attended school, 3.8% (24 pupils) previously attended schools outside of Staffordshire and 2.1% (13 pupils) were previously EHE outside of Staffordshire (Coventry, Derbyshire, Hungary, Shropshire, Solihull and Wolverhampton).

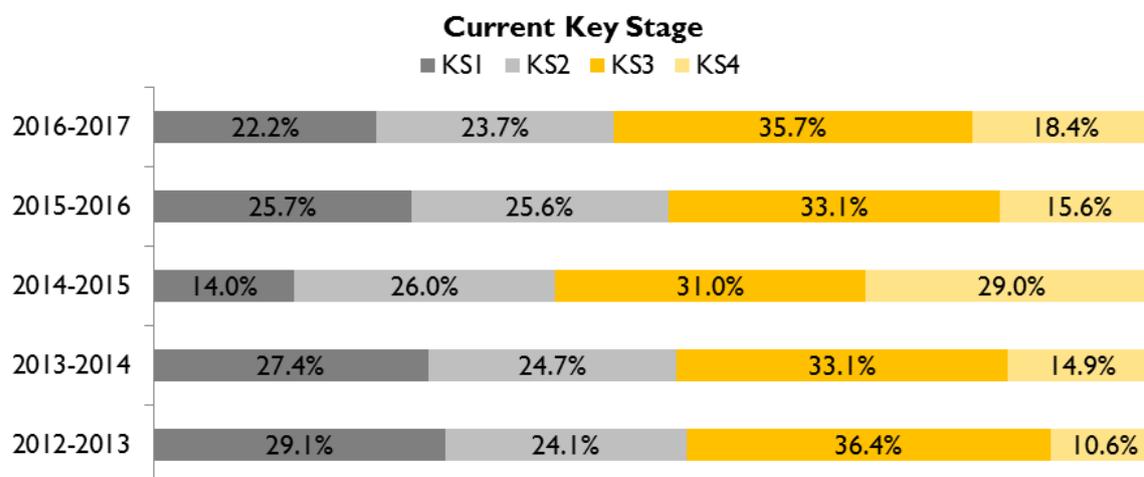
In 2017, 349 Staffordshire pupils came out of school and became electively home educated, an increase of 9 on the previous year. Of those who came out of school 173 (49.6%) were girls and 176 (50.4%) were boys.

During the year a total of 247 stopped being open to the service –

- 144 children reached the end of statutory education (46 of these children were de-registered in Year 11 in the autumn or spring of 2016/17)
- 86 children returned to school (40 girls, 46 boys)
- 14 families moved out of Staffordshire
- 2 attended EOTAS (Education other than at School)
- 1 child started attending a Pupil Referral Unit

A total of 12 referrals were made to the Children Missing Education team. This is due to the local authority not knowing the destination of the children, so in line with policy the children had to be referred so that this could be addressed.

Over the last 5 years there has been an increasing trend for children in Key Stage (KS) 3 and 4 age groups to become EHE. At the end of 2016/17 this represented 54% of the cohort. In 2016/17 there was an increase of 5.4% in the numbers of KS3 and 4 EHE from the previous year. There has also been an increase in the number of pupils first becoming EHE from both the KS3 and the KS4 age groups.



There are a number of reasons for a child to be electively home educated. The highest percentage reason is 'Risk of prosecution' as a result of poor attendance which has increased by 8.7% over the last 3 years. Other reasons of note in 2017 were 'Dissatisfaction with the school environment' (1.2% increase), 'Near exclusion' (1.2% increase) and 'Emotional and behavioural difficulties' (1.6% increase).

Both 'Lifestyle/ Cultural/ Philosophical' (1.9% reduction) and 'Religious beliefs' (2.5% reduction) represent the largest reductions from 2015/16 and these represent a long term trend over the last 3 years.

Reasons cited for EHE

Reason	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	3 yr Trend
Attendance/Prosecution	0.3%	10.2%	19.0%	24.1%	27.7%	↗
Lifestyle/Cultural/Philosophical	33.2%	28.4%	30.0%	14.9%	13.0%	↘
Awaiting Information	27.5%	30.0%	16.5%	15.3%	12.5%	↘
Dissatisfaction with School Environment	13.5%	9.2%	9.2%	8.8%	10.0%	↗
Bullying	6.3%	7.3%	8.2%	6.2%	6.4%	↘
Medical - Child	4.5%	3.5%	5.5%	5.6%	4.8%	●
Near Exclusion	0.8%	0.2%	1.1%	2.2%	3.4%	↗
Problems SEN Provision	2.4%	2.9%	2.7%	2.7%	3.0%	↗
Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	2.5%	↗
School Refuser/Phobic	1.9%	1.2%	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%	●
Not Preferred School	0.8%	1.0%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	●
Particular Talent	1.6%	1.4%	2.0%	0.5%	0.5%	↘
Racism/Homophobia	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	●
Religious Beliefs	6.6%	4.3%	3.3%	3.6%	0.1%	↘
Medical - Parent	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	●
Other	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	●

The number of EHE children as a result of bullying has seen a 2.0% decrease since 2015 but remains similar to the 2016 figure.

The National Picture

EHE has been an issue under discussion at a national level since the Badman report in 2009, which failed to bring about legislative change due in no small part to the 2010 General Election.

However EHE remains under discussion:

- following the 2014 “Trojan Horse” allegations, DfE and Ofsted created a joint team to target suspected unregistered schools. This team highlighted the complexity of the relationship between unregistered schools, education out of school settings and home education;
- in November 2017 the Children’s Commissioner published “Falling through the Gaps in Education” which highlighted the fact that little is known about home education provision and unregistered and alternative provision because this provision is not registered, inspected or regulated;
- in 2016/17 the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) undertook an EHE survey to provide an overview of the make-up and characteristics of EHE learners, to understand how LAs across the country are supporting them and gauge how resources are being deployed in this area;

- in 2018 DfE published draft guidance for LAs and parents and a call for evidence on EHE containing specific proposals (responses required by July 2018). The school system minister Lord Agnew has indicated that the DfE will strengthen the guidance for local authorities and parents on home education so that it will "help parents understand their responsibilities in delivering home education and make sure local authorities are clear on the action they can take";
- a private member's Bill introduced by Lord Soley on Home Education (Duty of Local Authorities) 2017-19 is currently being considered in the House of Lords. The Bill seeks to "Make provision for local authorities to monitor the educational, physical and emotional development of children receiving elective home education; and for connected purposes".

EHE Policy, Procedures and Resource in Staffordshire

The Staffordshire EHE Policies and Procedure document has been updated in 2018. It includes reference to the fact that Staffordshire County Council has sought to strengthen its relationship with Elective Home Educators to ensure that Staffordshire is a safe and supportive place in which to home educate your child. It sets out clearly the responsibilities of both the parents and the LA with regard to home educated young people, indicates how these procedures and practices will be reviewed and explains the process for deregistering from mainstream school.

An information booklet for parents has also been re-written with support from home educators themselves. This has been invaluable and their support in both the tone of and depth of information included is greatly appreciated. The booklet clearly explains the process to enable home education and the responsibilities of EHE.

These same Home Educators have also led training courses on EHE to LA staff, helping to broaden their understanding of EHE.

Currently there is one EHE Officer in Staffordshire. She is supported by one administrative officer. This provision has reduced from three full time EHE Officers and one administrative assistant in 2012/13, covering a cohort of just over 300 EHE children and young people. The one EHE Officer now covers a cohort of more than 887, with this figure rising each year. It is not possible for this one officer to offer the same service as that in 2012/13 when there was a greater level of resource and many less within the cohort. It becomes increasingly more challenging to visit and support the growing number of families who educate their children at home, with a move towards visiting when requested to do so by families or when concerns arise, which reduces the ability to work proactively and is far from ideal.

When compared with the resource level of other service areas, those allocated to EHE are poor. As an example, the Virtual School, which supports around 1000 children and young people, has approximately 10 members of staff. Whilst we understand that those children in the looked after system are not there out of choice and we applaud the vital work of the Virtual School in improving outcomes for these children, the difference in resource allocation between the two services is marked. It is also worth noting that Entrust felt unable to deliver the increased demands of the EHE service with the staffing resource allocated, with the EHE officer returning to the LA in April 2017.

GRT

Lifestyle/cultural reasons for becoming EHE were cited in 13% of EHE cases in 2017. Of the 13%, 88% were from the Gypsy Roma Traveller community. During our inquiry we met with head teachers from primary schools with a high GRT community and also heard from one of the GRT Advisors. Significant work was undertaken to build relationships with the GRT community and support their children through education. In the most part the two schools we heard from managed to keep their GRT pupils to the end of Year 6, although not always. The majority of GRT pupils will be EHE from Year 7 onwards, although where a middle school system exists these children will sometimes stay in mainstream education in Year 8. Good links existed between these schools and the GRT communities as well as with the GRT Advisor.

Schools have limited opportunities to show what has been achieved with these children and this can impact on a school's desire to accept the more transient children such as those from the GRT community. In particular there is an impact on the Progress 8 scores which may make some schools reluctant to take on GRT pupils.

Most GRT EHE are registered with the LA and most are happy to engage with the GRT Advisor.

There is particular concern following the recent decision by Central Government to make sex education compulsory in Year 5 and it is anticipated that this will result in a significant rise in the number of GRT pupils becoming EHE in Year 4 and/or 5. The changes are expected to come into effect from September 2019 and will include mandatory sex and relationship education in all schools, not just maintained schools. The Government has committed to retain parents' right to withdraw their child from sex education in secondary schools as currently, but not from relationships education at primary settings.

Alongside the good work of both schools and the GRT Advisor, we are aware of work within local communities and churches to support GRT communities (a Newcastle example of good community working was shared). We wish to acknowledge the benefits of such support and commend this excellent example of people helping people.

Returning to mainstream schooling from EHE

Whilst it is important to try and accommodate pupils who wish to return from EHE to mainstream schooling it also needs to be acknowledged that this has a significant impact on the school. Where EHE children do return to mainstream education a lot of work is needed to support that transition and ensure an appropriate curriculum offer. In the most part head teachers told us that those who had been EHE tended to have good general knowledge, could answer questions well and had good enquiry skills but found the more formal methodology difficult.

Schools concerns

In general those head teachers we heard from felt there were a number of concerns that could have an impact on EHE numbers. These included:

- the pressure on pupils as a result of constant testing and the consequent mental health concerns;
- the cut back in health care home visits giving less opportunity to find and identify those that need support and are unregistered;
- cut backs in the number of SEND team visits to 3 per year in schools;
- schools buckling under budget cuts and under funding.

Unregistered Schools

Currently we are not aware of any unregistered schools in Staffordshire. The LA has previously worked with both the DfE and Ofsted where there have been suspected unregistered schools in the County on two occasions. Of these, one school has since received approval to become a registered school. The second has been visited by Ofsted, with the LA being unaware of any further action being taken. This would imply that the establishment didn't meet the criteria of an unregistered school.

Should the LA become aware of a potential unregistered school, they inform both the DfE (unregistered schools department) and Ofsted. Whilst the LA doesn't routinely look for unregistered schools they do undertake checks to establish where children are reported to be being educated when they move from a school. If this indicates that education is being provided where there is no registration, the LA informs the appropriate regulatory bodies.

Ofsted's unregistered schools team continues to investigate settings across the country that may require registration as independent schools. This inevitably includes settings that are providing alternative education. The lack of a requirement for alternative providers to register unless they operate more full-time education and the lack of regulation for unregistered providers continue to be significant concerns for Ofsted.¹

In February 2018 Ofsted said that it had identified more than 350 suspected unregistered schools. (After setting up a specialist taskforce in 2016, it has failed to prosecute a single proprietor for running an unregistered school.) Ofsted believes that it currently lacks sufficient powers to close them. In response to a February BBC report on safeguarding concerns in unregistered schools, Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman says that her "hands are tied". In March 2018 she confirmed to MPs that she "would very much like to have stronger powers."

The DfE states clearly that "Unregistered schools and out-of-school settings are not the same thing." In March 2018 the Chief Ofsted Inspector suggested to MPs that, at the time when registration was deemed non-essential, "nobody really contemplated there being schools that simply would not want to comply with the law." Recently, relating to the Government Call for Evidence, and revised DfE guidance on Home Education, concerns have been "expressed by some LA staff that this (compulsory registration) could make their job of working pro-actively with the families involved more difficult. Compulsory registration carries with it the need for sanctions or penalties for non-compliance." In supporting a policy of compulsory registration

¹ "Social care commentary: hidden children - the challenges of safeguarding children who are not attending school " Ofsted's National Director, Social Care, Eleanor Schooling

consideration will need to be given to staffing, resources, and to the relationship between LAs and the home education community.

Reasons for the rise in EHE

The significant rise in the numbers of EHE in Staffordshire is mirrored nationally.

The LAs that responded to the ADCS survey indicated that over 80% of their known EHE cohort had previously attended school. General dissatisfaction with school was the most common reason for families choosing to educate their child at home. However, increasingly, some parents allege that EHE is 'suggested' to them as an 'option' to avoid attendance fines or further exclusions. These parents invariably say they do not know what EHE entails.²

For many years there has been a small group of elective home educators that choose to educate their children at home, recognize and accept the huge responsibility this involves and take up the challenge and immense work load that tackling home education requires. These parents were represented in the home educators we met, and their commitment and dedication to home educating their children was palpable. However we have seen a significant and concerning rise in the number of children becoming home educated as a direct result of poor attendance and/or to avoid exclusion or prosecution. Parents may not always understand what they are signing up for. One telling example given by an LA was of a parent persuaded by the school to educate their child at home as an alternative to exclusion. Schools are not permitted to do this. The parent's lack of understanding of what they had agreed to became apparent when they phoned the LA and asked when they (the LA) would start to provide the home education.

An example of unacceptable influence on a Year 11 pupil's parent deciding to electively home educate their child is attached at Appendix 1. This Staffordshire case study evidences one example where a parent clearly did not understand the impact on either themselves or their child of electing to home educate and would not have chosen to do so without this suggestion being both instigated and encouraged by the school. In this instance the County Manager, Targeted Services, successfully challenged the circumstances and the pupil was re-instated on a reduced time table and allowed to take his examinations.

Ofsted school inspections now focus strongly on children who are not being educated in school. This includes: reasons for exclusions; action taken by the school when children are missing education; pupils taken off roll; and the quality of education that pupils receive in alternative provision. It would be helpful if Ofsted investigate the reasons behind parents choosing to educate their child at home to help establish whether schools have influenced this decision.

The nature of senior school staff positions has changed in recent times, and this is contextually important in understanding the relationship between schools and the anecdotal cases of encouragement of EHE. The ADCS recognises how "Schools and their leaders stand and fall on their reputation." Similarly, the ADCS 2017 report

² "Social care commentary: hidden children - the challenges of safeguarding children who are not attending school " Ofsted's National Director, Social Care, Eleanor Schooling

on EHE, suggests the increase in EHE numbers, in part, “may be due to increased pressures on schools”, as well as on pupils and parents. The possible correlation here is, as suggested by the chair of the association's education achievement committee, “that rather than the school excluding them, the child is electively educated at home” – the concern here is that elective home education is being encouraged with consideration being given to school performance, to the disadvantage of the child's educational needs.

There is a growing sense of shared concern as a result of evidence suggesting that schools are involved with parents' decisions to electively home educate. The ADCS November 2017 Report stated “a concern that "suggesting", "proposing" or "promoting" EHE may increasingly be used as a strategy to move children from roll.” A following comment in February 2018 restated their concerns around “when the decision to home educate is not a well-informed, considered decision...when it is used as a cover for an informal exclusion.” Kevin Courtney, general secretary of the NUT, said in July 2017 that the rise in exclusions of questionable validity was a “concerning trend.”

The pressure that schools, and in particular senior leaders in those schools, are under around performance, inspections and league tables is understood and considered. However statements from the DfE make clear that school involvement in the decision to home educate is ultimately unacceptable. Responding to ADCS concerns in February 2018, the department spokesperson said that it was “never appropriate for a school to pressurise a parent into taking this decision”.

Community Impact

Resources and Value for Money

We have recommended extra resource into supporting EHE and to facilitate the EHE annual celebrations. We are aware of the budgetary limitations the Council currently faces but feel that it is unreasonable to continue a service which has seen more than a 66% increase in demand at the same time as seeing a staff reduction of 2 thirds.

Equalities and Legal

LAs have a statutory duty under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as they are able to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age but: a) are not registered pupils at a school, and b) are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. They also have a duty to ensure that all children receive a suitable education.

Risk

There is a risk that the Council will not meet its statutory obligations as listed above.

Climate Change

There are no climate change implications.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following officers who supported the Working Group:

- Karl Hobson, County Manager, Targeted Service;
- Helen Phillips, Scrutiny & Support Officer;
- Julie Roberts, Scrutiny & Support Officer;
- Finn Cartman-Frost, Business Support Apprentice

**County Councillor Paul Snape
Review Group Chairman
May 2018**

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List of Appendices/Background Papers

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Case Study 2018
Parent advised to Electively Home Educate their child in order to avoid
Permanent exclusion

Background papers

- Final Report of the Prosperous Staffordshire Working Group on CMOOE 2014

- <http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=868&MIId=5047&Ver=4>
- Report to the Secretary of State on the Review of Elective Home Education in England, Graham Badman, June 2009
<https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/PDF%20FINAL%20HOME%20ED.pdf>
 - “Social care commentary: hidden children - the challenges of safeguarding children who are not attending school “ Ofsted's National Director, Social Care, Eleanor Schooling
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/social-care-commentary-hidden-children-the-challenges-of-safeguarding-children-who-are-not-attending-school>
 - Home Education (Duty of Local Authorities) Bill
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2017-2019/0011/18011.pdf>
 - “Unregistered independent schools and out of school settings” Departmental advice for collaborative working between the Department for Education, Ofsted and local authorities
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/690495/La_Guidance_March_2018.pdf
 - “Out-of-school education settings” Report on the call for evidence conducted November 2015 to January 2016
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/698250/Out-of-school_education_settings-Report_on_the_call_for_evidence.pdf
 - Progress 8 and Attainment – how measures are calculated
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/561021/Progress_8_and_Attainment_8_how_measures_are_calculated.pdf
 - Sex and Relationships in Schools (England)
<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06103>
 - Policy Statement: Relationships Education, Relationships and sex Education, and Personal Social, Health and Economic Education

Appendix 1

Case Study 2018

Parent advised to Electively Home Educate (EHE) their child in order to avoid Permanent exclusion.

EHE Officer contacted the parent to discuss their recent decision to remove their child from year 11 of the local high school. Parent stated that they had only done this to avoid their child being permanently excluded from school, but had been promised the child could return to the school to take their exams. EHE officer outlined to the parent that they were now responsible for the education of their child. Parent explained that they did not feel able to provide an education for their child and again reiterated that the only reason he was electively home educated was to avoid a permanent exclusion. EHE officer asked permission from the parent to pass on her details to the County Manager, Targeted Services as she felt the school had acted inappropriately in putting the parent in this position.

County Manager, Targeted Services contacts parent. Parent again explains in more detail how the school coerced her into removing her child from year 11. Parent was very clear that she did want her child to remain in education and only removed him when she felt under pressure to do so. Parent explained that she had wanted her son to be put on a reduced timetable for the remainder of his time in year 11. Parent was very clear that she understood her son did have some behavioural issues, but felt that the school were not willing to even consider a reduced timetable so that he could remain in education and take his exams. Parent gave permission for the County Manager to contact the school directly and request them to take the child back on their role and offer a reduced timetable.

County Manager contacted the head teacher of the school. County Manager explained to the head teacher the conversation that had taken place with the parent and asked the head teacher to comment on what the parent had reported. Initially the head teacher refuted what had been said, and stated that the parent had willingly withdrawn their child from school in order to educate them at home. The County Manager challenged the head teacher as to why a parent would withdraw their child in year 11, just prior to the beginning of the exam period. A discussion then took place which concluded in the head teacher agreeing to reinstate the student, and to facilitate a reduced timetable. However, during the conversation the head teacher was asked about the promise made to the parent that the child could return to school for his exams. The head teacher explained that whilst this offer had been made the parent would have to pay for the examinations, I pointed out to the head teacher that this was in no way made clear to the parents.

I understand that the school contacted the family directly and arranged a meeting to reinstate the student into the school with a reduced timetable. The child will now be able to attend school specifically for the subjects he wishes to take his exams in.

Glossary	
ADCS	Association of Directors of Children's Services
CME	Children Missing Education
CMEO	Children Missing Education Officer
CMOOE	Children Missing Out on Education
DfE	Department for Education (previously DCSF/DES/DfES)
DIPs	District Inclusion Partnership
EHE	Elective Home Education
EOTAS	Education other than at School
GRT	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller
KS	Key Stage
LA	Local Authority
LST	Local Support Team

WORK PROGRAMME

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee 2018/19

This document sets out the work programme for the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee for 2018/19. The Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee is responsible for scrutinising: children and adults' safeguarding; community safety and Localism. The Council has three priority outcomes. This Committee is aligned to the outcome: The people of Staffordshire will feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

We review our work programme at every meeting. Sometimes we change it - if something comes up during the year that we think we should investigate as a priority. Our work results in recommendations for the County Council and other organisations about how what they do can be improved, for the benefit of the people and communities of Staffordshire.

Councillor John Francis

Chairman of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

If you would like to know more about our work programme, please get in touch with Tina Gould, Scrutiny and Support Manager on 01785 276148 or by emailing tina.gould@staffordshire.gov.uk

Membership – County Councillors 2018-19

John Francis (Chairman)
Conor Wileman (Vice Chairman)
Ann Beech
Mike Davies
Syed Hussain
Trevor Johnson
Jason Jones
Natasha Pullen
Paul Snape
Mike Worthington

Calendar of Committee Meetings 2018-2019

23 April 2018 at 11.00 am	Special meeting with the PCC & Chief Constable
8 June 2018 at 10.00 am	
10 July 2018 at 10.00 am	
3 September 2018 at 10.00 am	
8 November 2018 at 10.00 am	
11 December 2018 at 10.00 am	
14 January 2019 at 10.00 am	
4 March 2019 at 10.00 am	

Meetings usually take place in the Oak Room in County Buildings.

Work Programme 2018-19

Date of meeting	Item	Details	Action/Outcome
Extra meeting 23 April NB meeting starts at 11.00 am	Safeguarding concerns over the Rise in Crime PCC – Matthew Ellis Chief Constable – Gareth Morgan	Following concerns raised at the 15 January Select Committee and discussions at the 10 January Triangulation meeting the Chairman requested all Members of the Council forward details of crime and safeguarding issues within their area with a view to this Select Committee meeting with the PCC and Chief Constable to address these safeguarding concerns.	The Chief Constable Gareth Morgan and the Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis responded to the questions raised by member around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact services, including call handling, emergency 999 calls, 101 calls and incident resources; • overall crime performance, acquisitive crime, violence against the person, public order and drug related offences; • use of body cams; • police and PCSO visibility; • PCSO powers; • Mutual aid deployment; • Cross boarder crime; • Motorway policing; • Crewing of police vehicles; and • Local issues.
8 June 2018 10.00 am	Children’s Centres 3 years on Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Mick Harrison	At the Select Committee meeting of 5 March 2018 it was agreed that the Children’s Commissioning Officer should attend the June meeting to update Members on progress since the Children’s Centres Working Group 4 years ago.	
	Inquiry Group Report on Elective Home Education	Following a referral from the Corporate Parenting Panel a review group set up conflated with members of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee. Its first meeting was held on 12 January where Members received a briefing from officers. Further meetings were held, including the inquiry session scheduled for 21 March. The final report and recommendations will be considered by the Select Committee in readiness for forwarding to the Cabinet Member for his executive response.	
10 July 2018 10.00 am	Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Staffordshire, to include progress against the CSAF Action Plan Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Mick Harrison	The Committee has requested a six monthly update on this issue. The Chair of the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Stoke City Council has been invited to attend this meeting and this arrangement is reciprocated.	

3 September 2018 10.00 am	Customer Feedback & Complaints, Adult Social Care Annual Report 17/18 Cabinet Member: Alan White Officer: Kate Bullivant	Adult's Services have a statutory obligation to submit an Annual Report on complaints and representations to the relevant County Council Committee.	
	Customer Feedback & Complaints, Children's Social Care Annual Report 17/18 Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Kate Bullivant	Children's Services have a statutory obligation to submit an Annual Report on complaints and representations to the relevant County Council Committee.	
tbc	Domestic Abuse	Following their meeting of 15 January Members requested further details on a range of areas to be forwarded to them with a view to further work being undertaken in the new municipal year. Consideration will be given to whether this is undertaken by a review/working group.	
tbc	Provision of "places of safety" under section 136 MHA. Cabinet Member – Alan White Lead Officer -	Following the Triangulation meeting of 10 January the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing asked the select Committee to consider undertaking an overview of the current provision of places of safety. A few years ago there had been circumstances where prison cells were being used, which was agreed as inappropriate. A review to assess the current provision was requested.	
tbc	Short breaks for children with disabilities Cabinet Member – Mark Sutton Lead Officer -	Suggested for inclusion on the work programme at the 10 January Triangulation. Consideration to be given to solutions to drive the cost down.	
tbc	Trading Standards Cabinet Member: Gill Heath Officer: Trish Caldwell	Suggested for inclusion on the work programme at the 10 January Triangulation. Considering the safeguarding issues following the service review in 2018.	
tbc	MISPERS Cabinet Member Lead Officer	Suggested for inclusion on the work programme at the 10 January Triangulation.	
tbc	Children's & Families System Transformation & update on Pilot	The Transformation programme for Children and Family Services has previously been considered by this Select Committee on 8 June, 8 July & 12 December 2016 & 13 July 2017 and 5 March	

	Projects Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Mick Harrison/Helen Riley/ Janene Cox	2018.	
tbc	Independent Futures and Disability Team Cabinet Member: Lead Officer:	Suggested for inclusion on the work programme at the 10 January Triangulation.	
tbc	Youth Offending service Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Vonni Gordon	Consideration of the YOS Review	
tbc	Direct Payments Cabinet Member: Alan White Lead Officer: Andrew Jepps	Following the 15 January consideration of Home Care Members requested an item on Direct Payments to clarify how the system worked.	

Briefing Notes/Updates/Visits 2018-19

Date	Item	Details	Action/Outcome

Working Group and/or Inquiry Days 2018-19

Date	Item	Details	Action/Outcome
Inquiry Day 30 January 2018 + follow-on meetings on 12 February 13 March	Preventing Children coming into Care- now called "Edge of Care" Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Richard Hancock	This item was initially proposed by the Commissioner for Community Safety, Children and Families. The Chairman has met with the Head of Families First and a scoping report has been prepared for Members' consideration.	The 30 January Inquiry has been held. A further Member meeting on 12 February identified a range of further information they required. This detail will be presented by Officer at the 13 March meeting.
tbc	Children's Centres – 3 years on Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Mick Harrison	Three years ago the Select Committee completed work to assess the role of the Children's Centre. Three years on the Select Committee will re-visit this work, visiting the Centres to assess the current situation in comparison with the findings of the original working group report.	At the Select Committee meeting of 26 November Members agreed to a request that this review be put back until the current significant changes within Children's Centres were completed.

12 January 31 January 21 March Reporting to 8 June 2018 Select Committee	Elective Home Education	Referral from Corporate Parenting Panel – August 2017 (NB – also referred to Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee)	A review group has been set up jointly with members of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee. Its first meeting was held on 12 January where Members received a briefing from officers. A planning meeting was held on 31 January with the inquiry session on 21 March. The Inquiry Group then compiled their report and recommendations which were submitted to the 8 June Select Committee for their comment and/or endorsement.
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Current & Related Work of Select Committees and/or All Party Member Groups 2018-19

Timescale	Area of Work	Details	Action/Outcome
30 May 2018 Special joint meeting Page 61	All Age Disability Strategy Cabinet Member: Alan White Officer: Martyn Baggaley	The Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee has the All Age Disability Strategy on their work programme with the original intention that this issue would be considered by them and their findings shared. However it has now been agreed that this will be considered at a special joint meeting between Healthy Staffordshire, Prosperous Staffordshire and the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committees on 30 May 2018.	
September 2017 - June 2018	Children's mental health & wellbeing Cabinet Member: Alan White Officers: Tilly Flannigan & Divya Patel APMG Membership Keith Flunder (Chair) Johnny McMahon Bernard Peters Ron Clarke Bryan Jones Ann Edgeller	Innovation APMG: Terms of Reference 'how to promote children's emotional and mental wellbeing to reduce referrals to specialist services across SCC and other partners, by intervening earlier to ensure better long-term outcomes'	The final report of this APMG is due to be considered by Corporate Review in June 2018.
August 2017 – February 2018	Increasing S3 Capacity Cabinet Member: Gill Heath Officers: Angela Schulp & Adam Rooney APMG Membership Mike Davies (Chair) David Smith Kyle Robinson Maureen Compton Julia Jessel	Community APMG: How do we increase the capacity and utilise the services of S3 to deliver 'People helping people' and reduce the involvement of SCC	The final report of the APMG was considered by Corporate Review on 19 February 2018.

