

Notice of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 at 6.00 pm

Venue: HMS Phoebe, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth BH2 6DY

Membership:

Chairman:

Cllr S Carr-Brown

Vice Chairman:

Cllr S Bull

Cllr O Brown
Cllr P Cooper
Cllr D Farr

Cllr E Harman
Cllr B Hitchcock
Cllr S Mackrow

Cllr D Martin
Cllr T Slade
Cllr O Walter

Parent Governor Co-opted Representatives

Jeremy Payne and Matt Tuddenham

Diocesan Co-Opted Representatives

Mark Saxby

Youth Parliament Representatives

Ryan Cornish and Elliot Prentice

All Members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee are summoned to attend this meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

The press and public are welcome to view the live stream of this meeting at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Mid=6375>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Sinead O'Callaghan on 01202 096660 or email sinead.ocallaghan@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office by email at press.office@bcpcouncil.gov.uk or tel: 01202 118686

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk

AIDAN DUNN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

2 March 2026

**DEBATE
NOT HATE**



Available online and
on the Mod.gov app

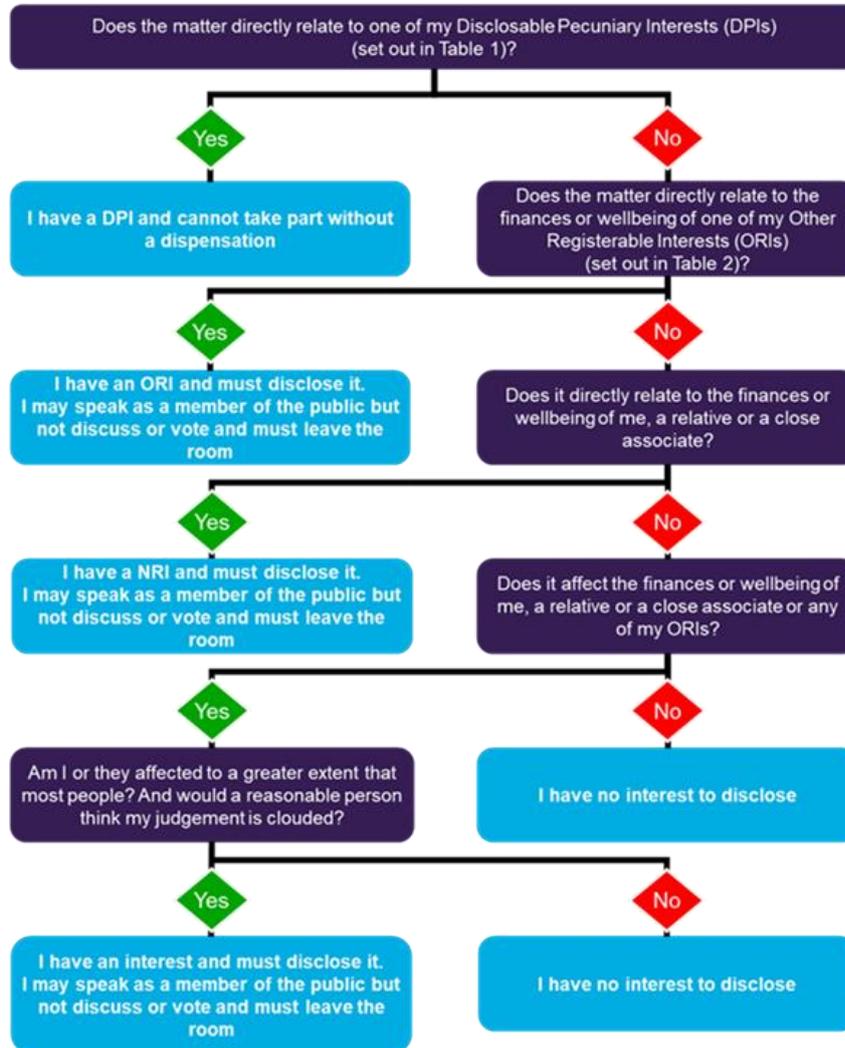


Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

Declaring interests at meetings

Familiarise yourself with the Councillor Code of Conduct which can be found in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Before the meeting, read the agenda and reports to see if the matters to be discussed at the meeting concern your interests



What are the principles of bias and pre-determination and how do they affect my participation in the meeting?

Bias and predetermination are common law concepts. If they affect you, your participation in the meeting may call into question the decision arrived at on the item.

Bias Test

In all the circumstances, would it lead a fair minded and informed observer to conclude that there was a real possibility or a real danger that the decision maker was biased?

Predetermination Test

At the time of making the decision, did the decision maker have a closed mind?

If a councillor appears to be biased or to have predetermined their decision, they must NOT participate in the meeting.

For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer

Selflessness

Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest

Integrity

Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

Objectivity

Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

Accountability

Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

Openness

Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

Honesty & Integrity

Councillors should act with honesty and integrity and should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned

Leadership

Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence from Councillors.

2. Substitute Members

To receive information on any changes in the membership of the Committee.

Note – When a member of a Committee is unable to attend a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the relevant Political Group Leader (or their nominated representative) may, by notice to the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated representative) prior to the meeting, appoint a substitute member from within the same Political Group. The contact details on the front of this agenda should be used for notifications.

3. Declarations of Interests

Councillors are requested to declare any interests on items included in this agenda. Please refer to the workflow on the preceding page for guidance.

Declarations received will be reported at the meeting.

4. Minutes

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2026.

7 - 16

5. Recommendation Tracker

To note the latest updates to the recommendation tracker.

17 - 54

6. Public Issues

To receive any public questions, statements or petitions submitted in accordance with the Constitution. Further information on the requirements for submitting these is available to view at the following link:-

<https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/documents/s2305/Public%20Items%20-%20Meeting%20Procedure%20Rules.pdf>

The deadline for the submission of public questions is 3 clear working days before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a statement is midday the working day before the meeting.

The deadline for the submission of a petition is 10 working days before the meeting.

7. Members of Youth Parliament Update

To receive a verbal update from the Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs).

ITEMS CIRCULATED BETWEEN MEETINGS

8. Corporate Performance Report - Q3

55 - 68

BCP Council adopted 'A shared vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2024-28' in May 2024.

The shared vision is the corporate strategy which sets out the council's vision, priorities and ambitions as well as the principles which underpin the way the council works as it develops and delivers its services.

Incorporated in the vision is a set of measures of progress for achieving the vision, priorities and ambitions.

This is the performance monitoring report for Quarter Three 25-26, presenting an update on the progress measures.

The council's delivery against its priorities and ambitions can also be monitored through the [performance dashboard](#) which is available on the council's website providing up-to-date real time information on the progress measures.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

9. Verbal update from John Coughlan on SEND improvement Journey

Verbal Report

To receive a verbal update from John Coughlan, DfE Advisor to BCP Council on SEND improvement Journey.

10. Families First Partnership Programme

69 - 136

This report provides an overview of the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme, the Government's national reform programme for children's social care, and sets out the proposed approach to local implementation.

FFP underpins delivery of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, the Government's Plan for Change, and aligns with the NHS 10 Year reform agenda, providing a single delivery framework at place level. The programme aims to reduce crisis driven statutory intervention through earlier preventative measures, safely reduce the number of children entering care, and improve outcomes for children and families through family centred practice and stronger partnership working.

The report outlines the local governance and programme management arrangements, including the establishment of a Strategic FFP Board and a multi-disciplinary transformation team, alongside arrangements for partner engagement, workforce development and learning from national pathfinders. It sets out the Council's priority delivery workstreams, including early help pathway development, front door reform, a Family Help pilot, planning for multi-agency child protection arrangements, and options appraisal for Family Group Decision Making.

11. Exclusion of Press and Public

In relation to the items of business appearing below, the Committee is asked to consider the following resolution: -

'That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.'

12. Children in Care - Baseline of Need, Spend and Overspend with Mitigation Proposals

137 - 160

This report provides a baseline assessment of the Children in Care (CiC) position at the end of Quarter 3 (December 2025) and sets out the mitigations already in train and further invest-to-save proposals.

CiC numbers have continued to rise to 628 (84.5 per 10,000), an increase of 13% (73 children) since Q4 2024/25. Forecast CiC expenditure for 2025/26 is £53.27m, c.11% (£5.4m) above budget, driven by rising demand and the increasing complexity and cost of provision.

The service has strengthened demand management and cost control through Early Help, the Reunification Team, employment of permanent Alternatively Qualified Practitioners, "It Takes a Family" (ITAF) and Mockingbird models, as well as the Creative Care Panel. To accelerate impact from 2026/27, an Outline Business Case proposes a Children in Care Transformation Programme (phase 1 investment £500k) comprising a full-system review and a CiC Strategy, with anticipated part-year savings of c.£1m in 2026/27.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

13. Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection Report

161 - 176

The local area partnership SEND inspection took place in November 2025 and the final report was published by Ofsted on the 6th February 2026. The report concludes that the local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and that partners must work jointly to secure the necessary improvements.

Inspectors recognised clear progress and strengthened foundations since the previous inspection. The report highlights:

- Increased stability in leadership and a strong shared vision across education, health and care.
- Improving lived experiences for many children and young people with SEND, with tangible examples of better multi-agency working and strengthened workforce capacity.
- More responsive health support, better partnership functioning, and growing opportunities for children and young people to have their voices heard.

Inspection findings also reaffirm that improvement work since 2021, such as the strengthened SEND partnership structures, the development of the Belonging Strategy and improvements in communication and co-production, has set a strong platform for continued change.

Overall, the inspection confirms that the partnership is moving firmly in the right direction and must now embed improvements so that positive experiences become the norm across the BCP area.

14. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025-26

177 - 202

The Council has a statutory duty to provide working families of children aged 0-14 (18 with SEND) enough childcare places in its area, where reasonably practicable. Each year Research and Children's Services colleagues assess the position of the market, providing parents, councillors, schools and private businesses ward level information as a planning tool to support access or expansion of places, while highlighting areas of focus or concern.

With significant government expansion of early years childcare now fully embedded this information and data is vital for private businesses seeking to enter the market and help the Council fulfil its ongoing statutory duties and the content of the assessment concludes that the Council is meeting its statutory duties.

In addition to a briefing report (appendix 1) the data that helped form the assessment is accessible [here](#).

15. Portfolio Holder Update

To receive a verbal update from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People.

16. Work Plan

203 - 212

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2026 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Carr-Brown – Chair

Present: Cllr O Brown, Cllr P Canavan (In place of Cllr P Cooper),
Cllr E Harman, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr D Martin, Cllr T Slade and
Cllr A Chapmanlaw (In place of Cllr O Walters).

Co-Opted Members: Jeremy Payne and Matt Tuddenham

Also in attendance: Ryan Cornish and Elliot Prentice

47. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Saxby, Cllr Peter Cooper, Cllr Oliver Walters, Cllr Duanne Farr and Cllr Simon Bull.

48. Substitute Members

Cllr Patrick Canavan attended as substitute for Cllr Peter Cooper and Cllr Adrian Chapmanlaw attended as substitute for Cllr Oliver Walters.

49. Declarations of Interests

Cllr Sandra Mackrow declared an interest in relation to an item of business as a close family member was in receipt of an EHCP and alternative provision.

Cllr Chapman-Law declared an interest in relation to an item of business as his wife was employed by BCP Council as a Personal Assistant supporting care experienced young people.

Cllr Olivia Brown declared an interest in relation to an item of business concerning the High Needs Block and budget papers, as the school at which she was employed was currently being assessed due to a new department referenced in the papers.

50. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

51. Recommendation Tracker

The Committee noted the Recommendation Tracker. The Overview and Scrutiny Specialist outlined the new format, which replaces the action sheet. Members agreed to review the tracker in more depth around June 2026.

The Chair provided an update on outstanding actions, and the Committee noted the actions that could be closed.

52. Public Issues

The following statements were received from Ms Susan Stockwell:

Statement 1

Re Agenda Item 9 Family Hubs, could these please be well provided with secure safe cycle storage for the use of staff, visitors and clients of all ages.

Statement 2

Re Agenda Item 11 School Admission Arrangement, when setting "reasonable" school catchment areas as per Schools Admission Code 2021 1.4 please as a matter of policy always take into account available safe active travel routes for walking/cycling as well as available bus services. It is reasonable to consider these because of government request to increase journeys made actively and because of BCP council's own climate emergency declaration.

53. Members of Youth Parliament Update

The Clerk advised the Committee that, due to an administrative error during publication of the agenda, the update from the Members of Youth Parliament had been inadvertently omitted. This would be recorded in the minutes and included as a standing agenda item going forward.

The Members of Youth Parliament provided an update of all the MYPs' recent activities, which included:

- The commencement of the election process for the new cohort, which had attracted a significantly higher number of candidates than in the previous year. A selection event would take place on 12 February, after which sixteen candidates would progress to the final stage.
- Progress on the mental health campaign, including the development of a training video to be launched during Mental Health Week.
- National engagement through the Youth Select Committee, including participation in evidence sessions on PSHE, with a final report expected in March 2026.

The Committee thanked the Members of Youth Parliament for their update and commended them for their continued commitment and representation of young people across BCP.

The mental health training video would be shared with Members when available, and officers would confirm whether it would be appropriate to present the video at a future Committee meeting or to circulate it outside the meeting. **ACTION**

54. Housing for Care Experienced Young People Update

The Head of Strategic Housing & Partnerships and Head of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

This report updated the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on arrangements to support Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) as they moved toward independent living. It responded to the Committee's recommendation in June 2025; that the Committee sought assurance that the new Joint Housing Protocol had been successfully agreed and was working effectively to ensure Care Experienced Young People were seeing an improved service and were in receipt of timely advice and safe housing that suited their individual needs and hopes for the future.

It evidenced the effectiveness of the Joint Housing Protocol review in improving partnership working, reducing homelessness, and ensuring priority access to housing options such as Staying Put, Supported Lodgings, Specialist Supported Housing, and independent accommodation.

Governance had been strengthened through the BCP Youth Homelessness Board, embedding strategic oversight and accountability. Young people's voices had shaped improvements to housing information, pathway clarity, and pre- and post-move support, while specialist and supported housing commissioning continued to provide tailored assistance for those with higher needs.

Support for planning independence was integrated across pathways, with recommissioned services to be focused upon enhancing life skills and resilience. Despite progress, challenges remained due to local housing market pressures and affordability, requiring continued learning from reviews and lived experience alongside implementation of the forthcoming Children's Wellbeing and Skills Bill to secure positive outcomes for CEYP.

The Committee discussed the report, including:

- In response to a query raised regarding data and monitoring, the Committee was advised that information on approaches, characteristics (including young people leaving custody) and repeat homelessness is collected and reviewed regularly to identify trends and inform practice.
- In response to a query raised regarding whether the statutory 56-day timeframe allowed sufficient time for planning, and the Committee was advised that earlier pathway planning is now undertaken

through regular multi-agency meetings, including probation, in order to prevent crisis situations wherever possible.

- The Committee was advised that Youth Homelessness Board data is reported regularly, and it was agreed that officers would provide the Committee with a summary of these metrics, including information on repeat homelessness and outcomes for care experienced young people. **ACTION**
- In response to a query raised regarding supported accommodation, the Committee was advised that recent challenges, including abandonment or eviction from placements, are informing forthcoming recommissioning work, and that respite options would be strengthened.
- The Committee was advised that tenancy-sustainment support is available, and where concerns emerge, agencies intervene early and update joint assessments to maintain stability or secure appropriate alternatives.
- In response to a query raised regarding young people's aspirations and voice, the Committee was advised that these are being embedded more strongly in planning and governance, including through the refreshed Youth Homelessness Board and the intention to appoint a young person as co-chair.
- The Committee was advised that long-term requirements for specialist and supported housing will be set out in the forthcoming strategy to support sufficiency and future commissioning.

RESOLVED that the update be noted and that a further update report be brought to the Committee in 12 months. ADD TO WORK PLAN

Voting: Nem. Con.

55. Invest to Save Budgets in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

The Director of Education and Skills presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

This report responded to the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee's second set of KLOEs on High Needs Block (HNB) "invest-to-save" activity. It distinguished: (i) initiatives funded from HNB (which impacted the in-year position unless offset by savings) and (ii) initiatives funded from the General Fund or external grants (which did not worsen the HNB position but could drive service improvement and future cost avoidance).

It summarised delivery to date (including sufficiency expansion and early-years interventions), the emerging impact, the approach to measuring cost avoidance, and the new initiatives then in development.

The Committee discussed the report, including:

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
27 January 2026

- In response to a query raised regarding forthcoming national SEND reforms, the Committee was advised that the White Paper was expected in early February and that the Council continued to work closely with the Department for Education to ensure alignment with anticipated changes.
- In response to a query raised regarding the extent to which the Council was preparing for a possible shift in the EHCP funding model, the Committee was advised that early intervention work, multi-agency support, and strengthened oversight structures were already consistent with the direction suggested through engagement with the Department for Education. Funding arrangements would become clearer following publication of the national proposals.
- In response to a query raised regarding confidence in delivering additional specialist and resource provision, the Committee was advised that strong interest had been received from primary schools, and renewed engagement with secondary schools had resulted in nine schools expressing interest in developing resource provision. Demographic changes were also supporting the availability of accommodation.
- The Committee was advised that the Portage service team was fully staffed, well-coordinated, and worked closely with early years partners to ensure earlier identification of need and appropriate placements. Officers agreed to circulate information on the Portage service to Members and, if helpful, arrange a short briefing session on the service. **ACTION**
- In response to a query raised about digital improvements, the Committee was advised that planned enhancements to SEND case management and high needs funding systems were essential, supporting clearer oversight and more consistent decision-making.
- The Committee was advised, in response to further queries, that regional learning continued to inform the programme, including forthcoming engagement with Southampton regarding targeted funding models.
- In response to a query raised regarding how future national requirements would be incorporated, and the Committee was advised that a maturity matrix was expected following publication of the White Paper, and that a further update could be brought to the Committee in September once partnership self-assessment activity had been completed.

RESOLVED that the update be noted, and that a further update be brought to the Committee at the September 2026 meeting, following national reforms and associated partnership assessment work. ADD TO WORK PLAN

RESOLVED that the Committee agreed the following recommendations and that they be passed to Cabinet:

- a.) **Note the current High Needs Block (HNB) position and the impact and cost avoidance of the initiatives implemented to date including the increased supply of specialist places, the early years inclusion**

model (Dingley's Promise) and the positive impact of the Portage Service.

- b.) Endorse the invest-to-save programme and the establishment of the High Needs Block Deficit Recovery Plan Board, including its role in approving a benefits-measurement framework to evidence cost avoidance and prevent double-counting across initiatives.**
- c.) Support the progression of the following priority initiatives:**
- **Digitalisation of High Needs funding processes (integrated with the SCM upgrade)**
 - **Synergy Case Management (SCM) upgrade to go-live (target May-June 2026)**
 - **Pre-EHCP targeted funding model (subject to affordability and governance)**

Voting: Nem. Con.

56. Family Hubs Working Group Final Report

The Cllr Olivia Brown presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Family Hubs Working Group to better understand and review progress of the implementation of Family Hubs in BCP.

The purpose of this report was to inform the committee of the output of the working group, including suggested recommendations.

The Committee discussed the report, including:

- The Committee was advised of an error in the report, which stated that the visit had taken place at the Kinson Hub, when the Working Group had in fact visited the Poole Town and West Howe Hubs.
- In response to a query raised regarding staff engagement, the Committee was advised that staff had welcomed the opportunity to speak openly with Members, and that the visits had provided valuable insight into frontline practice.
- Members of the working group advised of the strength of community engagement, and the Committee was informed that this continued to be a notable feature of the hubs' work, with teams actively building relationships with families and local organisations.
- In response to a query regarding staff support and retention, the Committee was advised that staff feedback had been positive overall, and that ongoing professional development, wellbeing arrangements and reflective practice remained priorities.
- In response to a query raised regarding performance and impact measures, and the Committee was advised that work was underway to further develop clear KPIs relating to inclusivity, accessibility and

engagement, supplemented by improved data and feedback mechanisms.

- In response to a query raised regarding future oversight, the Committee was advised that the Best Start in Life programme would provide the framework for further development, with the first hub identified at Boscombe, and it was agreed that an update on the programme would be brought to the Committee at the June meeting following publication of the Local Plan in March. **ADD TO WORK PLAN**
- The Committee agreed in the value of maintaining dialogue, and that informal engagement, including rapporteur arrangements, would support continuous visibility and strengthen Member-officer relationships going forward.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the report and agreed the following recommendations arising from the Family Hubs Working Group.

The Committee agreed the Working Group's recommendations to Officers:

1. Continue to build on the strong foundations of community engagement, with a focus on inclusivity and responsiveness.
2. Explore ways to support staff wellbeing that are informed by staff experiences and feedback.
3. Develop clear measures of effectiveness relating to Family Hubs, with key performance indicators focused on reach, inclusivity and responsiveness to evolving community needs, supported by improved data collection and feedback.

Note: These recommendations are directed to the Head of Service, Early Help and Targeted Intervention, and the Director of Children's Social Care.

The Committee agreed to make Cabinet aware that the Working Group recommended Cabinet:

4. Notes the scrutiny that has been undertaken on Family Hubs and the Working Group's finding of the strong staff commitment to community engagement.
5. Endorses continued support for Family Hubs, with future priorities to include investment in staff capacity, professional development and enhanced tools to evidence impact.

The Committee agreed the Working Group's recommendation that the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

6. Establishes regular, informal dialogue between the Committee and Family Hub teams to maintain transparency and shared understanding. This to be undertaken annually by named rapporteurs and included on the Committee's work programme. Agreed rapporteurs to maintain links to Family Hubs through

independent visits and highlight any significant progress or red flags to the Committee as they arise, to assist Members in identifying where further scrutiny may be valuable.

Voting: Nem. Con.

57. Children's Services Capital Strategy Report 2026-2029

The report was circulated for information only and noted by the Committee.

The Committee welcomed the report and noted positive feedback from recent capital works undertaken in schools, including improvements to heating infrastructure. In response to queries, the Committee was advised that capital priorities continued to be informed by condition surveys, demographic pressures and statutory requirements, with works allocated to address the most urgent needs first. The Committee was further informed that the Council continued to work collaboratively with academy trusts to support planning around capacity and estate condition, recognising their responsibilities as estate managers.

58. School Admissions Arrangements 2027/28

The report was circulated for information only with no discussion in Committee.

59. Corporate Performance Report - Q2

The report was circulated for information only with no discussion in Committee.

60. Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder provided an update on recent activity across Children's Services, which included:

- The Portfolio Holder advised that a confirmed publication date for the SEND White Paper had not yet been provided, and that discussions with the Department for Education were ongoing regarding future national SEND funding and the statutory override.
- The Committee was informed that the SEND inspection report was expected to be published on 2 February, and that Member communications would follow once the report was released.
- The Committee was advised that active work continued in relation to the Council's budget, particularly the High Needs Block deficit and the future funding required to service associated borrowing.
- The Portfolio Holder highlighted progress on the Best Start in Life strategy, noting that the national strategy was published in July 2025 and that all local authorities must publish a Best Start local plan by 31 March. Boscombe Family Hub had been identified as the first Best Start Hub locally, with a second hub for the west of the area to be identified by April 2026.

- The Committee was advised of recent meetings and visits, including attendance at the Corporate Parenting Board, where record participation had been achieved, and confirmation that the Director of Housing had taken on a role championing corporate parenting across directorates.
- The Portfolio Holder reported that youth engagement activities had taken place, including a youth voice event at the BIC involving UNITE, INSIGHT, the Youth Forum and the Members of Youth Parliament.
- The Committee was advised of updates from the Children's Lead Members Network Meeting, including Ofsted's planned renewal of ILACS in April 2026 and the forthcoming public consultation on proposed changes for 2027.
- The Portfolio Holder concluded by summarising recent school and early years visits, including Epiphany School, Twynham School, Avonbourne Academy, Mundeford Wood Playgroup, Connie Rothman Learning Trust and Bournemouth School for Girls.

61. Work Plan

The Committee noted the Work Plan in its current form.

The Committee was advised that work programming would take place on Tuesday 17 February, and that a pack of proposed topics would be shared ahead of the workshop. It was also noted that the Work Plan would remain flexible to accommodate emerging priorities and statutory updates.

A date error within the document was highlighted, and the Clerk confirmed that this would be corrected.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

CHAIR

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS TRACKER – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

UPDATED: 14.01.2026

Minute number	Item	Recommendation made <small>*items remain for monitoring until implementation is complete or committee agree to remove.</small>	Recommended to <small>*name of receiving body/ Officer, and date received</small>	Outcome <small>*accepted/ partially accepted/ rejected/ unknown.</small>	Implementation updates
Recommendations from Board meeting – 13 May 2024					
9.	A shared vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2024-28 Strategy and Delivery Plan	<p>RESOLVED that the Board support the recommendations to Cabinet, subject to the suggested amendments from the Board:</p> <p>(a) The delivery plan be approved (b) The measures for monitoring progress and ensuring accountability for delivery be agreed.</p> <p>Note – minor amendments to the measures contained in the report were suggested by the O&S Board and captured in the full minutes of the meeting.</p>	Cabinet - 22 May 2024	Accepted	The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the amendments suggested at O&S Board had been incorporated into the revised version of the Strategy and Delivery Plan supplied for decision by Cabinet.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 16 July 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 27 August 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 23 September 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 1 October 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 21 October 2024					

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Agenda Item 5

60.	Blue Badge Service Update Report	<p>The Board resolved that:</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder/Leader and the Chief Executive be asked to write to the Department for Transport to raise the concerns outlined by the O&S Board and that the Portfolio Holder take the issue forward with local MPs and the Local Government Association to encourage local authorities to raise these issues with the Department for Transport and request that central government gives local authorities the freedom to set fees which cover the cost of administering the system and that the system should be simplified in terms of renewal processes.</p>	Portfolio Holder/ Leader/ Chief Executive	Partially accepted by the Portfolio Holder	<p>The Portfolio Holder confirmed that they had written to the Department for Transport and provided the response received to the O&S Board at its meeting on 12 May.</p> <p>It was unknown if this had been raised directly with the LGA and at the O&S Board meeting on 12 May the Portfolio Holder undertook to follow up on this.</p>
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Recommendations from Board meeting – [18 November 2024](#)

69.	O&S Budget Working Groups – findings and recommendations	<p>Recommended to Cabinet</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the principle of an inflationary increase across all parking charges be endorsed for the 2025/26 budget. 2. That it requests Officers to take into account the suggestion that an assessment be made on using a proportion of surplus income to accelerate the parking charging machine replacement programme prioritising the best value machines in order to reduce future costs (subject to the necessary procurement processes). 3. That Officers be requested to explore options to reduce costs for the Council and make the process easier for the public to pay for car parking, in particular an option to be able to pay in advance/on Council website. 	Cabinet – 10 December 2024	Partially accepted	<p>Responses provided to the Cabinet meeting on 5 February</p> <p>://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55921/Appendix%203a%20-%20Portfolio%20Holder%20Responses%20to%20Budget%20Scrutiny.pdf</p>
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That it requests that Officers evaluate the retention and recruitment of Civil Enforcement Officers to ensure a robust and resilient workforce to provide an appropriate level of resource and promote safe and appropriate parking. 2. That Officers be requested to ensure adequate resourcing of parking enforcement to reduce inappropriate parking around schools. 	Cabinet – 10 December 2024	Accepted	<p>Response from Portfolio Holder received at the O&S Board meeting on 3 February 2025 :</p> <p>http://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55808/responses%20from%20Cabinet.pdf</p>

		<p>The O&S Board recommend to Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That any Resident Card offering is made fully accessible to all those who are not digitally enabled. 2. That there should be an application process for the card with a small financial contribution for the cost of processing and that the card should be a valuable offer that residents are willing to pay a small cost for, so that it can be sustainable in terms of administrative costs. 3. That any charge levied for the card should be the same regardless of the format and that consideration should be given to concessions for disadvantaged groups. 	Cabinet – 10 December 2024	Partially accepted	<p>Responses provided to the Cabinet meeting on 5 February</p> <p>://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55921/Appendix%203a%20-%20Portfolio%20Holder%20Responses%20to%20Budget%20Scrutiny.pdf</p> <p>Response from Portfolio Hodler received at the O&S Board meeting on 3 February 2025 :</p> <p>http://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55808/responses%20from%20Cabinet.pdf</p> <p>Note: the residents card offer did not progress as part of the budget</p>
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Recommendations from Board meeting – [9 December 2024](#)

19

78	Pay and Reward Progress Update	RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended to approve option 2 of the proposed process flowchart (Appendix 1 of the report) and the commencement of collective consultation under s188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ('TULRCA'), which is a statutory obligation where an employer is proposing to dismiss 20 or more employees.	Cabinet - 10 December 2024	Accepted	Negotiations with the pay and reward progress have continued and a new offer had been made to the unions. A ballot was now taking place with the recognised trade unions and an outcome was expected by the end of June 2025. This report was brought to O&S Board and Cabinet
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79	Housing Delivery Council Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy (CNHAS) update and Harbour Sail acquisition	RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that Cabinet support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report: Housing Delivery Council Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy CNHAS update and Harbour Sail a.pdf	Cabinet - 10 December 2024	Accepted	The recommendation from Cabinet has not been put before Council because the purchase of Harbour Sail has not proceeded. This was due to timing of the purchase which affected the ability to use the grant for the purchase (which without this grant the scheme was no longer financially viable) and that title restrictions could not be altered to allow flexibility of tenure that was required. The grant has been reallocated to other property acquisitions.
81	BCP Council Libraries – Update on Library Strategy Development	RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that Cabinet support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report: BCP Council Libraries Update on Library Strategy Development.pdf	Cabinet - 10 December 2024	Accepted	The Library strategy is expected to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Cabinet in August and September 2025
Recommendations from Board meeting – 6 January 2025					
90	Devolution	Recommended to the Leader that: a: The Leader arranges an emergency Full Council Meeting at the earliest opportunity to enable a vote of ALL of the available options b: An evidence-based piece of work be undertaken on the pros and cons of a devolution arrangement with both the Solent deal AND Wessex deal, including exploring a public referendum for BCP residents.	Leader of the Council	Partially accepted	Full Council meeting was arranged for 15 January 2025. The Council meeting considered the options of both the Solent deal and the Wessex deal, further information was brought to the Council meeting and Council voted to participate in the priority programme and to move forward with the Wessex proposal.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 13 January 2025 – No recommendations made at this meeting					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 3 February 2025					

106.	Council Budget Monitoring 2024/25 at Quarter 3	RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to the Audit and Governance Committee that it instigate an investigation on the Carters Quay development.	Audit and Governance Committee 27 February 2025	Accepted	Update provided to the A&G Committee at its meeting on 29 May. Chief Executive agreed that a report of the governance and process could be produced for the 24 July. It was also agreed to circulate by email the updated provided by the Director, Investment and Development together with the advice previously provided by the Monitoring Officer. Carters Quay - Update.pdf A further report will be take to Cabinet
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Recommendations from Board meeting – 4 March 2025

115.	Community Governance Review – Draft Recommendations	RESOLVED: that the O&S Board Recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to proposals for Burton and Winkton (A), Hum (B), Highcliffe & Walkford (C) and Christchurch Town (D) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.	Cabinet date – 5 March 2025	Accepted	Consultation progressed with these proposals. The Consultation closed 22 June 2025. The Working group are processing the outcome of the consultation and a report will be brought back to the October Cabinet meeting.
		RESOLVED: That the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Broadstone (F) and Poole Town (J) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Accepted	
		RESOLVED that the Board recommend to Cabinet that that the recommendation for Bournemouth (K) not be forwarded to Council.		Rejected	Cabinet felt that it was important to consult on all areas including (k) Bournemouth Town and therefore supported the recommendations as set out by the task and finish group and did not support recommendation 3 as submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

		RESOLVED that the Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Southbourne (I) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Accepted	
		RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Boscombe and Pokesdown (H) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Accepted	
		RESOVLED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Throop and Holdenhurst (E) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Accepted	
		RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Redhill and Northbourne (G) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment		Accepted	

116.	Bournemouth Development Company LLP Business Plan	RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that a decision to extend the Winter Gardens site 'Option Execution Date' is deferred by Cabinet until the new BDC Partnerships Business Plan has been approved by Cabinet.	Cabinet – 5 March 2025	Rejected	The Cabinet did amend a recommendation as follows: Agrees the principle of an extension of the Winter Gardens site "Option Execution Date", with details to be agreed to be delegated to the Chief Operations Officer acting in consultation with the Leader of the Council, or until Cabinet have had the opportunity to review a revised partnership business plan including the site development plan for the revised Winter Gardens scheme." It was not able to agree a deferment of this decision as this would stop progress on the Winter Gardens development.
117.	Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	RESOLVED That the Board recommended to Cabinet: 1. That the spending priorities for Strategic CIL as set out in Option 2 of the paper over the period 2024/25 to 2029/30 be agreed provided CIL income is as forecast; and 2. That the report be updated annually for Cabinet and Council.	Cabinet – 5 March 2025	Accepted	Accepted by Cabinet and spending priorities agreed for 2024/25 to 2029/30 for CIL.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 12 May 2025					
11.	Blue Badge Update	The Chair requested that the matter also be raised with the Local Government Association particularly regarding the cost of administering the Blue Badge scheme and the limitations of the current data system	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communication and Culture	Unknown	Update on this issue awaited – no deadline date

12.	Arts and Culture Funding	<p>Recommended to Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the O&S Board recognise the value of the NPOs funded by BCP to Health and well-being youth and the local economy and urge Cabinet to protect the funding BCP currently provides. 2. That Cabinet endorse the work that's been done with schools by the NPOs and recommends that Cabinet take action to encourage all schools to take part. 3. To explore whether it would be a benefit for a Councillor to be appointed as a member of the Board on any or all of the NPO organisations, and 4. That it ensures that the arts by sea festival goes ahead next year. 	Cabinet – 13 May 2025	Accepted	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: The cultural funding remains in the MTFP so there is no change in that position as of the moment. 2: The Portfolio Holder is working with the Cultural Hub to encourage this. 3: The Portfolio Holder has spoken to the NPO and they respectfully suggested that this would not be helpful. The Portfolio Holder agreed with this especially as they would likely be a PH and the Portfolio Holder already had very close links with all of them. 4: We are planning for ABTS next year and awaiting funding news from ACE.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 9 June 2025					
22.	Bournemouth Air Festival	The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed with the recommendation that Cabinet agrees to Option 4 as set out in the report, which acknowledges the ongoing process for new events to come forward and stops any further work on an Air Festival for 2026 onwards.	Cabinet – 18 June 2025	Accepted	Recommendation accepted and confirmed that further work on the Air Festival for 2026 had been discontinued.
23.	Bournemouth Development Company - Winter Gardens Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board supported the following recommendations to Cabinet: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (c) Cabinet approves the BDC Partnership Business Plan for 2025 – 2030. (c) Cabinet confirms the extension of the Site Option Execution Date to September 2028, allowing Muse as the Private Sector Partner in the BDC to fund the first stage of work on the new Winter Gardens scheme, resulting in a new Site Development Plan. (c) Cabinet approves proceeding on the understanding that public parking will not be included in a new scheme design. 2. The Overview and Scrutiny Board welcomed the development of the Town Centre Vision for Bournemouth and requested to scrutinise the regeneration visions for the 3 Towns in the BCP Area as these are redeveloped. 	Cabinet – 18 June 2025	Accepted	The development plans are due to come forward for consideration in December 2025 and it was proposed by the Leader that these would go to full Council.

		<p>3. The Overview and Scrutiny Board welcomed the development of the Town Centre Vision for Bournemouth and requested to scrutinise the regeneration visions for the 3 Towns in the BCP Area as these are redeveloped.</p>		<p>Accepted – update provided</p>	<p>We are developing the narrative across the three towns identifying key strengths and uniqueness to build upon the vision set out in the Corporate Strategy : vibrant places, where healthy people and nature flourish, with a thriving economy in a healthy natural environment. To support this we've made good progress by the establishment of a Citizen's Panel and the Growth Board. The Citizen's Panel comprises of residents with a focus on the town centre which is helping to provide insight into how residents feel and engage within the space. The Growth Board is a newly established steering group which is comprised of representatives from key sectors within the BCP conurbation including Business Improvement District, education, manufacturing, Starts up and the volunteering sector. These perspectives are helping to shape our vision for BCP as a place which can thrive, for residents to feel civic pride and a destination for visitors to enjoy. The conversation at the O&S focussed on how Winter Gardens fits into the wider context of the Town Centre and committee members asked for that to form part of any proposals from BDC. There is an existing Town Centre Vision which forms part of the Local Plan, and the intention is for BDC to review this to support a future planning application, ensuring it reflects the nature of the development proposals in the absence of a formal planning policy framework.</p>
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24.	Leisure Services Presentation and Discussion	The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommended that Cabinet be urged to put in place an "Access to Leisure" scheme across the whole BCP area as soon as possible, recognising that people in Poole have lost this facility and with particular emphasis on ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities	Cabinet – 18 June 2025	Accepted – update from Portfolio Holder Provided	The Portfolio holder has asked that officers explore options around a renewed access to leisure facility and bring forward options, including but not limited to; how that would be managed, financial implications, and meeting the recommendation as requested by the Overview and scrutiny board.
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Recommendations from Board meeting – [15 July 2025](#)

31.	Enhancement to Pay and Reward Offer	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Board supported the following recommendations to Council within the Cabinet report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agree the additional costs associated with enhancing the proposed Pay and Reward offer. b) Agree the additional savings proposals outlined in Appendix 1 to ensure the cost implications of the proposal remain consistent with the February 2025 endorsed Medium Term Financial Plan. c) Agrees the details of the enhanced offer shown in Appendix 4 and 5 that will form the basis of the signed collective agreement with our recognised trade unions. d) Approves the recommended implementation date of 1 December 2025. 	Cabinet – 16 July	Accepted	Agreed by Council on 22 July 2025. Work underway to achieve implementation for December 2025.
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32.	Scrutiny of Budget Related Cabinet reports – MTFP update report	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Board endorsed the work of Members and Officers around SEND as set out in recommendation C of the report as follows:</p> <p>In respect of the SEND deficit, note the update and acknowledges the action taken by the Leader and the Director of Finance</p>	Cabinet - 16 July	Accepted	
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Recommendations from Board meeting - [22 September 2025](#)

39.	Residents Card	RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board do not support the recommendation as outlined in the report as the Board did not feel that the Cabinet report included sufficient financial details and details of the scheme offers to enable it to make an informed decision. The Board recommend to Cabinet that the report is deferred to allow details of	Cabinet – 1 October	Rejected	Updates were made to the report and the recommendation prior to consideration by Cabinet.
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		the financial modelling that has been done to be added, including a cost/benefit analysis and a sensitivity analysis. Once this additional information is included in the report, it should then be brought back to the O&S Board before being taken to Cabinet for decision.			
Recommendations from Board meeting – 30 September 2025					
47.	Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations	All Recommendations as set out within the Cabinet report were supported by the Board: (a) the Task and Finish Group community governance review final recommendations, as set out in paragraphs 49, 62, 74, 92, 104, 117, 128, 140, 152, 166 and 181 of this report be approved; (b) the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make all necessary reorganisation of community governance orders to implement the changes agreed by Council; (c) the Task and Finish Group continue to consider the transfer of civic and ceremonial assets, statutory services and precept requirements for year 1, for each new parish, on the basis of minimal transfer and precept, and a report be presented to full Council in due course.	Cabinet – 1 October	Accepted	The recommendations of Cabinet were referred to Council on 14 October. The Recommendations of Cabinet were agreed by full Council
Recommendations from Board meeting - 20 October 2025					
56.	Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update	The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that as part of the Budget setting process. consideration be given to utilising receipts from the existing surplus asset disposal programme for 2026/27 to address some of the repairs and maintenance of publicly facing assets.	Cabinet – 29 October	Partially Accepted but final determination was to reject	The Portfolio Holder advised that this was considered as part of the budget setting process but due to the significant pressures on the delivery of statutory services it was not agreed to include this within the proposed budget – 9 February 2026
57.	BCP Council Libraries Draft Library Strategy	1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that as part of the Library Strategy it looks to maintain staffed hours in libraries, especially in the afternoon period, as open access is rolled out further in the future. 2. The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that the Library Service put together a list of smaller neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Bids to put to Councillors and Neighbourhood Forums immediately upon the opening of future CIL rounds.	Cabinet - 29 October	Accepted	The Portfolio Holder reported that the staff hours in Libraries would be maintained and that a list of potential CIL bids had been created and these were outlined to the Board – 9 February 2026

		3. That the O&S Board support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report.			
Recommendations from Board – 17 November 2025 – No recommendations made at this meeting					
Recommendations from Board – 8 December 2025					
79.	Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update	RESOLVED that the O&S Board advise Cabinet of its support for all recommendations as outlined in the Cabinet report.	Cabinet – 17 December	Accepted	Cabinet noted the support for the recommendations within the report.
Recommendations from Board – 5 January 2026					
87.	Regeneration Progress Report	That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that, to enable effective lobbying of Government in the future, the draft of the BCP Growth Plan be shared with O&S Board Members when available and that Overview and Scrutiny be embedded in the plan's development and approval process.	Cabinet – 14 January	Accepted	Extract from Cabinet minutes: The Leader thanked Councillor Salmon and the Board for bringing their recommendation to Cabinet and advised that she was minded to accept the recommendation and that a formal response would be provided to the Board.
Recommendations from Board – 9 February 2026					
95.	Budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Plan	The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that the questions asked in the budget consultation be reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the choices which need to be made in the 2027/28 budget setting.	Cabinet – 11 February	Unknown - TBC	

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
Actions from Board meeting – 12 May 2025				
10.	BCP Complaints Policy	RESOLVED that the Board further examine the role of councillors in the complaints process, particularly in relation to ward issues and casework.	To ensure the effectiveness of both the Councils complaints process and work of Ward Councillors	Work underway - Cllr S Aitkenhead as rapporteur
Actions from Board meeting – 22 September 2025				
38.	Commercial Operations	Portfolio Holder to provide an update on the current situation in 6 months-time with a view to scheduling further scrutiny when appropriate.	To monitor and receive updates on this area of the Council	Update due to the Board in March.
Actions from Board meeting – 20 October 2025				
57.	BCP Council Library – Draft Library Strategy	A potential item be included on the O&S work programme on a review of income generation opportunities within the library service, including commercialisation options and partnership models.	TBC	
Actions from Board meeting – 5 January 2026				
87.	Regeneration Progress Report	That a small group be convened including Cllrs J Beesley, P Canavan and K Salmon to scope draft Key Lines of Enquiry on a number of the issues raised for future scrutiny in preparation of the O&S Work Programming process.	To ensure that the issues raised are given due consideration and ensure that the work planning process can continue.	

ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

UPDATED: 14.01.26

Minute number	Item	Recommendation made *items remain for monitoring until implementation is complete or committee agree to remove.	Recommended to *name of receiving body/ Officer, and date received	Outcome *accepted/ partially accepted/ rejected/ unknown.	Implementation updates
Recommendations from Committee – 15 May 2024					
8	Improvement of the environment in Poole Park through a trial closure of a park entrance to motor traffic	Cabinet refer the matter to Full Council for decision.	Cabinet, 22 May 2024	Rejected	<p>Extract from Cabinet minutes:</p> <p>'Cabinet members questioned the benefit of taking the report to full council for further debate and felt that the decision should be made.'</p> <p>Decision made: RESOLVED that Cabinet: - (a) Agrees that the current trial closure, of the Whitecliff entrance and exit point to motor vehicles, is made permanent in Poole Park. (b) Agrees that current arrangements are retained, and motor vehicles can still access Poole Park and its facilities.'</p>
Recommendations from Committee – 11 September 2024					
15	Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: discussion paper	RESOLVED that a. the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the information presented in the discussion paper and gave their views on possible approaches Cabinet may wish to take in relation to the promotion of plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets. These proposals will then be subject to further evidence-gathering and consultation. b. To support the treaty and do more work outside the committee on the position statement. c. The draft position statement be brought back to the Committee for further consideration with information	Portfolio Holder and Officers	Accepted	A revised position statement with measurable objectives was returned to the committee for further scrutiny in October 2025.

		about how it can be measured against SMART objectives in order for the Council to be more ambitious and positive on this issue			
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Recommendations from Committee – 20 November 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.

Recommendations from Committee – [26 February 2025](#)

38	Climate Action Annual Report 2023/24	RESOLVED that a) The Committee propose to the Portfolio Holder that on the front page of the BCP Greenhouse Gas Emissions Dashboard an additional box is added to highlight the context of any carbon reduction relevant to the annual carbon reduction target b) Embedded carbon cost to be included in the calculation and displayed on the dashboard where available.	Portfolio Holder	Unknown - seek update	
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39	Housing Strategy Review	RESOLVED that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that that the Housing Strategy Steering Group be comprised of one member from each political group and one unaligned member.	Cabinet, 2 April 2025	Accepted	<p>Extract from Cabinet minutes:</p> <p>‘The Portfolio Holder thanked the Environment and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their thorough debate at the Committee and expressed support for their recommendation.’</p> <p>Decision made: RESOLVED that Cabinet: - (a) Approved the Revised Housing Strategy Delivery Plan at appendix B; (b) Approved the extension of the current Housing Strategy Period to 2027; (c) Approved the governance structure as set out in paragraphs 7-11 of the report; and (d) Approved that the steering group being formed be made up of 1 member of each Political group and 1 unaligned member.</p>
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Recommendations from Committee – [2 April 2025](#)

49	Recommendations from the Safer	Recommendations to Cabinet	Cabinet date, 26 November 25	Agreed	1. The proposed Safe Accommodation Strategy delivery plan includes a number of actions around communication,
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<p>Accommodati on Strategy Working Group</p>	<p>1. That as part of the Safe Accommodation Strategy development, officers consider an awareness campaign and/or guidance materials on the different types of financial support that are available to support those fleeing domestic abuse, in particular in relation to different types of housing tenure (e.g. shared tenancies, joint mortgages), in order to break down a significant barrier to survivors accessing support to end their abuse.</p> <p>2. That the engagement plan for the Safe Accommodation Strategy should ensure that the voices of those with lived experience are heard and reflected within the Strategy.</p> <p>3. That an all councillor briefing session be added to the Safe Accommodation Strategy engagement plan, to ensure members are adequately informed about the strategy and able to contribute views, and to enable them to fulfil their role within the community by communicating the benefits of the Safe Accommodation Strategy to residents.</p> <p>4. a) that the provision of safe accommodation and associated commissioning process be reviewed, b) that scrutiny members be invited to review and input into this review, prior to the commencement of commissioning, through an additional meeting of this working group.</p> <p>5. That the use of temporary accommodation be continuously reviewed and specific KPIs be established for monitoring the success of the new safe accommodation model, including occupancy rates, length of stay, outcomes for survivors (e.g., successful move-on to permanent housing), and survivor satisfaction. These KPIs should be reviewed regularly by the relevant scrutiny committee to ensure accountability and transparency.</p> <p>6. That Cabinet, with the support of the council's Corporate Management Board, be requested to take a</p>			<p>training and specialist advice that will ensure any household receives correct and clear information. Please see attached strategy delivery plan.</p> <p>2. Public consultation on the three domestic abuse strategies (Prevention of Domestic Abuse, Safe Accommodation and Perpetrator Strategies) has been completed, alongside several sessions on the Safe Accommodation Strategy with our established experts by experience group, including a dedicated session on the delivery plan. We will continue working with this group to monitor implementation, which includes actions to train and support experts by experience so they can actively participate in the commissioning and procurement of domestic abuse services.</p> <p>3. An all councillor briefing will be arranged in due course.</p> <p>4. The Safe Accommodation Strategy will be submitted with a commissioning plan for scrutiny and review.</p> <p>5. The proposed Safe Accommodation Strategy delivery plan sets out several actions that will contribute to this recommendation including the following:</p> <p>2.1.3 We will minimise the use of temporary accommodation and where this is provided, as a last resort, specialist Domestic Abuse support will</p>
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		view on forthcoming decisions that may be of significant or contentious public impact, regardless of decision-making thresholds, and an all councillor briefing be held before any such decisions are made, to enable all councillors, and particularly ward councillors, to be properly informed.			<p>be offered until the household can move into safe accommodation.</p> <p>5.1.1 Set up a task and finish group under the governance of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group to agree future data monitoring across commissioned services, BCP Homes, BCP Council Housing, Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.</p> <p>6. The Safe Accommodation Strategy will be submitted with a commissioning plan which will set out the procurement intentions for the next 3 years.</p>
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Recommendations from Committee – 14 May 2025 – No recommendations made at this meeting.

33

Recommendations from Committee – [9 July 2025](#)

17	Local Area Energy Plan	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>1) The recommendation as outlined in the report be approved by Cabinet.</p> <p>2) Cabinet add as an external stakeholder, the community to be represented in all stakeholder engagement, including any panels, meetings or focus groups.</p>	Cabinet	Partially accepted	<p>Cabinet approved the recommendations in the report and so accepted recommendation 1 from O&S.</p> <p>Cabinet were silent on recommendation 2 from O&S – seek an update.</p>
18	Email and Document Storage Retention – Impact Analysis on Costs and Environmental Factors & Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED to cabinet that:</p> <p>as per Option (B), the Committee supports the continuation of activity already underway, as part of the Councils Data and Innovation Programme, to re-assess and profile Microsoft 365 end-user licensing requirements, moving colleagues to lower-costs licenses where appropriate.</p>	Cabinet	Unknown	<p>Cabinet did not address this recommendation at the meeting</p> <p>The committee may wish to seek an update on this recommendation response, although the recommendation itself shows support for continued work within the council and so would require noting by Cabinet and not consideration.</p>

Recommendations from Committee – 8 October 2025

26	Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: draft position statement and action plan	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>a) All mentions of the word vegan be replaced with Plant-Based throughout the paper.</p> <p>b) Switching the target from 20% for plant-based concessions to 25%.</p> <p>c) That Council adopt the position statements and strategy for plant based diets in BCP Council with the amendments above.</p>	<p>Received by Cabinet, 29 October 2025.</p> <p>Then deferred by Cabinet for consideration at 26 November 2025 meeting</p>	Unknown	Awaiting response from Portfolio Holder
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Recommendations from Committee – 19 November 2025

34	Waste Strategy for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council 2026-2036	<p>RESOLVED that the committee supported the recommendations as set out in the report to Cabinet including Option 1 regarding the removal of current separate kerbside battery collections but requested an additional point be included in respect of this option to read:</p> <p>(ii) and to develop a convenient battery recycling scheme with local businesses to create more easily accessible drop off points and in addition, requested the strategy at appendix 1 be amended to include the following: -</p> <p>(a) Paragraph 5.1 of Appendix 1 'A Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-2028' be amended to include <i>'and incineration'</i> so that the paragraph reads <i>'5.1 Tendering waste disposal contracts that embed the waste hierarchy and minimise the use of landfill and incineration'; and</i></p> <p>(b) Paragraph 5.3 of Appendix 1 'A Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-2028' be amended to include <i>'whilst also considering the carbon footprint of the type of disposal'</i> so that the paragraph reads <i>'5.3 Prioritising waste site proximity where possible, so waste travels only as far as it needs to and reduces the significant carbon impact of transporting waste whilst also considering the carbon footprint of the type of disposal'</i>.</p>	Cabinet 17 December 2025	Partially accepted	<p>Extract from Cabinet minutes:</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder thanked the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration of the report and their recommendations. In relation to this the Portfolio Holder advised that he felt the additional recommendation of (ii) was not necessary as people would be signposted to available organisations, and that this would include those who offered a postal collection of batteries which would assist those unable to access those in shops. In addition, the Portfolio Holder advised that any shops selling batteries were required to provide a collection of used batteries.</p> <p>Further to this the Portfolio Holder advised that the recommendations raised in relation to paragraph 5.1 and 5.3 would be included within the tendering priorities and that he was happy to accept both of those recommendations. The seconder advised that they were also content with these.</p>
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Recommendations from Committee – 25 February 2026

Recommendations from Committee – 20 May 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 15 July 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 9 September 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 18 November 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 24 February 2026					

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OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
No current agreed actions				

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

UPDATED: 14.01.26

Minute number	Item	Recommendation made <small>*items remain for monitoring until implementation is complete or committee agree to remove.</small>	Recommended to <small>*name of receiving body/ Officer, and date received</small>	Outcome <small>*accepted/ partially accepted/ rejected/ unknown.</small>	Implementation updates
Recommendations from Committee – 24 July 2024					
36	Child Exploitation Working Group Findings Report	<p>RESOLVED that the Committee RECOMMEND to Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That partnership working be promoted to ensure increased communication around the issues highlighted with parents, schools, children and youth services. That earlier age-appropriate education be implemented within schools across BCP regarding the risks associated with exploitation, drugs and the dangers of carrying weapons. 	Cabinet, 2 October 2024	Partially accepted	<p>Extract from 2.10.24 Cabinet minutes:</p> <p>'The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills spoke in support of the recommendations whilst highlighting with regards to recommendation 2 as set out above that BCP couldn't dictate the curriculum but can certainly look at ways to support it.</p> <p>The Leader advised that the Cabinet would take the matter away and go back to the Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.'</p> <p>Update given by Portfolio Holder to O&S Committee at 26.11.24 meeting. Extract minute:</p> <p>'The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People provided a verbal update which included:</p> <p>An update on the outstanding Cabinet recommendation from previous meetings related to knife crime and drug/alcohol use in schools. The Education Improvement Service collaborated with police and community groups to gather data on school programs addressing these issues, but challenges remained in obtaining detailed information.</p>

					<p>OFSTED had recommended that schools incorporate local safeguarding issues, such as knife crime, into their curriculum. There are current resources available for Personal, Social, Health, and Economic education, with additional materials being sourced from providers attending conferences. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People highlighted that he also found free resources online through organisations like the DfE.</p> <p>In response to the Cabinet recommendations around earlier age-appropriate education. There was a need to assess existing educational initiatives related to this at both primary and secondary levels regarding knife crime awareness.</p> <p>Advised of upcoming events including webinars and community events focused on knife crime and related issues.'</p>
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37 **Recommendations from Committee – 19 September 2024** – No recommendations made at this meeting.

Recommendations from Committee – [26 November 2024](#)

36	Linwood Special School SEND Post 16 Provision at Ted Webster	<p>It was RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended to approve (a) in the report: Cabinet approves the scheme to develop a satellite of Linwood School hosted at the former Ted Webster Children’s Centre providing a total of 60 Post 16 places including the associated capital investment necessary to develop the scheme as contained in Appendix 1 (Exempt). The scheme is fully funded from the council’s grant allocation of High Needs Provision Capital and will progress in line with the project programme set out at paragraph 12</p>	Cabinet, 10 December 2024	Accepted	Cabinet agreed to the recommendations in the report, as endorsed by O&S.
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Recommendations from Committee –28 January 2025 – No recommendations made at this meeting.

Recommendations from Committee – [11 March 2025](#)

69	SEND Improvement Update	It was Proposed, Seconded and RECOMMENDED to better assess the impact on children, young people and families of any potential budget overspend in the SEND service budget, the Committee recommends that Cabinet requests a report be provided to Cabinet by June 2025 which outlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the likely overspend in the budget which areas have been identified to overspend the options to ensure the budget limit is met an appraisal of the impact on children and families of these factors 	Cabinet, 2 April 2025	Accepted	Cabinet requested a report on 'SEND Budget Pressures' as recommended by the O&S committee. The report was considered by Cabinet at the 16 July 2025 meeting. Cabinet noted the report.
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Recommendations from Committee – [10 June 2025](#)

11	Youth Justice Service Plan 2025-26	RESOLVED that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the Youth Justice Plan so that Cabinet can recommend its approval to the Full Council.	Cabinet, 26 November 2025	Accepted	Youth Justice Plan approved by Cabinet for recommendation to Council. Youth Justice Plan approved by Council.
12	Housing for Care Experienced Young People	It was Proposed, Seconded and RECOMMENDED that the Committee seeks assurance that the new Joint Housing protocol has been successfully agreed and is working effectively to ensure our Care Experienced Young People are seeing an improved service and are in receipt of timely advice and safe housing that suits their individual needs and hopes for the future.	Officers	Unknown, but Officers were in support of the recommendation in the meeting.	Seek update

Recommendations from Committee – [15 September 2025](#) - No recommendations made at this meeting.

Recommendations from Committee – 25 November 2025

9	Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions	Comment to Cabinet: The committee agreed to make Cabinet aware that the Committee appreciates the detrimental impact of school exclusions, which were highlighted in the report, and recognises the work that is underway to address this. The committee agreed that through this work the council's primary focus is improved outcomes for the children of BCP but that this work will also likely bring budgetary savings such as:	Cabinet, 26 November 2025	Not applicable	The Cabinet thanked the committee for its work on this. Note: the constitution requires no response from Cabinet to comments from O&S.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in exclusions and associated costs (e.g. transport, AP placements, tribunal processes) • Improved outcomes for vulnerable pupils, reducing future demand on social care, youth justice, and post-16 support service • A reduction in the need for unregistered and costly AP as more needs are met by schools 			
10	Home to School Transport	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to endorse the recommendation within the report to Cabinet, this being that Cabinet:</p> <p>'Agree to tender an external provider to deliver a transformation project over three years with a total cost of £1.5 million funded by the flexible use of capital receipts to deliver service improvements and by the end of the project on-going savings in SEND school transport projected at £3 million (net of additional resource requirement)'</p>	Cabinet, 26 November 2025.	Accepted	<p>Report recommendations agreed by Cabinet for recommendation to Council.</p> <p>Report recommendations agreed by Council.</p>

39

Recommendations from Committee – 27 January 2026

55	Invest to Save Budgets in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	<p>RESOLVED that the Committee agreed the following recommendations and that they be passed to Cabinet:</p> <p>a.) Note the current High Needs Block (HNB) position and the impact and cost avoidance of the initiatives implemented to date including the increased supply of specialist places, the early years inclusion model (Dingley's Promise) and the positive impact of the Portage Service.</p> <p>b.) Endorse the invest-to-save programme and the establishment of the High Needs Block Deficit Recovery Plan Board, including its role in approving a benefits-measurement framework to evidence cost avoidance and prevent double-counting across initiatives.</p> <p>c.) Support the progression of the following priority initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitalisation of High Needs funding processes (integrated with the SCM upgrade) • Synergy Case Management (SCM) upgrade to go-live (target May–June 2026) 	Cabinet		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-EHCP targeted funding model (subject to affordability and governance) 			
56	Family Hubs Working Group Final Report	<p>The Committee agreed the Working Group's recommendations to Officers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build on the strong foundations of community engagement, with a focus on inclusivity and responsiveness. Explore ways to support staff wellbeing that are informed by staff experiences and feedback. Develop clear measures of effectiveness relating to Family Hubs, with key performance indicators focused on reach, inclusivity and responsiveness to evolving community needs, supported by improved data collection and feedback. 	Officers		
56	Family Hubs Working Group Final Report	<p>The Committee agreed to make Cabinet aware that the Working Group recommended Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Notes the scrutiny that has been undertaken on Family Hubs and the Working Group's finding of the strong staff commitment to community engagement. Endorses continued support for Family Hubs, with future priorities to include investment in staff capacity, professional development and enhanced tools to evidence impact. 	Cabinet		
Recommendations from Committee – 10 March 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 26 March 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 16 June 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 14 September 2026					

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Recommendations from Committee – 24 November 2026

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Recommendations from Committee – 26 January 2027

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Recommendations from Committee – 9 March 2027

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OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
11 March 2025				
69	<p>SEND Improvement Update</p> <p>SEND Improvement Update.pdf</p>	<p>Decision made: The officers agreed to share the full review of the DSG finances as well as the SEND improvement board's response to the review.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p> <p>The Committee requested an update on the ongoing work regarding education outside of school and home education and asked that it be shared with the Committee.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		
15 September 2025				
25	<p><u>Alternative Provision Improvement Plan</u></p> <p>Alternative Provision Improvement Plan Final.pdf</p>	<p>Decision Made: The Committee discussed the routes into AP, including exclusions and EHCPs, and officers agreed to provide further data on this breakdown.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		To be incorporated into new SEND/AP Strategy
27 January 2026				
51	<p><u>Recommendation Tracker</u></p>	<p>Members agreed to review the tracker in more depth around June 2026.</p> <p>Action – Committee aware</p>		
53	<p><u>Members of Youth Parliament Update</u></p>	<p>The mental health training video would be shared with Members when available, and officers would confirm whether it would be appropriate to present the video at a future Committee meeting or to circulate it outside the meeting.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
54	<u>Housing for Care Experienced Young People</u>	<p>The Committee was advised that Youth Homelessness Board data is reported regularly, and it was agreed that officers would provide the Committee with a summary of these metrics, including information on repeat homelessness and outcomes for care experienced young people.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		
55	<u>Invest to Save Budgets in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)</u>	<p>Officers agreed to circulate information on the Portage service to Members and, if helpful, arrange a short briefing session on the service.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		

HEALTH & ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UPDATED: 20.2.26

Minute number	Item	Recommendation made *items remain for monitoring until implementation is complete or committee agree to remove.	Recommended to *name of receiving body/ Officer, and date received	Outcome *accepted/ partially accepted/ rejected/ unknown.	Implementation updates
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 20 May 2024					
11	Data Working Group Final Report	<p>The Committee recommend to the O&S Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that a similar [data] toolkit be developed for all O&S committees to reflect the relevant data and policy landscape within the remit of these committees. This to be added to the O&S Action Plan. that the Data Use Toolkit be highlighted within the O&S annual report to Council. 	Overview and Scrutiny Board (16 July 2024).	Recommendations accepted.	<p>Toolkit development for all O&S committees has been added to the O&S Action Plan.</p> <p>Toolkit for the Children’s O&S Committee is near completion. All others are yet to start and will be developed when resources allow.</p> <p>The Data Use Toolkit was highlighted within the 2023/24 O&S annual report to Council. (Update by O&S Specialist, 24/4/25)</p>
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 15 July 2024					
21	Adult Social Care Business Transformation Case	<p>The Committee recommend that Cabinet recommends that Council:</p> <p>a) Approves the business case for a new adult social care transformation delivery model to improve outcomes for residents and to achieve financial efficiencies and savings enabled by investment.</p> <p>b) Agrees to the establishment of a formal transformation programme; ‘Fulfilled Lives’.</p> <p>c) Agrees to the proposed investment of £2.9M, with Corporate Management Board being provided 6-monthly stage reviews on</p>	Cabinet (17 July 24) and Council (23 July 24)	Recommendations partially accepted at both Cabinet and Council	<p>The final decision of Council was different from the committee recommendation as follows:</p> <p>Resolved that Council:</p> <p>(a) Approves in principle the business case for a new adult social care transformation delivery model to improve outcomes for residents and to achieve financial efficiencies and savings enabled by investment of up to 2.9M;</p> <p>(b) Agrees to the establishment of a formal transformation programme; ‘Fulfilled Lives’;</p> <p>(c) Agrees to an initial 12-month investment of 1.79M, with an interim report to Cabinet on progress of the design phase in January</p>

		<p>the progress of the transformation programme.</p> <p>d) Invites the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide regular scrutiny of progress towards benefits and sustainable change. In particular, the Committee be invited to review the progress against the four priority areas of the Fulfilled Lives programme and the risks and opportunities of data with ASC transformation</p>			<p>2025 and a full report by July 2025, with recommendations for further investment; and</p> <p>(d) Invites the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide regular scrutiny of progress towards benefits and sustainable change. In particular the Committee be invited to review the progress against the four priority areas of the Fulfilled Lives programme and the risks and opportunities of data with ASC transformation.</p> <p>Implementation update required on a)-c) above.</p> <p>Implementation update on d) above:</p> <p>The Health & ASC O&S Committee now receives regular reports on the Fulfilled Lives programme to provide opportunity for ongoing scrutiny of the transformation delivery. (Update by O&S Specialist, 24/4/25)</p>
<p>Recommendations from Committee meeting – 24 September 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.</p>					
<p>Recommendations from Committee meeting – 2 December 2024</p>					
46	Health and Social Care for the Homeless	<p>The Committee recommend that Cabinet:</p> <p>Discuss the issues caused by a lack of funding for rough sleepers with no local connection and those without an identified priority need with a view to developing solutions in partnership with other local authorities and key stakeholders such as the Integrated Care Board and relevant ministers to create a robust system that does not fail our most vulnerable or unfairly place the responsibility for caring for these people on local particular local authorities, with a view to getting something in place before the new strategy.</p>	Cabinet (10 December 2024)	<p>Acceptance unknown – recommendation received by Cabinet with advice that it would be considered at a future meeting of the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Cllr Kieron Wilson is responding by email to this recommendation.</p>

47	Transforming Urgent and Emergency Care Services	<p>The Committee recommend that Cabinet recommends to Council:</p> <p>a) Notes the summary of the diagnostic review, including improved outcomes for residents and financial benefits for the Council.</p> <p>b) Notes that under the draft Partnership Agreement with Dorset health and care partners, anticipated benefits are significantly in excess of costs to the Council.</p> <p>c) Delegates to the Corporate Director for Wellbeing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, the Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Finance, authority to enter into the Partnership Agreement to undertake the proposed transformation programme.</p>	Cabinet (10 December 2024) and Council (10 December 2024)	Recommendations accepted at both Cabinet and Council	
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 3 March 2025					
61	Adult Social Care Strategy 2025-28	<p>The Committee recommend to Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the inclusion of some clear targets ideally linked to the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) within the Adult Social Care Strategy; and the inclusion of an overview of how to better integrate performance and activity data with finance data in the Adult Social Care Strategy. 	Cabinet (2 April 2025)	Response unknown – recommendations 'welcomed' by Cabinet but no clear response given.	<p>The final decision of Cabinet did not reflect the recommendations made by the committee, and was as follows:</p> <p>'Resolved that the new ASC Strategy 2025-28 is linked to the Corporate Vision and supports corporate priorities under 'Our People and Communities.'</p> <p>Update required. Committee may wish to seek a response from relevant Portfolio Holder back into committee.</p>
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 19 May 2025 No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 14 July 2025					

20	Adult Social Care Fulfilled Lives Transformation Programme	The HASC O&S Committee: 1. Supports the recommendation to Cabinet that Council approves the request for the release of the remaining £1.11m funding that was previously agreed to allow the Fulfilled Lives Programme to reach completion and realisation of the benefits; and 2. Continues to monitor this four-year programme in particular around self-directed support and support at home that will enable people to stay independent.	Cabinet 26 July 2025	Accepted	Cabinet and Council approved the release of the remaining £1.1m as outlined at part 1 of the recommendation.
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 23 September 2025					
30	Get Dorset & BCP Working Plan - GD&BCPWP	The Committee RECOMMENDS that: 1) The recommendations as outlined in the report be approved by Cabinet. 2) That Cabinet agree for the Get Dorset & BCP Working Plan to return to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee at an appropriate stage for further scrutiny, to enable Members to review its delivery, assess its impact in supporting individuals to return to work, and consider whether intended outcomes are being achieved.	Cabinet 1 October 2025	Accepted	Report recommendations agreed by Council.
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 1 December 2025					
44	FutureCare Programme – Mid Programme Review	RESOLVED that the Committee requests the programme return to its next meeting on 2 March 2026 with detailed financial and impact data to scrutinise.	Officers	Accepted	Coming back to Committee on 2 March with further information requested.
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 2 March 2026					

Recommendations from Committee meeting – 19 May 2026

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Recommendations from Committee meeting – 20 July 2026

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Recommendations from Committee meeting – 22 September 2026

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Recommendations from Committee meeting – 30 November 2026

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Recommendations from Committee meeting – 1 March 2027

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OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

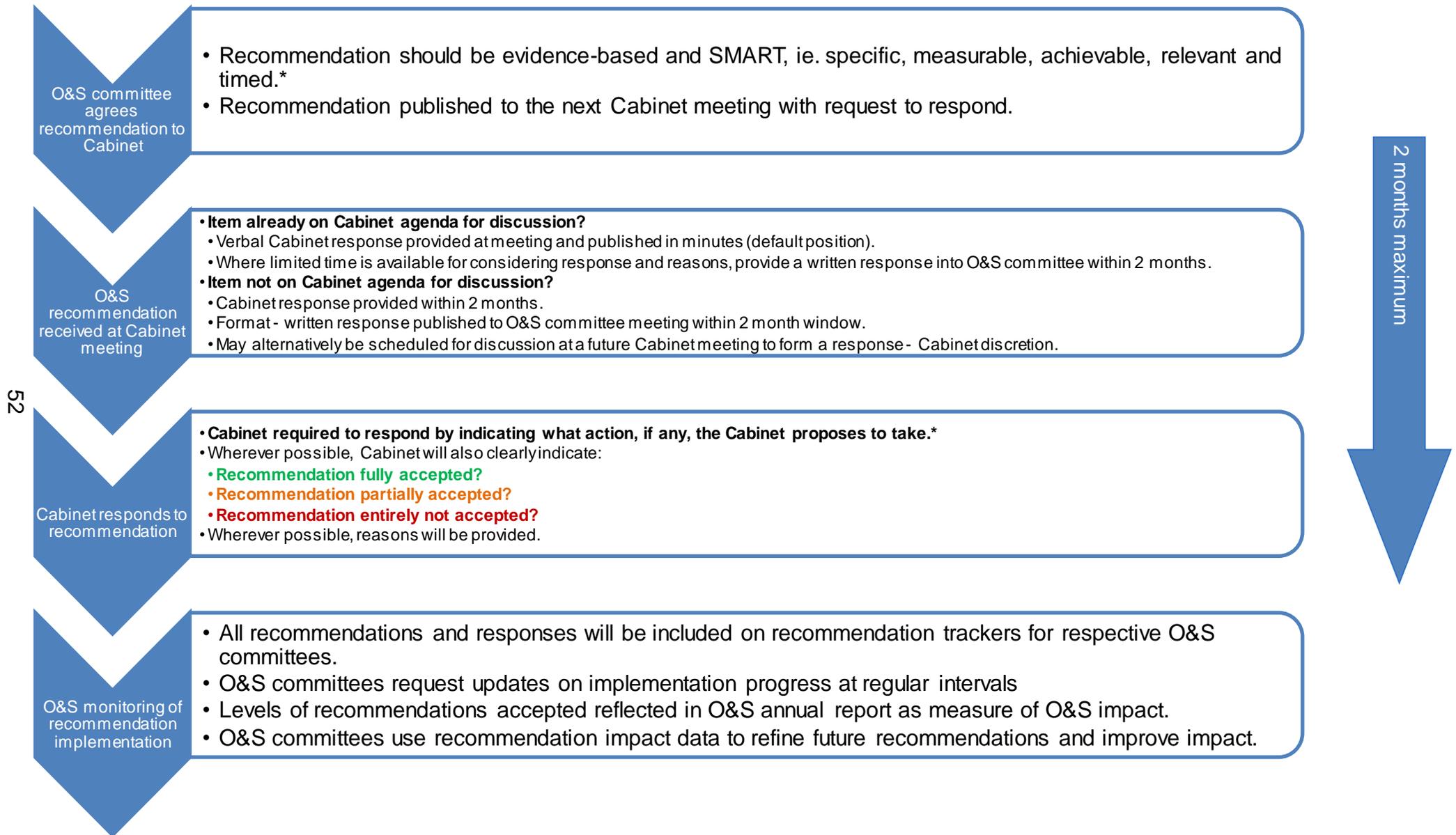
Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 25 September 2023				
20	National Suicide Prevention Strategy	Decision Made: The Board was advised that Public Health was unsure of the amount which would be allocated to the BCP area, as the closing dates for bids had not yet happened, however bids were being worked on and once any funding was known, the Committee could be informed. Action – Public Health aware		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 15 July 24				
49	Adult Social Care Transformation Business Case	Decision Made: That key risks and Key Performance Indicators be included in future reports regarding the Transformation Programme Action – Officers aware	To enable the Committee to have this information when scrutinising	
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 24 September 24				
34.	Adult Social Care Budget Presentation	Decision made: In response to a query regarding the activities and outcomes of the Live Well Dorset programme, the Committee was advised that it had managed to reach those living in the most deprived areas of BCP and that access could potentially be provided to the dashboard for the Committee to see the output. Action: to be considered further		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 3 March 25				

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
59.	The Transformation of UHD Hospitals	Decision Made: That the Director of Adult Social Care be the contact for any Cllrs wishing to visit the new facilities ACTION – Director and Cllrs aware.		
64.	Work Plan	Decision Made: As requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Committee will monitor the proposed increase of block booked beds for long-term care and that an update on progress against this be provided at an appropriate time. ACTION – added to the work plan with no date yet identified.		An update requested under budget presentation in September 2025
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 19 May 25				
11	FutureCare Programme Update	Decision Made: That the Committee receive data regarding bed capacity and workforce numbers at an appropriate time. Action – Officers aware Decision Made: That the Committee receive data around benefits tracking and monitoring to be reported to a meeting at a future date. Action – Officers aware and added to the work plan Decision Made: That the Committee receive further information regarding capacity within secondary care to fulfil the future need. Action – Officers aware		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 14 July 25				
20.	Adult Social Care Fulfilled Lives Transformation Programme	Decision Made: That the Committee receive quantitative data about the impact in future reports.		

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
		Action – Officers aware		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 23 September 25				
31.	Tricuro: Business Plan Review and Objectives 2025-26	<p>Decision Made: The Committee requested data on service capacity, particularly at the Moordown centre. Officers confirmed that capacity data is available via dashboards and would be circulated to the Committee.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p> <p>Decision made: The Committee was advised of the officer's commitment to ongoing engagement and agreed that progress updates should be provided between formal planning cycles to support continued collaboration and oversight</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 1 December 2025				
44.	FutureCare Programme – Mid Programme Review	<p>Decision Made: The importance of tracking savings through to tangible outcomes, such as reduced home care hours and improved reablement was highlighted, and the Chair requested detailed data analysis at a future meeting.</p> <p>Action – added to work plan for 2 March 2026</p>	To enable the Committee to fully scrutinise the impact of the programme in terms of tangible outcomes and savings	Coming back to Committee on 2 March 2026.
45.	Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) Update	<p>Decision Made: The Committee requested the programme DiS dashboard be shared with them to consider further.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware.</p>		

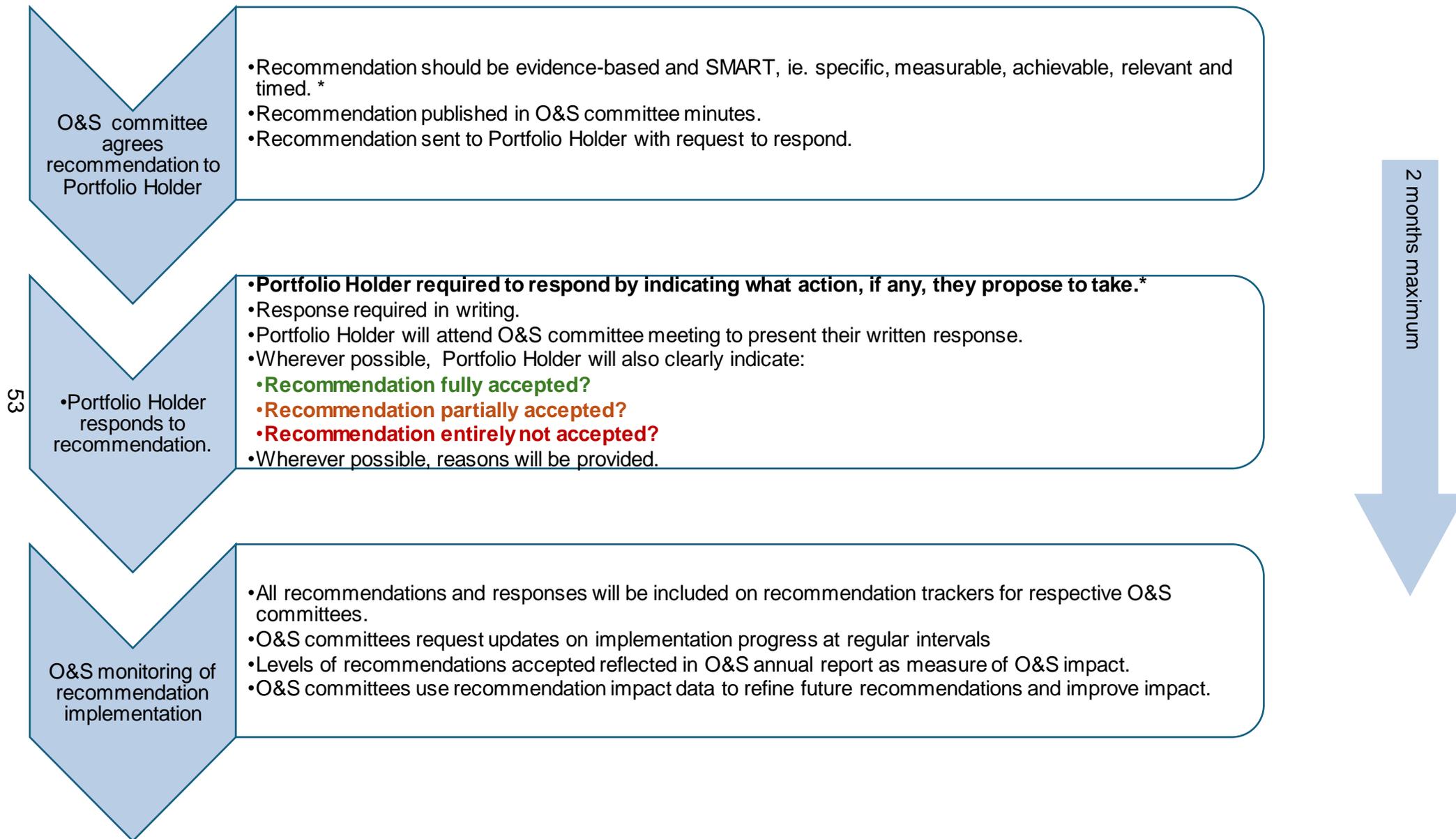
O&S Recommendations / Executive response process

Cabinet process:



* [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK](#)

Portfolio Holder process



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CABINET



Report subject	Corporate Performance Report - Q3
Meeting date	4 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>BCP Council adopted ‘A shared vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2024-28’ in May 2024.</p> <p>The shared vision is the corporate strategy which sets out the council’s vision, priorities and ambitions as well as the principles which underpin the way the council works as it develops and delivers its services.</p> <p>Incorporated in the vision is a set of measures of progress for achieving the vision, priorities and ambitions.</p> <p>This is the performance monitoring report for Quarter Three 25-26, presenting an update on the progress measures.</p> <p>The council’s delivery against its priorities and ambitions can also be monitored through the performance dashboard which is available on the council’s website providing up-to-date real time information on the progress measures.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Consider the Quarter Three performance (b) Note that work continues to expand the data available on the interactive performance dashboard (c) Note the positive activities highlighted in the report (d) Note the performance exception reports relating to areas of underperformance and task the corporate directors to take action to improve performance
Reason for recommendations	<p>Our shared vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole sets out the priorities and ambitions against which the council’s performance will be judged, and as such is a vital component of the council’s performance management framework.</p> <p>An understanding of performance against targets, goals and objectives helps the council to assess and manage service delivery and identify emerging business risks.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Millie Earl, Leader of the Council
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Service Director	Isla Reynolds, Director of Marketing, Communications and Policy
Report Authors	Chris Shephard, Head of Policy. Strategy and Partnerships Liz Orme, Policy & Strategy Officer Pippa Quinton, Policy Apprentice Performance leads across the council
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information

Background

1. BCP Council adopted 'A shared vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2024-28' in May 2024 which was developed following a process of stakeholder engagement from June to October 2023.
2. The vision includes a comprehensive set of progress measures that track performance against the ambitions and focus areas of activity.
3. Since the vision was adopted, work has been carried out to establish and evolve baseline data, targets and intervention levels for the progress measures.
4. A performance dashboard has been created which we have been using successfully to support the monitoring of our progress towards the council's vision, using technology to enhance transparency and support data-driven decisions. This dashboard is updated by performance officers across the council, providing real-time information as it's available and is accessible on the council's website. The dashboard continues to be updated and evolved.
5. The Corporate Strategy Delivery Board meeting allows officers to meet monthly to monitor delivery of the council's vision at a strategic level. This also allows the board to conduct delivery deep dives and risk reviews, allowing for areas of concern to be addressed in a timely manner and best practice can be celebrated and shared. The board also allows the Council to prioritise key areas of activity.

An interactive performance dashboard to monitor performance

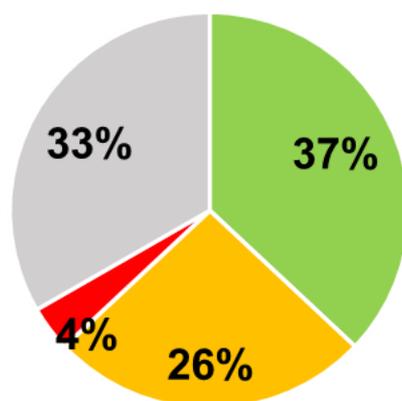
6. A live and interactive [performance dashboard](#) is available alongside quarterly reports, providing a real-time tracking tool that effectively addresses Cabinet's previous concerns regarding the timeliness of the reports. This is because quarterly performance reports are static snapshots of performance, often two to three months out of date by the time they reach Cabinet.
7. The performance dashboard supports the council's approach towards data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement in organisational performance.

8. Furthermore, transparency and accountability are enhanced through the public-facing live performance dashboard, which is continuously accessible to residents, councillors and officers.
9. The dashboard's purpose is to maintain a strategic perspective of overall council performance, and it is reviewed regularly with directors to ensure the best data is provided. Cabinet also has the flexibility to introduce additional measures if necessary for more detailed performance monitoring.
10. The dashboard is developing in phases, with further plans to enhance data availability, links to other dashboards and data sources and provide various lenses to view the data eventually replacing the need for a paginated performance report.
11. The dashboard was reviewed for accessibility and usability and changes to the design and content have been made as a result.
12. Links have been made to a [sustainability dashboard](#) demonstrating further information on the council's advancements towards achieving our net zero targets.
13. Subsequent phases will include:
 - a. Progress on strategic programmes of work,
 - b. Analysis of the latest data regarding the health of the people and places within the BCP area,
 - c. Sharing an overview of corporate risks.

Summary of Quarter Three Performance

14. Quarter Three data shows stable and broadly improving performance (Figure 1). The percentage of measures that are on target (green) has moved up from 35% in Quarter Two to 37% in Quarter Three. Where performance is being monitored (amber), the percentage has moved from 31% in Quarter Two to 26% in Quarter Three. The percentage of those measures requiring action (red) has reduced positively from 6% in Quarter Two to 4% in Quarter Three. The percentage of pending measures (grey) has increased from 28% in Quarter Two to 33% in Quarter Three. These are measures where there is no data to report in this quarter.

15. Figure 1: Quarter Three Performance Summary



16. **Appendix 1** contains more detail for each measure including the latest performance compared to the target and the baseline, and an updated commentary.
17. The direction of travel for each measure is also provided in Appendix 1. This shows whether performance is improving, declining or remains the same level compared to the previous update. For Quarter Three, there are more measures showing a positive direction of travel compared to Quarter Two with 22 measures showing a positive direction of travel (compared to 20), fewer measures showing a negative direction in Quarter Three (9 compared to 13), and 5 measures have stayed the same compared to 6 in Quarter Two.
18. It is important to note good and improving performance for many of the measures. A highlight is the measure that tracks the percentage of successful grant applications. For 25/26 to date, a total of 10 grant applications were submitted and all were successful, although not every application was awarded the full amount applied for. For Q3 the successful bids awarded were:
 - £37,000 awarded by The Tree Council for Stage 2 of The Trees Outside Woodland Fund application.
 - £51,000 awarded by Environment Agency (WRFFC) for Local Levy bid for Christchurch Harbour Habitat Restoration Feasibility Study.
 - £50,000 awarded by MHCLG for Digital Planning Improvement Fundround 4.2 to become an active member of the Open Digital Planning (ODP) community.
 - £598,000 awarded by DFE for SEND Intervention Support Fund.
19. Following underperformance in Quarter Two it is also important to note the significant improvement made to the determination of major planning applications during Quarter Three. There is more detail about this measure and the actions taken in the positive exception report at **Appendix 2**.
20. Some measures are doing less well and are areas of focus. **Appendix 3** contains exception reports that provide additional detail about the two red rated measures this Quarter, to reduce the number of primary school aged children excluded from school and to reduce the number of homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation. There is also a report in the measure to increase the enforcement outcomes of street based anti-social behaviour that details current performance and proposed action around future reporting.
21. Performance continues to be monitored by services and by the Corporate Strategy Delivery Board to ensure appropriate mitigations are in place and log actions being taken to improve performance.

Summary of financial implications

22. There are no financial implications as this is a performance monitoring report for the corporate strategy. The corporate strategy is an important document to identify and establish project priorities for council budget-setting and contains programmes of work aimed at improving strategic finance, under the Our Approach priority.

Summary of legal implications

23. There are two measures that require action in Quarter Three. Any potential risks and mitigations have been and will continue to be assessed by the relevant service area and reviewed by the Corporate Strategy Delivery Board.

Summary of human resources implications

24. One of the key strategies linked to delivery of the corporate strategy - the people and culture strategy - aims to foster a high-performance culture. Through a performance framework, colleagues understand their roles and contribution to BCP Council's vision and ambitions. It includes regular 1:1s, SMART objectives, and annual reviews. Personal objectives are linked to corporate ambitions in the shared vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. A dashboard is being developed with ICT to provide council leadership teams with performance insights, enhancing alignment to performance reporting. Additionally, programmes under Our Approach priority aim to positively impact human resources.

Summary of sustainability impact

25. The programmes of work underpinning the Place and Environment priority of the corporate strategy are designed to have a positive impact on sustainability outcomes.

Summary of public health implications

26. The programmes of work underpinning the People and Communities and Our Approach priorities in the corporate strategy are designed to have a positive impact on public health outcomes.

Summary of equality implications

27. The work programmes supporting the corporate strategy aim to positively impact protected groups. Equality impact assessments are conducted for these programmes, particularly under the People and Communities and Our Approach priorities.

Summary of risk assessment

28. There are two measures from Quarter Three that require action, and 14 that require monitoring. Potential risks and mitigations are assessed by the relevant service area and are regularly reviewed by Corporate Strategy Delivery Board.

Background papers

- [A shared vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole](#)
- [BCP Council Corporate Performance Dashboard](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Quarter Three - Corporate Performance Report – Overview of Q3 Performance

Appendix 2: Quarter Three – Positive Exception Report

Appendix 3: Quarter Three – Performance Exception Reports

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Positive Exception Performance Report:

Please use this report to highlight outstanding performance during the last quarter, the factors that drove the good performance, and the reason it is important. This report will make up part of the overall corporate performance report presented to Cabinet.

Indicator Description (taken from performance scorecard):

Increase the percentage of all major planning applications determined on time

2025/26 Q2 outturn: 69%

2025/26 Q3 outturn: 79%

2025/26 target: 80%

Reason for level of performance (what drove success?):

Planning application determination data is sourced from central government and provides year-to-date quarterly performance updates. Q3 Performance has significantly improved from Q2 and now only 1% below target of 80%.

A number of older applications were determined end of Q2 and some at the start of Q3 which accounts for the applications which were determined out of time. This is part of the drive to ensure we have no back log and was also due in part to the New Forest Mitigation requirement. Whilst the mitigation strategy was being developed we were unable to determine applications within a certain area of the Borough which resulted in some going over time.

Reason for significance and next steps:

There is an ongoing drive to ensure there is no backlog in determining major applications and there has been significant progress towards reaching the target during Q3. The ambition is to reach or exceed target for Q4, which will have a positive impact on the efficiency of the planning service and those who are in the system pipeline.

Beyond the reasons provided above, additional actions were highlighted at Q2 which will contribute to maintaining this progress. These include:

Staff training on Biodiversity Net Gain so they are less reliant on seeking advice from the ecologist thereby reducing delays in the consultee process.

New protocol being put into place with regards to procedure for seeking an extension of time to a planning application.

A new policy on accepting amended plans. This will enable the case officer to have a clear framework for assessing and determining the planning application.

New report templates to streamline the report writing process and help reduce time spent by case officers writing reports allowing them to focus on issuing decisions.

Completed by: Jon Bishop

Date: 03.02.26

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Exception Performance Report

Please use this report to explain the reasons for performance not meeting target, the risks this presents in each of the sections and the actions and intervention planned or in place to improve performance and mitigate the risks identified.

This report will make up part of the overall corporate performance report presented to Cabinet.

Indicator Description: Reduce the percentage of primary school aged children permanently excluded from school

2025/26 Q3 outturn: 0.019%

Quarterly Target: 0.010%

Reason for level of performance:

Data shown for Quarter 3 is from Autumn 2025 term (1st September 2025 to 31st December 2025) and is showing a permanent exclusion rate of 0.019% with is equivalent to 5 permanent exclusions. This is the same number as reported in the same period last year. However, one of the permanent exclusions from Autumn 2025 term has since been rescinded bringing the Quarter 3 rate down to 0.016%. National, statistical neighbour and regional comparison data is not yet available for Autumn 2025 term, and the latest national, statistical neighbour and regional data is from Autumn term 2024.

The data indicates that the reasons for the performance are challenges meeting the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and in particular meeting the needs of our primary aged boys with SEND.

Summary of financial implications:

Exclusion results in the Local Authority having to arrange alternative provision which is more costly than a mainstream school place.

Summary of legal implications:

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to arrange a suitable education within six days of a child being excluded.

Summary of human resources implications:

The main reason for exclusion for this group of children is physical assault against an adult.

Summary of sustainability impact:

n/a

Summary of public health implications:

Research has found that children who have been excluded from school achieve poorer health outcomes.

Summary of equality implications:

Boys are disproportionately represented in the cohort, as are children with SEND.
Actions taken or planned to improve performance:
<p>We are investing in leadership development and inclusive practice across our education system. This includes commissioning places on a nationally recognised Inclusion Leadership Programme and progressing work on our Three-Tier Alternative Provision Delivery Plan. We are strengthening local capacity through specialist workshops, advisory support, and collaborative forums, while promoting best practice through a planned Inclusion Conference in the Summer Term.</p> <p>To embed sustainable change, we have introduced dedicated Inclusion Advisors and seconded SENCOs to enhance Ordinarily Available Provision and the Graduated Approach. Work is underway to establish an Education Effectiveness Framework, clarifying roles, responsibilities, and accountability.</p> <p>Further initiatives include developing place-based approaches through Head Teacher Forums and progressing towards the establishment of a BCP Education Partnership Board to drive a shared culture and ethos.</p>
Completed by: Stefanie Gehrig Clark – Head of Performance, Governance & Systems
Date: 23 January 2026
Service Unit Head approval with date: Kerry Smith - Head of Education Effectiveness – 04.02.26

Exception Performance Report

Please use this report to explain the reasons for performance not meeting target, the risks this presents in each of the sections and the actions and intervention planned or in place to improve performance and mitigate the risks identified.

This report will make up part of the overall corporate performance report presented to Cabinet.

Indicator Description (taken from performance scorecard):

Reduce the number of homeless households in bed and breakfast

2025/26 Q3 outturn: 66

Quarterly Target: 40

Reason for level of performance:

Households in B&B have remained stable this quarter, while overall demand for Housing services has reached a five-year high.

Homelessness has risen by 9% over the past year, driven mainly by no-fault evictions in the private rented sector. The number of households the Council places in bed & breakfast is above target and largely made up of single people; families in B&B have significantly reduced.

The drivers of single homelessness demand on temporary accommodation also includes people leaving institutions, particularly the Criminal Justice System, Domestic Abuse survivors and evictions from Supported Housing.

Whilst the Housing service targets help and support towards the prevention of homelessness, efforts to improve early notification from other statutory agencies that people may need assistance will avert the need for temporary housing in many cases.

The provision of temporary accommodation for the households recording in this indicator is a statutory requirement.

Summary of financial implications:

The Council manages the additional cost of providing Bed & Breakfast accommodation through the receipt of government grant, The Homelessness Prevention Grant. The grant is being used to offset any financial TA pressures alongside expenditure on a number of TA prevention interventions.

Summary of legal implications:

Councils must ensure that no family with children is placed in bed and breakfast accommodation for longer than six weeks, which is the legal maximum stay permitted. This rule is designed to prevent families from remaining in unsuitable emergency housing for extended periods and is a key focus in local homelessness prevention work. BCP Council has been compliant for over a year, despite increased demand.

Summary of human resources implications:

Additional one off government grant received in 2025/26 is being deployed on temporary housing officer and support staff in the Housing Options team to help all households move-on from TA. Grant to support prevent homelessness is also in place for a number of specialist housing groups, including young people, offenders and survivors of domestic abuse.

Summary of sustainability impact:
<i>Detail any impact, if applicable.</i> N/A
Summary of public health implications:
Homeless households placed in B\&B accommodation face heightened public health risks, as extended stays in hotel-type settings are linked to poor housing conditions that worsen physical and mental health, increase hospital admissions, and contribute to health inequalities. Moving people into stable, self-contained accommodation reduces these risks and improves overall wellbeing by ensuring safer living environments and better access to support.
Summary of equality implications:
Using B\&B accommodation for homeless households can deepen existing inequalities, as vulnerable groups already facing poorer physical and mental health outcomes are at greater risk when placed in unsuitable or unstable housing. These conditions can worsen stress, limit access to opportunities, and heighten health disparities, particularly for those who already experience disproportionate disadvantage.
Actions taken or planned to improve performance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy to be considered by Cabinet in May 2026 with accompanying delivery plan. • New Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy to be considered by Cabinet in March 2026 • Re-commissioning of Housing Related Support Services for single people with multiple disadvantage to commence in 2026. • Review of Homelessness Prevention Grant expenditure to target interventions associated with delivery plan and preventing the use of temporary housing. • Appraisal and review of existing interventions to ensure value for money is achieved and successes recognised via proactive communications. • Programme lead to support the implementation of new legislation, Renters Right Act in Spring 2026
Completed by: Ben Tomlin Date: 06/02/26
Service Unit Head approval with date: 9/2/26

Exception Performance Report

Please use this report to explain the reasons for performance not meeting target, the risks this presents in each of the sections and the actions and intervention planned or in place to improve performance and mitigate the risks identified.

This report will make up part of the overall corporate performance report presented to Cabinet.

Indicator Description (taken from performance scorecard):

Increase enforcement outcomes relating to street-based ASB

2025/26 Q3 outturn: 1,181

Quarterly Target: 1,926

Reason for level of performance:

Street based enforcement stats Q3:

Number of CSAS incidents attended : 720

Number of alcohol seizures: 12

Number of dispersals : 384

Early intervention notices: 16

Support referrals:35

Community Protection Notice Warning – 6

Community Protection Notice – 3

Anti Social Behaviour Injunction – 2

Closure of premise

There has been a significant reduction in staff numbers since this period last year, however, figures for the quarter are strong, showing a robust approach to street related anti-social behaviour. The enforcement outcomes show a lack of escalated behaviours and successful formal warnings being applied, but robust action where required.

Previous years staffing levels were at 12FTE due to grant funded delivery, current staffing levels for Q3 were 5.5FTE, therefore outcomes per head are higher than previous year.

Summary of financial implications:

n/a

Summary of legal implications:

n/a

Summary of human resources implications:

n/a

Summary of sustainability impact:

n/a

Summary of public health implications:

n/a

Summary of equality implications:

n/a

Actions taken or planned to improve performance:

New corporate performance measures are being proposed to the Strategy Board for April 26 onwards, these measures will be less reliant on fluctuating staffing levels and give a more consistent picture of ASB levels and associated enforcement.

Completed by: Sophie Sajic

Date: 06/02/26

Service Unit Head approval with date: Sophie Sajic 9/2/26

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Families First Partnership Programme
Meeting date	10 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides an overview of the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme, the Government's national reform programme for children's social care, and sets out the proposed approach to local implementation.</p> <p>FFP underpins delivery of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, the Government's Plan for Change, and aligns with the NHS 10 Year reform agenda, providing a single delivery framework at place level. The programme aims to reduce crisis driven statutory intervention through earlier preventative measures, safely reduce the number of children entering care, and improve outcomes for children and families through family centred practice and stronger partnership working.</p> <p>The report outlines the local governance and programme management arrangements, including the establishment of a Strategic FFP Board and a multi-disciplinary transformation team, alongside arrangements for partner engagement, workforce development and learning from national pathfinders. It sets out the Council's priority delivery workstreams, including early help pathway development, front door reform, a Family Help pilot, planning for multi-agency child protection arrangements, and options appraisal for Family Group Decision Making.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the contents of the report. b) Consider the implications and impact for safeguarding practice for Children's Services and partner agencies.
Reason for recommendations	To provide an overview of the national reform programme related to safeguarding practice, and to allow the committee to consider the impact and implications for BCP Children's Social Care, and its partners.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr. Richard Burton
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley
Report Authors	Tracy Ryan – Head of Transformation Juliette Blake – Director of Children’s Social Care
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information

1. Background

The Families First Partnership (FFP) programme is the Government’s national reform programme for children’s social care in England, launched in April 2025. It aims to rebalance the system towards earlier intervention, integrated family support and more effective multi-agency child protection teams, ensuring children receive the right help at the right time and are supported to remain safely within their families wherever possible.

2. National Context

The programme aims to respond directly to sustained pressures within children’s social care, including rising demand, late (statutory) intervention and variable outcomes. These issues were identified in the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care and the Government’s response, *Stable Homes, Built on Love*, which called for a whole system shift towards prevention, family-led decision making and stronger multiagency working.

FFP underpins delivery of the Government’s Plan for Change and the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill, which seek to break the link between disadvantage and poor life outcomes. The programme is designed to reduce crisis driven statutory intervention, safely reduce the number of children entering care, and improve the consistency and quality of practice nationally.

FFP provides the primary delivery mechanism through which the ambitions of the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the NHS 10 Year reform agenda are realised at place level. All three reforms share a focus on early intervention, prevention, family-centred practice and integrated multiagency working, with the shared objective of improving life chances for children, reducing pressure on statutory services and supporting improved long-term population health.

3. Core Element of FFP Reforms

The programme guidance identifies the following key deliverables for all local areas:

a. Family Help

A unified Family Help offer spanning targeted early help and child in need which aims to provide a seamless system of identification of needs, assessment and multi-agency care planning. This aims to ensure children and families ‘Tell their stories once’ and received more timely support.

A Lead Family Help Practitioner role coordinating multi-disciplinary support with a single oversight view of the child, reducing the number of professional 'hand over points' and acting as a key point of contact for the family.

Integrated, multi-agency Family Help teams with clear pathways from first contact to statutory intervention to ensure holistic and integrated support plans for those with complex needs.

b. Multi-agency Child Protection

Establishment of Multi Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs), closer collaboration and information sharing between partner agencies, and Lead Child Protection Practitioners.

This aims to promote shared decision making, risk assessment and planning across social care, health and police creating clear accountability and consistent responses to harm, including extra-familial risks.

c. Family Group Decision Making

Routine and early use of Family Group Decision Making, a family support meeting to enable them to codesign their own support planning.

This enhanced planning meeting aims for greater involvement of wider family networks in safeguarding and care planning, with a focus on safely keeping children within their families wherever possible.

4. Local Implementation

BCP and Partner staff have been working together since May 2025 to understand the expectations of the national guidance and develop a local transformation programme to suit local needs.

Governance

A Strategic Families First Partnership (FFP) Board has been established, comprising senior representatives from key partner agencies. The Board provides strategic oversight, ensures alignment between national reforms and local programmes, and oversees delivery of the FFP transformation.

Transformation Team

A multi-disciplinary transformation team has been established to lead implementation. This includes dedicated FFP staff, secondees from partner agencies and specialist roles aligned to programme priorities and delivery requirements.

Research and Learning

Ten local authorities acted as national FFP Pathfinders for the reforms during 2024–25. Learning from these areas has been shared nationally and continues to inform local design. Dorset Council, the Southwest Pathfinder, remains a key partner, with ongoing joint sessions to align approaches where appropriate.

Engagement

A comprehensive programme of partner, workforce and service user engagement is underway. This includes coordinated communications activity, staff engagement

sessions and workshops, and a series of thematic workstreams to support codesign and implementation.

Key BCP Delivery workstreams

Following initial local engagement and evaluation of BCP's readiness to delivery and scoping, the current focus of delivery is as follows:

Early Help - Strengthening engagement with universal partners (including schools, midwifery, and health visiting) to deliver a single, partnership wide early identification, assessment and planning pathway. This builds on work already underway through the BCP Early Help Strategy 2024–26.

Front Door - Enhancing the children's services front door to move from a triage and process led model to a more conversational, needs led approach, improving timeliness, quality of decision making and access to the right support. This is dependent on expanded multiagency participation. A local vision has been developed and scoping for wider partnership involvement is underway.

Family Help Pilot - In line with FFP guidance, the Early Help and Child in Need safeguarding workforce will be expanded beyond Social Workers to include Alternative Qualified Practitioners acting as Lead Practitioners where appropriate. This aims to strengthen multi-disciplinary practice and earlier intervention. The pilot will be subject to robust evaluation prior to any wider rollout and is due to commence in March 2026.

Multi Agency Child Protection Teams - Scoping and modelling are underway to identify how existing child protection arrangements can be safely enhanced through increased partner involvement and the introduction of Lead Child Protection Practitioners. Pathfinder learning indicates no single national model has emerged as best practice. BCP continues to scope and plan for an enhanced offer with partners. Pending further national consideration of the evidence base for making these changes.

Family Group Decision Making - Staff are being trained to deliver family led planning meetings that strengthen family involvement and resilience. An options appraisal is underway to identify the most cost effective and impactful local delivery model that might be adopted, recognising workforce and resource implications.

All workstreams are subject to robust programme management, including planning, testing and evaluation. Performance management, workforce development and impact assessment are embedded throughout the transformation activity.

5. Summary of financial implications

The FFP national programme is backed by over £500 million in 2025/26, to local Authorities to commence transformation planning. BCP allocation was £1,173,000. From 2026 onwards, funding for the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme is expected to continue for at least a further two years at similar levels, and BCP awaits confirmation of its allocation in spring 2026.

Grant funding is expected to be utilised for transformation activities to implement the reforms and strengthen safeguarding workforce and practice across Children's Services and its partners.

6. Summary of legal implications

The FFP programme does not introduce new local statutory duties beyond those already established in existing children's social care and safeguarding legislation. Delivery of the programme must continue to comply with current legal frameworks, including the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children, and associated statutory guidance.

7. Summary of human resources implications

The primary HR impact of the FFP programme relates to workforce change and development, including role adaptation, new ways of working and increased multidisciplinary practice. This will require targeted training, clear role definitions, and effective change management to support staff through implementation. HR services are actively involved throughout delivery, and all workforce changes are being managed in accordance with the Council's established HR policies, procedures and employment law requirements.

8. Summary of sustainability impact

The Families First Partnership programme is intended to support the long-term sustainability of children's services by shifting investment towards earlier intervention, prevention and integrated working, thereby reducing reliance on crisis driven statutory responses over time. While the programme is supported by time limited transformation funding, ongoing sustainability will depend on embedding new practice models, workforce capability and multiagency working into business-as-usual arrangements. Financial, workforce and service impacts will continue to be monitored to ensure that emerging models are affordable, scalable and deliver improved outcomes within available resources.

9. Summary of public health implications

The Families First Partnership programme has positive public health implications through its focus on early intervention, prevention and whole family support. By addressing vulnerability earlier and strengthening multiagency working between children's services, health and community partners, the programme supports improved mental health, wellbeing and developmental outcomes for children and families. Over time, this preventative approach is expected to contribute to reduced health inequalities, lower demand on acute and specialist health services, and improved long term population health outcomes.

10. Summary of equality implications

A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is being completed for the FFP programme and will be reviewed through the Council's EIA governance process. It is anticipated that the programme will have a positive impact on children, young people and families who experience disadvantage or protected characteristics, through its focus on early intervention, prevention, family led decision making and improved access to coordinated support. No adverse or disproportionate impacts have been identified at this stage; however, the draft EIA recognises that ongoing monitoring will be required as new delivery models are piloted and scaled. Mitigating actions include inclusive service

design, workforce training, and continued engagement with communities and service users.

11. Summary of risk assessment

The key risks associated with the FFP programme relate to the scale and pace of system change, workforce readiness, multi-agency alignment, and the sustainability of funding beyond the transformation period. These risks are being mitigated through phased implementation, piloting and evaluation, strong programme governance and ongoing financial and performance monitoring. Overall, the programme is assessed as manageable risk, with appropriate controls in place.

Background papers

Families First Partnership Programme Presentation

Appendices

Appendix 1 – DfE Families First Programme Guidance

Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Focus: Families First Transformation Programme

Families First Partnership Programme National

Context

In response to the Care Review priorities and recommendations, a new national programme has been set up in the Department for Education to improve local services for children and families with transformation activity starting in April 2025.

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A national DfE-led programme	Families First Partnership Programme		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding: £523.5m ringfenced for preventative services 	Children and Families Grant £253.5m (previously supporting families)	Children's Social Care Prevention Grant £270m of new funding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy: Implementing three key reform strands 	Family Help	Multi-agency child protection	Family Group Decision Making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporates: two previous DFE programmes 	System enablers (i.e. practice, MASA, information sharing, data and digital)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners: Local and national partners 	Supporting Families Programme	Families First Pathfinder Programme	
	Local partners including LAs, police forces, health commissioners and providers, education & VCS.	National partners including DHSC, HO, Ofsted, NHSE, NPCC and other national bodies	

The CSC Prevention Grant has been provided to all LAs:
BCP Council received **£1,173,000** for 2025/2026

To be used in conjunction with the Children and Families Grant (formerly Supporting Families Grant) of **£1,357,900** to enable continuation of existing prevention services

The Prevention Grant is ringfenced to be used for: transformation, including evidence-based service design ahead of new or changed services being launched; and service delivery of both existing and new preventative services across Early Help, Family Help, Family Networks and Child Protection

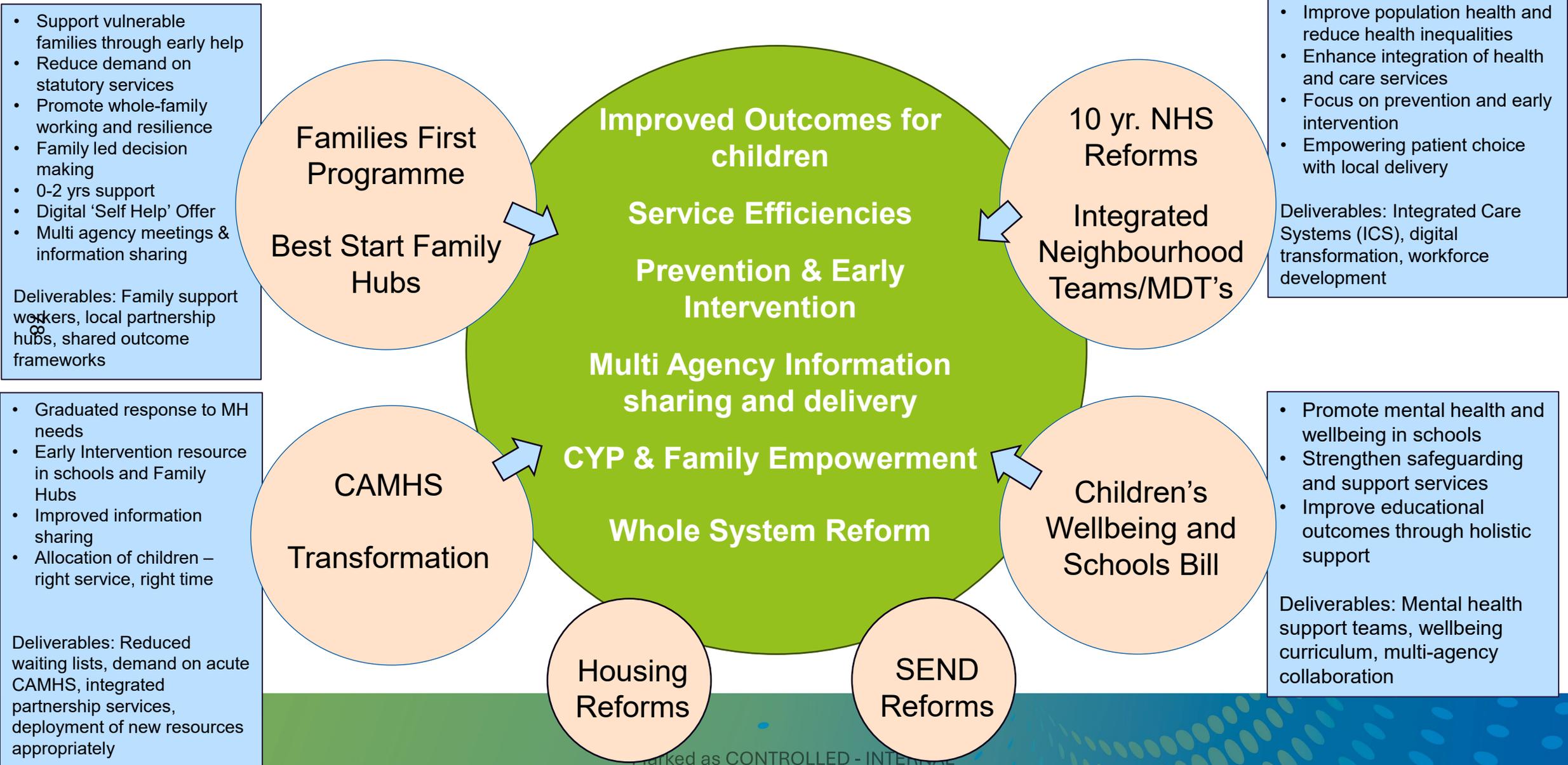
The funding can also be used to support offers of **Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)** to all families at pre-proceedings from March 2026

Service delivery should be in line with the **Children's social care: National Framework** and ensure delivery of prevention services, as described in **Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive**

Grant recipients are expected to spend a proportion of the funding (c. 30% of the CSC Prevention Grant) on transformation activity to establish the right conditions for effective and sustainable practice and service change. The remainder will be spent on service delivery, alongside the Children and Families Grant.

The grant recipient is also expected to review its needs assessment(s) of the local area ahead of redesigning services to address these priorities.

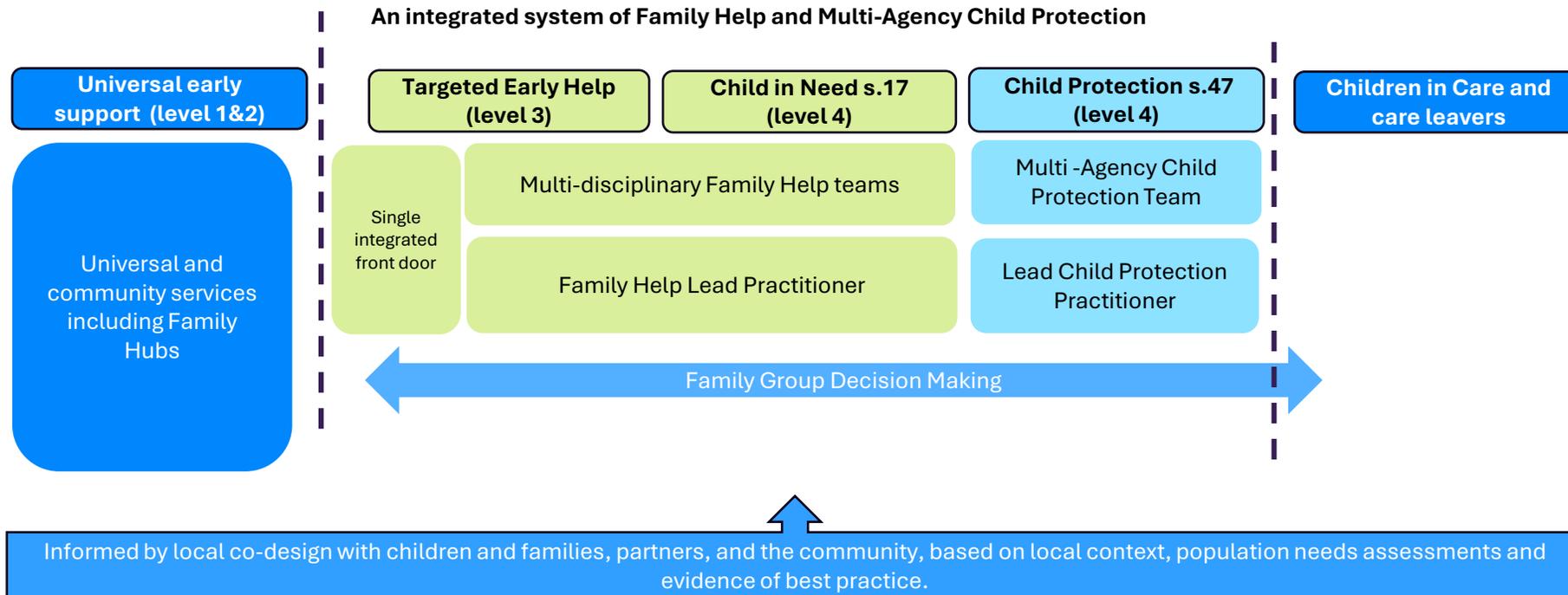
Integrating the Reforms – creating a single vision



Local redesign of an end-to-end system of support and protection, emphasising prevention and meeting the local needs of the population through an effective, integrated, joined up approach



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Local Implementation Focus

Early Help

- Reviewed implementation of **Family Hubs and Early Help Strategy**
- Relaunch of Strategy in March 2026 – **Partnership Single Assessment & Care Planning Pathway**
- Work with **Schools and Health** Providers Commencing
- Test, link and develop the **Self Help & Online Resources**

Front Door Access

- **New vision** for enhanced working shared with Partners
- Shift from Process, criteria and allocation to **Conversational model**
- Greater understanding needs, more timely support, greater focus on timely earlier intervention

Family Help

- Pilot Team will be launched from March 2026
- Introduction of **Alternatively Qualified 'Family Help Workers'** working alongside Qualified Social Workers
- Workforce development
- Review and development of policy, procedures and quality assurance

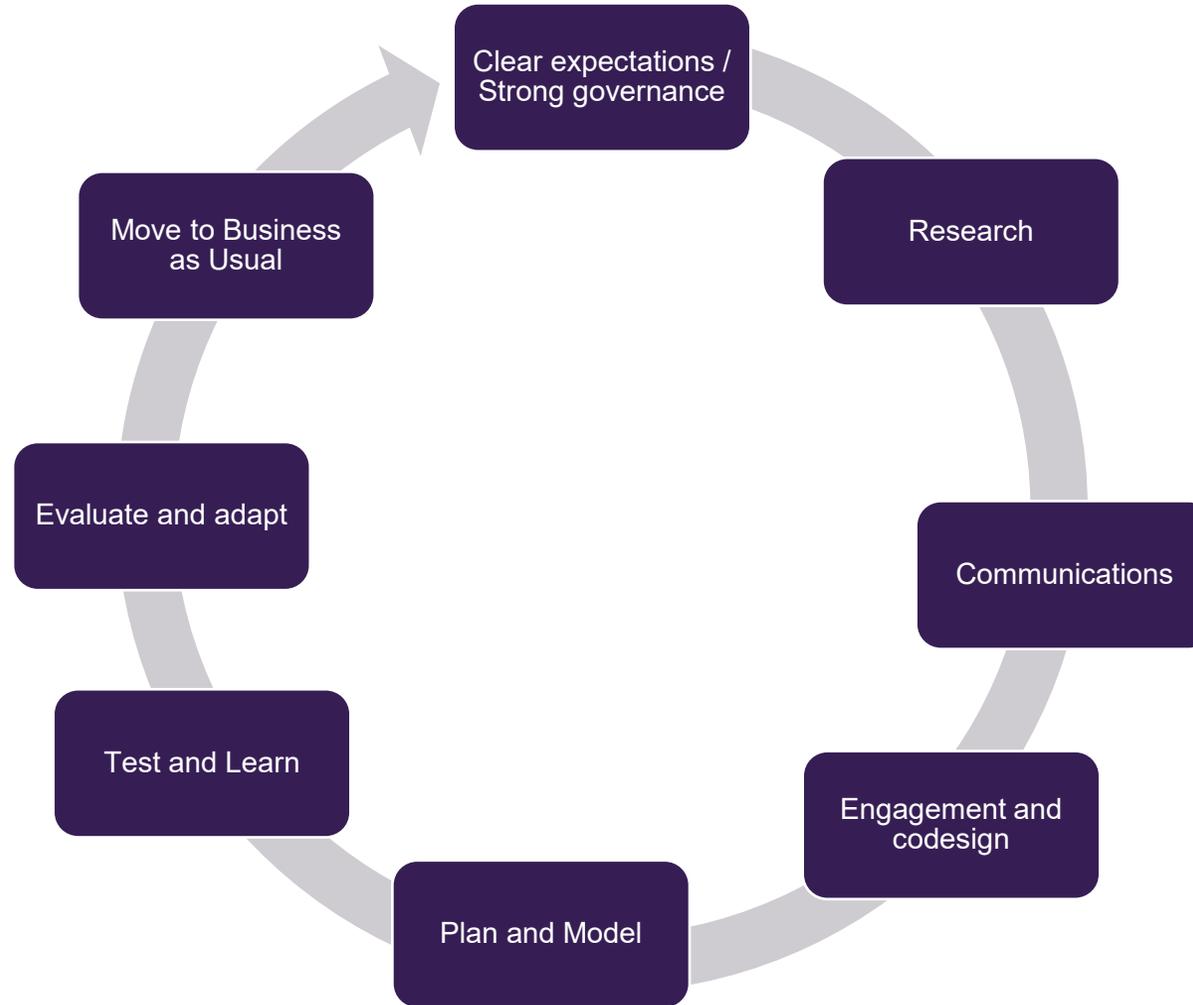
MACPT's

- Learning from **Dorset Council Pathfinder**
- Maintain what works well
- Early thinking is an enhancement of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
- Understanding and designing role and functions of Lead Child Protection Practitioners and Chair Protection Chairs

Family Group Decision Making / Practice Framework / Workforce

- Mapping staff skills to offer / facilitate **Family Group Conferencing / FGDM**
- Reviewing current practice and scoping adjustments to be applied
- Options appraisal of cost effective models

Project Implementation



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Department
for Education

The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide

**Delivery expectations for safeguarding
partners in England**

March 2025

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Ministerial foreword

Our government has set out its Plan for Change which includes working across government to ensure every child is kept safe so that everyone, regardless of their background or where they live across the country, has the opportunity to succeed. Keeping children safe from multiple forms of abuse and harm and tackling child poverty is the foundation of giving every child the best start in life, ensuring they can achieve and thrive as they grow up.

We appreciate the vital role local safeguarding partners – children’s social care, police and health – and relevant agencies, like education and childcare settings, play in helping families and ensuring all children receive the support and protection they need. Between us, we have decades of experience from social work and management to victim and survivor support, and working in local communities. Your unwavering dedication ensures these children receive the care and support they need to succeed. We are profoundly grateful for your tireless efforts in protecting children from different harms and supporting families to make a lasting difference in young people’s lives.

We know that you share our ambition to make sure that all children and families can receive the right help at the right time. But for too long you have had to fight the tide of increasing spend on statutory and acute services, at the expense of investment in preventative family support.

We are committed to rebalancing the children’s social care system and that is why we are rolling out the Families First Partnership programme – backed by over £500 million of funding in financial year 25/26, through the Local Government Finance Settlement. The publication of this programme guide confirms our expectations of safeguarding partners to implement reforms to Family Help, multi-agency child protection and Family Group Decision Making – building on a body of evidence of what we know works to support families to stay together and thrive, and ultimately reduce the number of looked after children, safely.

We envision a transformed system, where practitioners from social work, police, health, education, and beyond work together to promote the wellbeing of children and keep them safe from harm. We have no doubt that we will take this journey of change as a team – and that this requires us all to work together effectively, to enact and resource a multi-agency approach throughout the programme and the whole system reform it entails.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff across children’s social care, police, health, and education for your continued hard work and dedication, as well as the many committed carers across the country.

Together, we can transform the way we support families and vulnerable children by providing the right help at the right time, protecting them from harm and ensuring more

children can grow up safely, with the right love and support around them. Without you, none of this is possible.

Thank you,

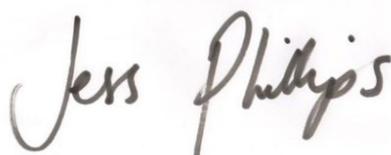
Janet Daby MP: Minister for Children and Families, Department for Education

A handwritten signature of Janet Daby in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Ashley Dalton MP: Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention, Department of Health and Social Care

A handwritten signature of Ashley Dalton in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Jess Phillips MP: Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, Home Office

A handwritten signature of Jess Phillips in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Introduction

The Families First Partnership (FFP) programme guide has been produced to support safeguarding partners¹ implement **Family Help and multi-agency child protection reforms and make greater use of Family Group Decision Making**. The rollout of these reforms represents a significant step forward in delivering on the government's mission to provide children with the best start in life and break down barriers to opportunity.

About this guide

This programme guide is not statutory guidance and does not replace existing statutory guidance, including:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: statutory guidance](#) (referred to in this document as 'Working Together') is the multi-agency statutory guidance for every organisation, individual and agency who is involved in helping and supporting families and protecting children; or the
- [Children's social care: national framework - GOV.UK](#) (referred to in the document as the 'National Framework') which sets out the purpose, principles and enablers of good practice of children's social care and the outcomes that should be achieved.

This guide describes the programme vision and objectives, and sets out the practice change we expect to see to improve the support provided to children and their families. The following chapters set out:

- **Chapter 1:** vision for a transformation in family support, to rebalance the system away from crisis intervention and toward earlier help and support
- **Chapter 2:** delivery expectations for Family Help, multi-agency child protection and Family Group Decision Making
- **Chapter 3:** key principles and system enablers
- **Chapter 4:** national delivery support offer

In this guide, the term 'children and young people' refers to individuals up to the age of 25. This recognises that in law the term children refers to anyone up to the age of 18, and there are some young adults who will continue to receive support from children's social care as care leavers or through education, health and care plans, up to the age of 25.

¹ A safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined in section 16E of the Children Act 2004 as: (a) the local authority, (b) an integrated care board for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area, and (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area.

How this guide should be used

Reforming the children's social care system will take time. Changes to service structure, workforce roles, practice frameworks and oversight arrangements will require time to design and implement. Our expectation is that the next year (April 2025 to March 2026) will feature ongoing business as usual service delivery alongside transformation activity. It is crucial that reform is multi-agency and implemented effectively, with improving the safety and wellbeing of children at its heart.

This guide should be used by safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies and organisations within their local areas to begin planning for transformation activity and implementation. It will be followed by further implementation and 'how to' guides on specific aspects of reform as part of our ongoing delivery support offer. More detail about this support offer is provided in [Chapter 4](#).

The guide requires safeguarding partners to build on the foundations of what is already in place through the requirements of Working Together and the National Framework. It is clear about the expectations for reform, but it is not prescriptive, and safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies should co-design how it will work for them, based on their specific local context. This co-design activity should have the voices of children, young people and families at the heart of new service design. The guide builds on a range of well evidenced programmes that have been delivered in recent years – including the Supporting Families Programme and Strengthening Families Protecting Children. The aim is to embed a more consistent application of what works to achieve improved outcomes, whilst tailored to local areas' needs and the children and families living there.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for everyone who works with children, young people and their families including strategic leaders, senior and middle managers, and those in direct practice.

These reforms are underpinned by strong multi-agency working. Safeguarding partners through their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, are foundational to success and improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working will be fundamental to the implementation of reforms:

- by multi-disciplinary working we mean: a range of practitioners and professionals from different backgrounds working together, to enable the best outcomes for children, young people and families;
- by multi-agency working we mean: working across organisations to meet children, young people and families' needs including effective information sharing, joint decision-making and co-ordinated interventions, to facilitate effective help, support and protection. This includes in child protection where individuals from different

agencies come together into a single team to deliver statutory child protection functions whilst remaining connected to their parent agency.

Investment to support local areas

Over £500 million has been made available through the [Final local government finance settlement: England, 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#) (LGFS) to support local authorities working with their safeguarding partners to invest in transformation and expansion of preventative support in FY25-26. This will build on the extensive existing spend from local authority, partner and other agency budgets on preventative services.

This funding will be from two grants within the LGFS:

- **Children’s Social Care Prevention Grant** - £270 million of new funding (to note this figure has now increased by £20 million from the announcement in the LGFS Policy Statement in November; £13 million of which is for family group decision making);
- **Children and Families Grant** - £253.5 million of mainstreamed funding originally for the Supporting Families programme.

These grants support the government’s commitment to reform local government funding and will ensure local authorities, with their partners, are able to fund preventative support and services including targeted early help, child in need and child protection activity, marking a step-change to the way in which core funding is spent. [Grant Determination Letters](#) with expectations and conditions have been issued to local authorities for these grants. This includes an expectation that around 30% of the new funding will be spent on the costs of transformation and co-design, ensuring leaders have the capacity to undertake this important reform backed with funding. We recognise the actual percentage of funding spent on this phase of transformation will vary depending on the circumstances in each local area.

Over time, nationally, we are expecting a significant reduction in the numbers of looked after children as a result of this investment. To keep more families together, the savings made from these reduced placement costs will contribute to the rebalancing of the system. There is consensus across government and the statutory safeguarding partners that this change is necessary. Investing earlier in the system and before serious problems emerge brings greater efficacy and improves children’s outcomes. The government is also committed to improving the availability of foster homes, reducing the use of residential care, using family strengths through kinship support and there are a series of work streams in place to support that ambition.

The Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill

The Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill was introduced into Parliament on 17 December 2024. The bill is an important step towards delivering the government’s

Opportunity Mission to break the link between background and future success. The following key policy changes outlined in this guide are included in the bill:

Family group decision making

A measure to mandate local authorities to offer a ‘family group decision making’ meeting at the point the local authority is seriously considering applying to the court for a care or supervision order, to give all families an opportunity to come together and make a plan in response to concerns regarding the child’s welfare.

Multi-agency child protection teams

A measure to create a duty for the statutory safeguarding partners (local authorities, police and health) to make arrangements to establish multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) to support the local authority in the discharge of its child protection duties; and require relevant agencies to enter memoranda to set out how they will facilitate the operation of the MACPT.

Strengthening the role of education in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

A measure to place duties on the statutory safeguarding partners (local authorities, police and health) to make education and childcare settings relevant agencies by default, thereby ensuring their participation in safeguarding in their area and that their views are included and represented at strategic and operational levels in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Information sharing and consistent identifiers

A measure to improve data sharing between agencies to better safeguard and support children and families. This will be enabled by the introduction of an information sharing duty that provides a clear legal basis to share information for the purposes of safeguarding and promotion of welfare, and provision to enable the specification of a consistent identifier (also known as ‘Single Unique Identifier’).

More information on the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill can be found at [Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill - policy summary notes](#)

Learning and accountability

As the system embarks on these reforms, sharing learning and good practice across local partnerships will be key. This will include drawing on the experiences of the 10 funded [Families first for children \(FFC\) pathfinder](#) local partnerships, who have been testing these system reforms since July 2023. More information about the national delivery support offer can be found in [Chapter 4](#).

The grant conditions set out what local authorities should do to make use of the funding that has been made available, and the Department for Education, alongside the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care as appropriate, will work closely with local partnerships on the delivery of the Families First Partnership programme. If local authorities are found to not be delivering the programme in accordance with the grant conditions, the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government may reduce, suspend or withhold future grant payments or require the repayment of the whole or any part of the grant monies paid.

During this period of transformation, local areas will need to be mindful of making safe decisions to transition their services to deliver even better outcomes for children, young people and families. We would expect that all appropriate local governance is in place, and that the senior leaders that have responsibility for services understand and are involved in the changes that are being made. This is likely to involve both Chief Executives of local authorities, Lead Members for children, and Chief Executives of Integrated Care Boards and Chief Constables. At a practice level, areas will need to be confident that quality oversight and assurance processes are in place and that workforces are suitably engaged and supported to understand the changes in services. Practitioners should have access to information and advice that will support them to deliver their responsibilities towards children, young people and families, including through quality supervision.

Ofsted continues to have responsibility for inspecting local authority children's services under the Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services framework (ILACS). They have a crucial role in evaluating what is working well and what needs to improve in children's social care. Safeguarding partners are inspected by their respective inspectorate bodies (Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services) and jointly through Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs).

As reforms to children's social care are embedded, Ofsted will continue to rebalance inspection, ensuring it continues to act as a lever for improvement. Government is committed to replacing single headline grades in all remits that Ofsted inspects, including in children's social care. This will be done in consultation with the sector, alongside progressing reforms and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

Chapter 1: A transformation in family support

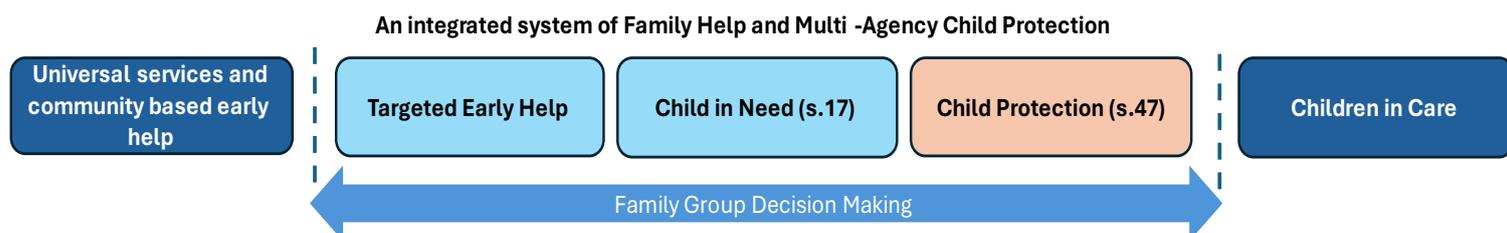
All families need support, whether from family or volunteers, private funded services (such as in-home childcare support or paid for therapeutic support) or publicly funded family support or social work. Families have diverse needs and circumstances. The aim of the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme is to transform the whole system of help, support and protection, to ensure that every family can access the right help and support when they need it, with a strong emphasis on early intervention to prevent crisis.

The Families First for Children Pathfinder programme has demonstrated that for safeguarding partners, effective transformation of family support means considering how services from universal to social care interventions interact as a connected system. Collaboration among all partners and relevant agencies, including voluntary and community sector organisations that work with children and adults, is essential to tailor approaches for diverse needs such as: disabilities, mental health issues, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, substance misuse, and harm outside the home including exploitation and online. Services should address the needs of children of all ages. And a whole family approach means that understanding the needs of the adults in the household is also important. In providing support, it is crucial that local areas understand and take account of the diverse backgrounds of families. Practice should be anti-discriminatory and address barriers to accessing services. Chapter 1 of the Working Together statutory guidance sets out this shared responsibility across agencies, including principles for working in partnership with parents and carers wherever this is possible.

For families, transformation through the FFP programme will mean a better way to access help. Instead of feeling like they simply don't know where to go, or being handed over between different teams, they will be able to connect with the right support, through an integrated and relationship focussed approach, that adapts to their needs.

The diagram in Figure 1 shows how different support and services can operate together to wrap help and support around families and adapt as needs change. The ambition is to maintain relationships in order to avoid children, young people and families telling their stories multiple times or being passed between teams or practitioners. The more seamless model facilitates dynamic and responsive assessment and planning, rather than a stop/start approach.

Figure 1: Our vision for a reformed system



Vision for Family Help and multi-agency child protection

The FFP programme will support safeguarding partners to bring together targeted early help, child in need, and multi-agency child protection into a seamless system of help, support and protection. This includes services and workforces, such as family support workers, social workers and other specialist and alternatively qualified practitioners, coming together to support families. By targeted early help, child in need and child protection, we mean:

- **targeted early help:** children and families with multiple and/or complex needs that require a plan to be in place and a lead practitioner appointed;
- **children in Need (Section 17, Children Act 1989):** a general duty for local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need or are disabled, and promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs;
- **child protection (Section 47):** the duty on local authorities to investigate where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

The reforms to Family Help and multi-agency child protection are fully interconnected. They support a fundamental rebalancing of the whole system, enabling support to be wrapped around families at the earliest opportunity, preventing escalation, and reducing the flow of families toward child protection investigations where this is possible. Where there are child protection concerns, the reformed system will be forensic and decisive, focused on protecting children from significant harm, inside and outside of the home, including online. Children will have different needs and vulnerabilities and, as such, the type of significant harm they experience and the context in which this happens will vary.

Our vision is a reformed system where Family Help Lead Practitioners (FHLPs), supported by expert multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) including social worker lead child protection practitioners (LCPPs), are responsible for and undertake direct child protection practice together with families where this is needed. When child protection concerns arise, FHLPs will maintain the relationship with the family and continue to coordinate the support and services for them. Where there are concerns about significant harm, the LCPP will take statutory child protection decisions with input from the wider (MACPT). The FHLP will remain involved in direct practice with the family throughout. There will be child protection expertise across the whole system of Family Help and multi-agency child protection, so effective action can be taken where concerns arise.

The Home Office are developing Prevention Partnerships. These will operate through Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). Although still in development, we would encourage engagement with VRUs and local youth justice governance to ensure alignment, keeping children, young people and families at the heart of the design, avoiding duplication or gaps in support.

Interaction with universal services and community based early help

FFP programme funding should be used to support families with multiple and/or complex needs - covering targeted early help, child in need and child protection. But we recognise that universal services and community based early help, will continue to play a crucial role in identifying emerging problems and providing support at an early stage. This includes support delivered through family hubs, youth services, after school clubs and routine health and housing provision. Local areas should build on the strengths of their universal and community based early help delivery models and workforce when designing their approach to Family Help.

Voluntary and community services also continue to be a vital part of the end-to-end system. The contribution of community, faith and voluntary groups should be recognised and valued. This is particularly important for families and communities that may be wary of, or unaware of, the local services available to them.

Family Hubs, while focused on preventative services, can act as a non-stigmatising gateway to targeted whole-family support delivered through Family Help. Some of the Families First for Children pathfinders have integrated family hubs and Family Help to support delivery, for example using family hubs as the primary co-location space for multi-disciplinary Family Help teams. As a community-based model for providing early help to families, family hubs can play an important role in identifying families who may need more intensive support from Family Help and multi-agency child protection services, for example, those families where domestic abuse is a factor. For families who no longer require the support of targeted and specialist services, family hubs can offer an ongoing, local support network. Not every area has a family hub therefore other forms of community-based settings providing early help will play an important role in early identification of family need and appropriate referrals into targeted support.

Education and childcare settings and attendance

Education and childcare settings will often have the strongest relationships with children, young people and their families and be the first to identify when help or protection is needed. Education and childcare settings may be able to offer support directly to families, connect them with other local services that provide more targeted support, have continued contact with a family to monitor progress or change, and know when to escalate to seek further input, intervention or oversight.

Education and childcare settings are vital in understanding underlying causes of absence which can be indicators or causes of other issues. Live attendance data is therefore one of the best early-warning indicators of need, particularly where pupils are absent more often than they attend. Alongside expectations in statutory [attendance guidance](#), partnerships should consider how:

- families with severely absent pupils are factored into local eligibility decisions: if pupils face out-of-school barriers and the family do not have a social worker, they should routinely be assessed for Family Help;
- schools and local partnerships agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils as part of their Family Help offer;
- practitioners understand the importance of absence as an indicator of wider need, the benefits of improving attendance to improve outcomes for the whole family, and the role of the Virtual School Head [for children with a social worker](#).

Areas should also liaise with education teams to ensure they are aware of issues relating to the needs of children who are not on a school roll, for example children missing from education or electively home educated children.

Keeping families together – Reunification and Family Group Decision Making

Family Help has an important role in supporting children and young people to return safely and sustainably to their parents or wider family from care. Effective support for these children and families increases the likelihood of stable, long lasting relationships and children living safely within their family networks. A whole-family approach, including increased use of family group decision-making, is an opportunity to empower families by prioritising family-led solutions. Family group decision-making also plays a crucial role in supporting reunification by enabling families to develop sustainable plans that facilitate a child's safe return home.

Local partnerships should understand their data on reunification and consider how Family Help supports robust preparation, planning and support for all children. The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review regulations and guidance² already provides clear direction for local authorities regarding their duty to return a looked after child to their family unless this is not consistent with safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare. The rollout of Family Help provides an opportunity to strengthen practice and improve outcomes for these children and their families. It is important that local support services are accessible for all children and young people, including looked after children who may be accessing the same services as families in Family Help.

Children affected by parental imprisonment

Family Help can also play an important role in helping to maintain relationships where children may have a parent in prison. Local partnerships should consider what data or information they have on children affected by parental imprisonment and consider how Family Help can offer appropriate support.

² [Children Act 1989: care planning, placement and case review - GOV.UK](#)

Chapter 2: Delivery expectations

This section sets out the expectations for practice and areas of local flexibility to support safeguarding partners to plan their transformation activity for Family Help, multi-agency child protection and Family Group Decision Making.

Section 1: Family Help

Family Help aims to improve children's outcomes by understanding and responding to the needs and circumstances of the family as early as possible to enable children to thrive and families to remain together.

Family Help will take place at the heart of communities, bringing together local services under a combined, multi-disciplinary practice approach and service offer. It will be underpinned by a set of key principles that will inform the delivery of services:

- wrapping support around the whole-family at the earliest opportunity – using the expertise of multi-disciplinary practitioners;
- ensuring consistency of relationships between children, families and their lead practitioner;
- adopting one plan that will stay with families but adapt as needs change.

Identifying need for Family Help

Family Help is for all children, young people and families whose needs are multiple and/or complex. This includes those who are currently eligible for targeted early help or receiving support and services as a child in need, and those subject to child protection enquiries and plans. Where appropriate, it may also include support for children in care – both as part of services they may be receiving while in care, but also as part of planning and support to return home to their families. Families who access Family Help will consent to assessment and the support they receive, unless there are child protection concerns and activity.

By multiple and/or complex, we mean that a family's needs are above the level of universal and community based early help, such as that provided by a Family Hub or in community settings, and they are unable to access and navigate support themselves. In Family Help, these families will be officially recorded in a local area's children's social care case management system and assigned a Family Help Lead Practitioner.

Below is a list of issues or indicators that should be considered in relation to whether Family Help is the most appropriate course of action – it is not exhaustive:

- child and/or adult mental health issues
- child and/or adult substance misuse
- domestic abuse
- neglect

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- teenage relationship abuse
- a child who is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- a child who is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- a child who is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- a child who is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- a child who is at risk of radicalisation
- a child who has a parent or carer in custody
- a child who is bereaved
- a child who is a young carer
- a child who is exposed to frequent, intense and poorly resolved parental conflict
- a child who has returned home to their family from care
- a child who has unmet physical and/or developmental needs
- a child who is disabled
- a child who has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- a child who is missing education, persistently or severely absent from school, or not receiving a suitable education
- a child who has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded
- housing insecurity including temporary accommodation
- financial insecurity including adult worklessness and youth NEET status

The support and services that families receive will look different depending on specific circumstances, but it should always be underpinned by a whole-family approach, where multi-disciplinary professionals wrap support around the family to address challenges at the earliest opportunity. The type of support that disabled children and their families may need is potentially different from other children and families who will be supported through Family Help. They may require support for the entirety of their childhood, and sit across children's social care, education and health. This means that their support offer should be adjusted to reflect that – for example, safeguarding partners should consider using a more flexible approach to assessments for disabled children (where there are not child protection concerns).

The following sections outline the key practice changes associated with moving to Family Help:

1. [A seamless offer of Family Help: Closer alignment between Targeted Early Help and Child in Need \(Section 17\)](#)

2. [Family Help Lead Practitioners](#)
3. [Multi-disciplinary Family Help Teams](#)
4. [Family Help Assessment and Plans](#)
5. [Front Door Arrangements](#)

A Seamless Offer of Family Help: Targeted Early Help and Child in Need

Central to Family Help is a closer alignment between targeted early help and child in need support and services, to create a seamless support system that promotes early intervention. Families should not be left waiting to access help and support when issues arise – a more flexible and responsive system will remove barriers and ensure support is wrapped around families at the point of need. Through this, it will be possible to bring the whole-family approach championed in targeted early help to a larger number of families.

The legislative framework is not changing. Local authorities will continue to have a general duty to provide support and services where children are deemed to be in need (including disabled children). Working Together is clear that local authorities should work with safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies to determine a local protocol as to how this is delivered. The ambition is that Family Help will flex to the needs of children, young people and their families, where needs change or complexity increases, practitioners will deliver support within a consistent practice framework, and relationships will be maintained as much as possible. While families may move between targeted early help and child in need support and services within Family Help, this should feel seamless with minimal disruption – supported by greater consistency in lead practitioner, the use of single assessments and plans which can be adapted and built on over time, helping families retain relationships and trust in the system of support.

Local authorities will continue to provide annual data returns to the department on support and services provided to children and their families under section 17 and section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Working Together already clarifies that as needs change, support and services should respond effectively. This is why multi-agency child protection teams are embedded in the Family Help system and will wrap around the family, alongside the ongoing support from the Family Help Lead Practitioner.

Expectations

- delivering Family Help will mean, as a minimum, **bringing together family support workers (or equivalent) and social workers into a single service**. This will cover a broad continuum of need – from targeted early help through to multi-agency child protection - that responds more flexibly to a range of contexts, needs and harms;
- safeguarding partnerships should work together to **publish a refreshed threshold document** by the end of the transformation year (March 2026) to confirm the changes and remove the need for handovers, building on

assessments and plans as needs change. This should set out a broad continuum of Family Help, showing the range of needs for all children that will be supported – with an emphasis on fluidity and prioritising family experience, as opposed to gatekeeping against rigid thresholds;

- safeguarding partners should update their local protocol for assessment and support;
- safeguarding partners should consider how Family Help can address the **needs of a diverse range of children** (from babies, including pre-birth, to teenagers) and families, including but not limited to children with SEND, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and children with a parent in custody.

Local Flexibility

- **team structure:** It will be for local partnerships to determine where the new teams will be based and how many teams they will have. For local partnerships that have an existing locality model, there could be multiple teams based in settings across their area (more information can be found in 'multi-disciplinary family help teams').

Family Help Lead Practitioner

Family Help should be led by Family Help lead practitioners (FHLPs) who will be a range of practitioners from different disciplines with the right knowledge, skills and experience to support families who need help and support. Some will be social work qualified, and others will have alternative appropriate skills or qualifications. They may or may not be employed directly by the local authority but will be integrated into multi-disciplinary Family Help teams with appropriate oversight set out in the safeguarding partners' local protocol. In line with the National Framework, FHLPs will work with families to build strong relationships based on respect and work in a strengths based way, recognising that families, and family networks, will often have solutions to their own challenges. FHLPs will have a focus on the whole family, recognising this is often the best way of improving outcomes for children and young people.

The FHLP will remain the main point of contact for the family for as long as they require support. The FHLP will be alert to all forms of significant harm and work with multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) and Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs) to respond to it, retaining the lead relationship with the child and family. They will have the knowledge and skills to draw on relevant evidence-based interventions and to collaborate with and identify the relevant agencies or individuals required to meet a family's unique set of needs and form the 'team around the family'³ (TAF). Whilst the FHLP will be the main point of contact for the family, it is through the expertise across the TAF that families receive the help and support they need.

Children and families have said they want a consistent, trusting relationship with a

³ The team around the family is the team of practitioners that the FHLP brings together to meet the child, young person or family' s needs.

practitioner. To support and preserve such relationships, FHLPs should carry out or coordinate all or most of the direct work with the family for as long as it is safe to do so. FHLPs should be qualified social workers when it is agreed that a child protection plan is needed. In some cases, this will mean that the lead practitioner will change for a child who moves onto a child protection plan because their FHLP is not a qualified social worker. FHLPs, supported by expertise from LCPPs, will be the main practitioner responsible for child protection direct practice with families.

Embedding experienced social work qualified FHLPs in multi-disciplinary Family Help teams, whilst ensuring access to expert advice from LCPPs within MACPTs, will mean that less experienced FHLPs have the right advice knowledge and skills, to keep working with families wherever possible. The MACPT will be responsible for statutory child protection decisions and oversee child protection activity. Family Help teams will include highly experienced social workers, including in child protection practice, to ensure that child protection expertise and oversight is embedded in practice across the whole system. All FHLPs should receive effective and appropriate supervision and support. The safeguarding partners and any relevant agencies, should develop, agree, and publish local protocols for assessments and support.

Expectations

Safeguarding partners should establish the FHLP role, building on their current practice. To support implementation, safeguarding partners, should:

- have a shared practice framework across agencies, that covers the end-to-end system of help, support and protection, in line with the National Framework outcomes and the requirements of Working Together;
- publish local protocols for assessments and support, including clarifying who can act as an FHLP for children receiving support and services as a child in need and the skills, experience, oversight and accountability requirements outlined in Working Together. Plans for providing social work oversight should also be clarified;
- develop a multi-agency workforce development plan outlining the training, knowledge and skill levels for the Family Help workforce including the FHLP role.

Identifying the right Family Help Lead Practitioner:

Safeguarding partners should have clear processes in place to identify the most suitable lead practitioner to support families in Family Help and consider how a range of practitioners from across the partnership could be appointed into the role.

Where appropriate, safeguarding partners should engage families, including children and young people, to have a say in who their lead practitioner is, taking into account their views, wishes and feelings – as well as the experiences of children and families with protected characteristics.

Safeguarding partners should consider how to keep changes of FHLP to a minimum and, when a change is necessary, the approach that should be followed to minimise the

impact of families. For example, when deciding who the right FHLP will be, consideration should be given to the complexity of need, including concerns about significant harm and whether a social work qualified FHLP should be allocated from the outset. Where a change of FHLP is required, consideration could be given to whether the previous FHLP could continue to work with the family as part of the TAF, enabling a consistent relationship to continue.

Supervision and oversight:

Effective supervision will play a critical role in ensuring a clear focus on a child's welfare and safety. Lead practitioners should have access to high quality supervision. Supervision should be regular, consistent and reflective to support practitioners in their practice, development and wellbeing, enabling practitioners to work effectively with children, young people and families.

Safeguarding partners will need to determine management structures and supervision arrangements in line with Working Together to ensure appropriate oversight for Family Help support. Oversight and supervision arrangements should be reviewed, and local protocols updated, to outline responsibilities and decision making, recognising a broader range of lead practitioners will be working with families.

As set out in Working Together, safeguarding partners should consider how to quality assure the work with families. This might include through audit, management / case supervision, critical and reflective supervision, and easily accessible guidance. This includes having procedures in place for the supervision and oversight of all FHLPs, including those not employed by the local authority, to ensure they continue to receive appropriate supervision and support for continuing professional development and to maintain professional registration, where appropriate, within their existing line management arrangements.

Safeguarding partners will want to consider the use of reflective group, multi-agency and clinical supervision.

FHLP roles and responsibilities:

The roles and responsibilities of FHLPs detailed below should inform workforce development plans, including ongoing FHLP training, learning and development.

The FHLP should:

- take a whole family approach to practice;
- build a relationship with the family and, wherever possible, remain their main point of contact for as long as they require support;
- conduct assessments and implement a whole family plan;
- establish a 'team around the family' (TAF), bringing in relevant agencies or individuals;
- offer Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) to support families to find their own solutions;

- engage the multi-agency child protection team (MACPT) where there are concerns about likely or actual significant harm;
- where there is likely or actual significant harm, maintain coordinated support for the family and deliver the child protection plan, working alongside the LCPP and MACPT;
- create a sustainability plan with the family, so they can refer back to the challenges they have overcome, their strengths and next steps when moving on from Family Help.

Knowledge, skills and experience:

The FHLP will need the knowledge, skills and experience to build relationships with and work with families receiving support through Family Help, including those with a child protection plan.

Knowledge, skills and experience should:

- meet the requirements set out in Working Together and the National Framework;
- align with a shared practice framework and evidence-based interventions (such as in the [Practice Guides](#)) for use across the multi-agency workforce;
- be determined by and align with the FHLP role and responsibilities, ensuring these are fulfilled;
- be sufficient to meet the individual needs of all children including babies, children, young people and families;
- be anti-discriminatory and taking into account the unique circumstances of each child, young person and family including ethnicity, race and culture;
- be set out in local protocols.

It is important FHLPs are culturally competent, understand the impact of poverty on family life, and able to take an anti-racist and an anti-discriminatory approach in all aspects of their work.

Training:

The information set out below does not replace any statutory guidance on training. Safeguarding partners should ensure guidance on training requirements, set out in Working Together and the National Framework are met.

Safeguarding partners should outline training requirements for FHLPs in their multi-agency workforce development plans.

Safeguarding partners will need to consider how to deliver and evaluate the effectiveness of training undertaken by FHLPs across a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency workforce to ensure outcomes for children, young people and families are met.

Some practitioners may benefit from, or want to complete, a relevant apprenticeship. The early intervention practitioner apprenticeship and the children, young people and families practitioner apprenticeship both cover relevant skills and knowledge for those working in

Family Help.

Local flexibility:

- **choosing the right lead practitioner:** Local authorities and partner agencies can use flexibility in selecting lead practitioners, as per Working Together, which confirms that the lead practitioner does not always need to be a social worker when providing support and services to children in need. The safeguarding partnership should have clear processes in place to identify the most suitable lead practitioner to support families across the Family Help continuum of need and consider how practitioners from across the partnership could be appointed as the FHLP, including under Section 17.

Multi-disciplinary Family Help Teams

Community-based, multi-disciplinary teams should wrap help and support around children, young people and their families. This should take a whole family approach – considering not only the presenting needs of the child or young person, but also the needs of the family and how those impact children and young people. To ensure support is inclusive, consideration should be given to race, ethnicity, and/or culture, as well as other protected characteristics. Where needed, a range of practitioners and services should be provided for the family, so a range of needs can be addressed, and challenges overcome. The Family Help Lead Practitioner will co-ordinate this support, helping a family to navigate the help and support they need, which might include accessing multiple services.

Family Help teams will be multi-disciplinary and draw on multi-agency partners. These teams will build on those already operating in the early help space, established through the Supporting Families Programme.

Expectations

- local partnerships should set up, or build on existing multi-disciplinary teams, to include co-working between a wide range of practitioners including family support workers (or equivalent), social workers and other alternatively qualified or specialist roles. Examples of services that practitioners might work in include:
 - domestic abuse
 - substance misuse
 - children and adult mental health
 - SEND – including the Designated Social Care Officer Role, as encouraged in Working Together
 - parental conflict
 - school attendance support teams
 - prison and probation
 - public health
 - youth justice
 - youth work
 - adult social care, specifically Safeguarding Adult Boards

- police
- victim support including wider sexual abuse support
- health visiting
- midwives, sexual health and school nursing
- employment advisors to support parents who are out of work
- homelessness and housing
- while these new multi-disciplinary family help teams may be based on an extension of existing teams – local partnerships should refer to population needs assessments to determine the different agencies, services and practitioners that should be part of their multi-disciplinary teams. Local partnerships may want to update these assessments as part of their transformation activity.
- when setting up multi-disciplinary teams, safeguarding partners should consider how to effectively join up Family Help with existing SEND services, to improve access to support for children with special educational needs, and disabilities.

Local Flexibility

- **structure of teams (size and location):** Decisions on the size and location of teams will depend on local circumstances. Local authorities, with partners, could consider using family hubs, where they exist, as a location to base these teams.
- **the role of individual practitioners within the team:** Multi-disciplinary practitioners in the team could perform a number of functions – e.g. they could: provide direct support to families; triage or provide advice at the front door; provide consultative support to FHLPs as part of TAF or a link back to their home organisation to help facilitate appropriate support. Local partnerships have discretion to determine these arrangements based on their local circumstances and workforce.
- **co-location of teams:** While the co-location of services and practitioners makes it easier for families to access the services they need; it will be for local partnerships to determine their local arrangements. This includes how the teams are resourced across agencies and the flexibility of working arrangements to meet the needs of families.

Family Help Assessment and Plans

In Family Help, we are aiming for one assessment and plan, which will stay and evolve with a family, and will be accessed by all practitioners and agencies working with them. While circumstances will change and new information will need to be captured, this should be added to existing assessments and plans, rather than starting from a blank slate. This aligns with the ambition that families will have consistent lead practitioners, and the system will wrap around them.

Assessments and plans should cover non statutory targeted early help and support, and services provided to a child in need where requirements are set out in Working Together. Local partnerships will need to determine how assessments are brought together into a

single plan. Where appropriate, assessment should also build on help and support provided in universal or community based services including family hubs.

Expectations

Safeguarding partners should:

- develop family help assessments and plans in line with Working Together, which sets out principles for high-quality assessments and plans. These should be accessed and jointly monitored by all the agencies working with the child, young person and family;
- establish an assessment which can be tailored to the level of need identified within a family, including adapting appropriately for children with SEND and disabled children and their families, taking into account previous interventions and wider contextual factors including for example where a parent is imprisoned;
- ensure practitioners consider the needs of the whole-family as part of the assessment and that the child, young person and family voice is captured and reflected in the plan – whilst being clear the needs of the child are paramount;
- adhere to the maximum timelines for child in need assessments set out in Working Together;
- coordinate with other assessments that are ongoing (such as an Education, Health and Care assessment, or a Prevention and Diversion Assessment), or if previously completed, practitioners should use assessments to build a complete picture of the child and their family (as set out in Working Together);
- develop family help plans that provide clear, measurable outcomes for the child or young person and set expectations for families, with reviewable actions to track progress. Plans should specify the agencies and practitioners involved, the services available, and how success will be measured. Regular reviews should assess whether progress has been made to meet the child or young person's needs;
- have robust oversight arrangements as required by Working Together through the local protocol for assessment and support;
- seek consent prior to an assessment being completed, adhering to legal frameworks and guidance around consent and children and young people;
- build on any previous assessments or plans that might have been put in place in universal/community based early help.

Local Flexibility

- **internal timelines:** Working Together requires that assessments for a child in need should be completed within 45 days, areas retain flexibility to set timescales for targeted early help;
- **the practitioner who leads the assessment:** assessments can be led by a range of practitioners, and it is for local partnerships to determine appropriate oversight and sign off arrangements;

- **reviews:** local safeguarding partners can determine their process and timelines for reviewing plans. There should be mechanisms to review the effectiveness and impact of the plan;
- **naming conventions:** local safeguarding partners can determine the title of their assessment and plans. Local partnerships should continue to be mindful of the language used and this could be reviewed during the co-design process including seeking the views of families on terminology.

Front Door Arrangements

Families should receive the right support, at the right time. Every local area has a front door: a mechanism for determining how to get children, young people and families the help they need. Some are multi-agency; others are single agency. Local partnerships should consider how their front door arrangements will be integrated into the Family Help offer, supporting engagement and ensuring the right decisions are made in a timely manner. Local partnerships should also consider how children and families first engage with services and how to make this accessible and de-stigmatising.

Expectations for triaging at the front door

- move towards an integrated front door, where contacts and referrals can be triaged to the right level of service; this should include families being connected to universal and community services if required. Local partnerships operating Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) should review/explore how their functions might align more strongly with other places where families might come into contact with services, for example, separate early help front doors;
- consider the range of practitioners and agencies that could be brought into the integrated front door - this could include for example education, police, health and youth workers.

Local Flexibility for triaging at the front door

- **location:** local partnerships can determine the location of their front door – for example, in areas where there are family hubs, we would encourage these areas to consider the role family hubs could play in providing an access point to services;
- **co-location:** local partnerships can determine whether teams are co-located physically or virtually;
- **make up of front door teams:** local partnerships can determine the practitioners and agencies at the front door, for example, including considering those with SEND, youth work or domestic abuse expertise, or from services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS);
- **links to the Multi-agency Child Protection Team (MACPT):** local partnerships can determine the most efficient way to align with and work alongside MACPTs. Ensuring swift action in identifying and protecting children from significant harm when such referrals are made;

- **the extent of the digital offer** to support families and practitioners to navigate services;
- **considering out of hours services**, to support the identification of need outside core working hours.

Expectations for promoting engagement with services

- implement digital solutions such as a service directory, social media and also roles such as community connectors and service access points which provide accessible opportunities for families to understand and access support;
- as much as is practical, local partnerships should embed a relationship-based approach to practice at the front door where families and practitioners can have a conversation about the help they need.

Section 2: Multi-agency Child Protection

- Effective multi-agency child protection is a system where the right decisions are made at the right time for children to keep them safe;
- Establishing multi-agency child protection teams will bring a clear, fresh focus where there are child protection concerns, bringing experts together across agencies to identify actual or likely significant harm and take decisive action to protect children.

A Seamless System of Help, Support and Protection

It is critical that local safeguarding partners design and deliver child protection together as an integrated multi-agency system within Family Help. Multi-agency child protection arrangements should seek to protect all children from actual or likely significant harm, inside and outside of the home, including online. Multi-agency child protection should also engage and empower parents, family networks and others in a transparent and compassionate way to care safely for their children, wherever this is possible.

Families will stay rooted in Family Help including when child protection action is necessary, with Family Help Lead Practitioners (FHLPs) continuing their relationship and responsibilities for direct practice and coordinating support and input for families across the system. FHLPs will play a crucial role in working with the multi-agency child protection team to make sure that the day-to-day life and experiences of the child and family are really understood, and child protection decisions centre this information. Where a child needs a protection plan, the FHLP should be a social worker if they aren't already.

Where a child comes to the attention of Family Help because of significant harm concerns but is not previously known, the FHLP should be a social worker. The FHLP will be responsible for the coordination of support and services that may be needed while a section 47 enquiry takes place, as well as throughout any subsequent child protection plan.

It will remain critical to have social workers with child protection expertise within Family Help to be the FHLP for children in need where needs are particularly complex, or for children who are subject to a s47 enquiry as well as those on child protection plans.

Creating a multi-agency child protection system will include:

1. [Establishing multi-agency child protection teams](#)
2. [Embedding the lead child protection practitioner role \(LCPPs\)](#)
3. [Responding to local needs and harms](#)
4. [Responding to significant harm outside the home](#)
5. [Providing information, support and advice to parents and carers in child protection](#)

Establishing Multi-agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs)

As statutory safeguarding partners, local authorities, integrated care boards and the police already have a joint and equal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area – and should dedicate resource to discharge this duty. Through this programme, we expect safeguarding partners to establish new, expert-led multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) to support the local authority to discharge its duties under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (duty to investigate). MACPTs will deliver specific child protection functions. New, expert social worker Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs), embedded within MACPTs, will be responsible for statutory child protection decisions drawing on the expertise and knowledge of the wider multi-agency practitioners in the team. The teams will carry out these functions in line with Working Together and the National Framework (2023) and build on learning from the Families First for Children Pathfinders.

Expectations:

Safeguarding partners will:

- nominate a core membership of dedicated, experienced, highly skilled and suitably qualified social workers (including into the new LCPP roles), police officers, registered health practitioners and persons with experience of education;
- determine which other relevant agencies (such as probation, domestic abuse services and youth workers) should be involved in the MACPT according to local demographics, needs and harm profiles;
- decide the location, number of teams and staffing arrangements for local MACPTs;
- determine how MACPTs integrate with and build on existing arrangements in the wider system (such as local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs or equivalents), whilst retaining a distinct identity and clear focus on direct multi-agency child protection activities;
- agree, allocate and transparently set out multi-agency resourcing;
- agree the shared vision, structure, and practice framework that includes senior management oversight and accountability for delivery and delegated decision-making (as part of strategic, statutory multi-agency safeguarding arrangements);
- set out how operational decisions and the related responsibilities of different agencies will be made and quality-assured for children who are the focus of section 47 enquiries and child protection plans. This should include medical assessments and multi-agency investigation procedures (which will depend on the type(s) of significant harm identified);
- establish a mechanism for triaging, reviewing and acting on referrals sent to the MACPT, including links to the MASH or other front door referral teams and responsibilities for out of hours services;
- consider and set out the role of the MACPT, including the LCPP, in supporting transitions out of child protection, including reunification, role in the Public Law

Outline and pre-proceedings and transitions between child and adult services (often referred to as transitional safeguarding) and Family Help or universal services;

- consider and set out chairing arrangements for child protection conferences within the MACPT, whilst ensuring clear ongoing quality assurance;
- set out access to group and individual reflective and clinical supervision and training
- consider how the team will quality assure child protection plans. Quality assurance should have regard to whether proposed actions clearly correspond to goals, whether these goals are adequately progressed, and whether plans meet needs arising from contextual factors identified during assessments;
- establish the MACPT(s) as a local centre of expertise accessible to all child and family practitioners across the multi-agency system, through overseeing, supporting and evidencing best practice in child protection;
- set out reporting requirements aligned with the requirements in Working Together for Safeguarding Partner Yearly Reports.

The roles and responsibilities for the MACPT should inform workforce development plans.

MACPT members should work together to:

- promote a sense of collective responsibility among agencies to protect children;
- provide child protection advice and expertise across the multi-agency system;
- build upon or conduct thorough assessments of children's needs by considering various perspectives and expertise from across the team, as well as the wider system;
- ensure that interventions are prompt, evidence-based and tailored to the child and family's needs, proactively addressing issues before they escalate;
- use resources efficiently by pooling expertise and services from various agencies;
- facilitate better communication and information sharing among practitioners and agencies.

Local flexibility:

- some pathfinder local partnerships have aligned MACPTs with the local authority's locality structure; others have established specialist MACPTs to respond to particular needs or harms, for example exploitation. These decisions will be for local area partnerships to determine as they prepare to implement change and should be informed by local safeguarding partner readiness assessments, intelligence about harm types and what is working well locally in child protection practice.

Functions of the Multi-agency Child Protection Teams

MACPTs will work closely alongside FHLPs who will retain their role with the family throughout child protection activity, including implementing child protection plans, with MACPT support and oversight. Child protection enquiries and plans should build on information and activity set out in the existing single family help assessment and plan or inform one where the child is not already known to Family Help.

Expectations

Specific MACPT functions include:

- chairing strategy meetings and child protection conferences;
- leading section 47 enquiries;
- leading or overseeing multi-agency and single investigations (as required);
- gathering information about whether a child is suffering significant harm, to support decision making;
- build in family group decision making and family network engagement into child protection processes;
- overseeing the development, review and closure of child protection plans;
- input to onward planning for children and families (including continued support from Family Help or supporting reunification);
- initiating emergency action (Emergency Protection Orders, Police Protection Orders);
- deciding whether to move into pre-proceedings and the Public Law Outline (PLO) process;
- providing relevant evidence to subsequent court proceedings;
- providing advice and consultation for practitioners who need multi-agency child protection expertise;
- maintaining an understanding of local patterns of significant harm and agency responses;
- oversight of all children who are the subject of section 47 enquiries or on a child protection plan and a clear line of sight to and from the local safeguarding partnership.

Working Together currently requires child protection conferences to be chaired by a social worker independent from the line management for the lead practitioner. The LCPP role will fulfil this function.

Other agencies and expertise

Safeguarding partners should determine the precise membership of MACPTs, beyond the minimum members, in line with local demographics, needs, and patterns of harm to best support and protect local children and their families. This should include understanding and responding to sexual abuse and extra-familial contexts of harm; the needs of all age groups from vulnerable babies (including pre-birth) to teenagers; and

different cultures, communities and ethnicities, ensuring practice is anti-discriminatory and inclusive. Examples of services that members could have individuals included in the MACPT:

- Prison and probation
- Youth justice
- Youth work
- Virtual school headteachers and/or local authority education teams
- Voluntary sector
- Family/children and young people engagement leads
- Multi-cultural community organisations
- Disabled children's teams
- Mental health practitioners (children and young people and adult services/specialisms, including maternal and perinatal)
- Health visitors and midwives
- School and/or public health nurses
- Sexual health practitioners
- Paediatricians with expertise in child protection
- Forensic physicians
- Domestic abuse services
- Substance misuse services
- Victim support services

Embedding the Lead Child Protection Practitioner Role

Lead Child Protection Practitioners

Each local area should introduce new 'Lead Child Protection Practitioner' (LCPP) social worker roles that are embedded in the local MACPT(s).

LCPPs should:

- be qualified social workers with substantial frontline child protection practice experience within children's social care (enquiries, assessments, reviews, conferences, decision-making and supervision) and an in-depth knowledge of the statutory and legislative framework;
- be skilled at identifying and responding to all types of significant harm, including extra-familial harm, recognising children can experience harm both within and outside the home;
- know how to work skilfully and confidently with families and parents in child protection, situating them as partners where safe to do so, and including those who have demonstrated resistant, hostile and/or deceptive behaviour;
- support partners to consider the influence of different extra-familial contexts in child protection, steering conversations towards a focus on building safety around children within public/peer contexts where they have or may come to harm;
- demonstrate anti-discriminatory, inclusive practice and be responsive to the needs and experiences of children and families of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- ensure MACPT members maintain a consistent focus on best interests of the child - this is equally important in the case of extra-familial harm where children demonstrate offending behaviour as a result of being exploited and groomed.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Responding to Local Needs and Harms

It will be important for MACPTs to be equipped to identify, understand and respond effectively to all harm types, inside and outside of the home and online. Abuse and exploitation can take many forms – from domestic abuse to child sexual abuse or physical harm inside the home to exploitation, trafficking or peer on peer abuse outside the home. Children can also experience more than one type of harm, and it will be important for MACPTs to recognise this when protecting children.

Data consistently shows that babies in the home and teenagers outside of the home are the highest risk groups when it comes to serious incidents. MACPTs should therefore ensure that they understand and respond effectively to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of all children from pre-birth onwards, including these groups. MACPTs will also need to consider that for some children, a safe and loving family environment is not enough to protect them from harms outside the home. For others, problems which exist within the home, such as abuse and neglect, could increase a child's vulnerability to exploitation and extra-familial harm.

It will be important to MACPTs to explore how the child's experiences within their families and networks, including their friends and peer groups, interplay with the risk of harm outside of the home and identify what needs to change. Recognising and responding to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of children with SEND will be critical. The impact of poverty should also be understood, with practitioners skilled at recognising the distinction between poverty and neglect and responding accordingly.

Practice should be inclusive, anti-discriminatory and responsive to the needs and experiences of children and families of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Practitioners should be alive to any bias in practice that may adversely impact particular groups or communities and consider children first and foremost in terms of vulnerability to harm. For instance, care should be taken to ensure children of particular ethnic backgrounds are not 'adultified'.

Responding to Significant Harm Outside the Home

Children can experience harm in various extra-familial contexts such as schools and colleges, peer groups, community and public spaces, and/or online. Types of harm include criminal or sexual exploitation, serious violence, modern slavery, trafficking⁴, teenage relationship abuse, and influences of extremism which could lead to radicalisation. Working Together is clear that children who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, significant harm outside the home should receive a child protection response.

The Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm⁵ and emerging evidence from Durham University's Planning for Safety research project⁶ outline a number of key features which MACPTs, working alongside the FHLP, should consider when tailoring their multi-agency child protection response to harm outside the home. These build on the expectations set out in the National Framework and include:

Putting children first, understanding their experiences and responding to their needs

- be curious about what drives behaviour;
- listen to how children define and describe their identity;
- be aware of disproportionality and negative biases, such as adultification.

⁴ If there are concerns that a child may be a potential victim of modern slavery or child trafficking then a referral should be made to the National Referral Mechanism and, where available, the Independent Child Trafficking Guardian Service, alongside a referral to children's social care - *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*

⁵ [Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm](#)

⁶ [Planning for Safety | Contextual Safeguarding: Embedding Risk Outside of the Home \(ROTH\) pathways](#)

Positioning of parents/carers as partners in, rather than the subject of, the child protection process wherever safe to do so

- approach parents and carers as partners and ensure their voice is heard;
- involve parents and carers in producing reports and planning for safety;
- build trusting relationships to support parents/carers share their concerns and needs.

Considering the influence of different contexts on children and young people's safety, and the capacity of their parents and carers and professionals to protect them

- assess where harm is taking place and where the child or young person feels safe and/or unsafe. This is sometimes referred to as 'context weighting';⁷
- consider the often-overlapping influences that different contexts can have on each other, children and their families;
- determine any changes to where children are safe or unsafe, and prioritise actions that build safety in these contexts.

Working collaboratively and creatively, with parents and carers, children, and community partners, to understand the extra-familial context in which harm is occurring and to determine the actions that each can take to help create safety

- bring together partners⁸ to develop creative solutions to build safety around children and within the contexts that may facilitate or cause harm;
- share knowledge about services, interventions, and/or support offered by the wider safeguarding partnership and local community, including voluntary sector organisations;
- when responding to contexts, MAPCTs should consider three key areas:
 1. **Children's Needs:** take a child welfare approach to identify and meet the needs of children in the context.
 2. **Community Guardianship:** identify trusted adults or peers and build/increase their safeguarding role.
 3. **Environmental Factors:** address environmental features that contribute to harm or safety, such as improving lighting or running positive activities.

Knowledge and expertise of the child protection conference chair on the nature of extra-familial harm and the types of resources/services available locally that can influence extra-familial contexts.⁹

⁷ Further information on contextual weighting is available at [Context Weighting | Contextual Safeguarding](#) including the [Contextual Safeguarding | Context Weighting Guide \(June 2022\)](#) which provides examples of how to use context weighting in assessment and planning.

⁸ Such as those working in voluntary, private and statutory organisations who may come into contact with or be aware of the presence of children in their day-to-day roles in the community - *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*

⁹ Emerging findings from Durham University's research has shown the added value of the Chair having expertise in extra-familial harm, particularly their role in helping partners to take a holistic approach to

- facilitate context focused conversations to share understanding of which contexts most require attention and a holistic assessment of the child needs;
- coordinate traditional and non-traditional safeguarding partners, parents/carers, and children to work collaboratively to understand harms and identify child-welfare-focussed solutions;
- ensure that the welfare of the child is paramount in planning, including for those children who may be causing harm to others. It is vital to advocate the value of understanding their experiences and meeting their needs as a route to safeguarding their welfare, to reduce the likelihood of harm to themselves and others.¹⁰

Information, Support and Advice for Parents and Carers

Parents and carers involved in child protection need high quality information, advice and support to engage effectively and make meaningful change to keep their child(ren) safe. Local partnerships should develop consistent approaches to working collaboratively with all parents and carers, having regard to the principles set out in Working Together.

Expectations

Through both Family Help and MACPTs, local areas should:

- build positive, trusting and co-operative partnerships with parents wherever possible;
- set out their engagement, information and support offer for all parents and carers in child protection;
- provide clear, accessible information and signpost support for all parents and carers from the point a section 47 enquiry is initiated. This should cover the process, what they can expect, what is expected of them, and their rights;
- work with parents and carers, including those with lived experience of child protection, those living in areas of high deprivation and from diverse communities to design and deliver the service;
- develop and implement a plan to reach a wide range of parents and carers including fathers and male carers, those who are neurodiverse and parents and carers where the harm is extra-familial, and parents are a protective factor;
- consider innovative approaches to working with parents and carers who may be unwilling or unable to participate in decisions about their family;
- adapt responses to meet the diverse needs of parents and carers including parents/ and carers of disabled children, parents and carers that are disabled, with mental health needs and/or who have English as an additional language;

address all types of extra-familial harm children can experience outside the home and identify actions to address contexts of harm and the dynamics of extra-familial harm, including escalating risk and recognising and challenging system/structures drivers of harm.

¹⁰ Consider the views of the child/young person when agreeing a plan; their acceptability of any actions will be key to ongoing engagement and ensure that the desired goals reflect what the child/young person needs.

- understand the family members' background, ethnicity, religion, financial situation, education, sex, ages and sexual orientation, and potential barriers certain groups may experience in seeking and accessing help and support;
- have in place relevant and appropriate data sharing arrangements to support identification of children and families needing support, help or protection.

Section 3: Family Group Decision Making

Families should be supported to enable their children to remain living at home with their birth parents, where it is safe to do so. Children who stay with their families have considerably better outcomes than children who enter local authority care. Empowering families and wider family networks, supported by practitioners in both Family Help and multi-agency child protection, to make plans to support children and help families to stay together safely, is central to the whole family approach in this end-to-end system reform.

A family network may include the child's parents or any other person with parental responsibility for the child, relatives, friends or other persons connected with the child. Siblings, cousins, family friends, neighbours or other members of a child's community, might also form a part of the family network. Family networks can play a key role in supporting families to stay together safely, and even when this is not possible, can often offer a safe, loving and stable home which helps to keep children out of local authority care. Family networks can also, with the right support from trained practitioners, help parents and carers access support to address their own needs, while continuing to offer vital stability to children and young people.

Family group decision-making (FGDM) is a term used to describe a voluntary process that enables a family network to come together and make a family-led plan in response to concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing, working alongside skilled professionals. The plan will include offering practical support to parents and carers, whilst prioritising the safety and wellbeing of the child. FGDM helps to ensure a family network is engaged and empowered to participate in decision-making while a child and their family is receiving help, support or protection. Family Help Lead Practitioners (FHLPs) and multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) will play a crucial role in supporting FGDM as the practitioners who know the child and family well and are delivering help, support and in some cases, protection through an existing plan. Growing evidence¹¹ shows that Family Group Conferences (FGC), a form of FGDM, have been highly successful in preventing children from entering and remaining in the care system. FGDM should be embedded within Family Help and multi-agency child protection, benefiting from consistency in lead practitioners and multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working.

Implementing family group decision making includes:

¹¹ <https://foundations.org.uk/our-work/publications/family-group-conferencing-at-pre-proceedings-stage/>

- building a family first culture with the integration of FGDM at every point from Family Help, into support, through multi-agency child protection and into care;
- offering FGDM at the pre-proceedings stage to ensure that families on the edge of care are offered the opportunity to make a family-led plan before care proceedings are initiated, if this offer is in the child's best interests.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill includes a measure to mandate local authorities to offer a 'family group decision making' meeting at the point the local authority is seriously considering applying to the court for a care or supervision order, to give all families an opportunity to come together and make a plan in response to concerns regarding the child's welfare.

Embedding Family Group Decision Making across the system of help, support and protection

Working Together and the National Framework set expectations for local areas to consider FGDM for a child and their family where they are receiving help, support or protection and also as a route to reunification with the birth parents or family network where appropriate. Where it is in the best interests of the child, local partnerships should ensure that the offer of FGDM is made as early as possible and repeat the offer as a child's needs and the support they receive changes. Local partnerships should consider how they embed FGDM to support the principles of right support at the right time, effective multi-agency child protection intervention, to prevent children entering the care system where possible and to support successful reunification where this is appropriate.

Expectations

- ensure FHLPs identify a child's family network and engage them in decision making;
- offer FGDM through family help, multi-agency child protection and care and consider offering FGDM at every decision point, including at the point of reunification;
- consider how FHLPs can use the information about needs, any safeguarding concerns, risk or previous harm to inform decisions about wider family members who should be invited to engage in FGDM. MACPTs will operate as a local centre of child protection expertise and will provide consultancy and support across the system of help, support and protection. FHLPs will be able to consult with the MACPT on concerns about safety and wellbeing, including where FGDM is agreed;
- agree when offering FGDM would not be in the child's best interest and set this out in a transparent way in line with their local protocol for assessment and support required by Working Together;
- ensure family plans are integrated into, and given sufficient weight within, family help and child protection plans.

Implementing Family Group Decision Making

Local authorities are best placed to understand the needs of their families and communities. This will inform how FGDM can be embedded within their end-to-end system. Local partnerships should develop an approach which is evidence-based, aligns with their practice framework, and is embedded within the integrated Family Help and multi-agency child protection system. FGDM should be defined with clear processes to ensure that the offer made to each family is high quality and practice is consistent. There should be clarity about how FHLPs, and where appropriate MACPTs, support FGDM and the role and responsibility of other practitioners who might facilitate FGDM. Suitable training should be provided to ensure FGDM facilitators have the knowledge, skills and experience to co-ordinate meetings safely and effectively. This should be included in the local partnership workforce plan.

Government does not mandate the use of a particular model for delivering FGDM. However, local partnerships should consider the strong evidence for the Family Group Conference (FGC) model of FGDM. In both domestic and international studies, FGCs have been shown to be highly effective in supporting families, improving decision-making processes and diverting children from care¹².

Whether a local partnership adopts the FGC model or not, all areas should develop FGDM which is underpinned by these minimum requirements, informed by the evidence-based FGC approach:

1. Appointing a dedicated FGDM facilitator

A designated Family Group Decision Making facilitator should be identified to coordinate and lead the FGDM process. It will be important to consider offering families the option of a facilitator who has had no previous involvement or decision making responsibility with the child or family. Emerging evidence from the Families First for Children Pathfinder has shown that some families value this independence and neutrality, and it can lead to better outcomes. In some cases, families may request that their FHLP facilitates FGDM. The FHLP, and where FGDM is facilitated during pre-proceedings, the MACPT should consider these requests, assess whether the family would benefit from having someone familiar to them and take into account the relationship between the FHLP and the family.

2. Preparation

a. Initial meeting with professionals

The FGDM facilitator should work with the FHLP to discuss the child, their family, their history, and why the family is in need of help, support or protection. This will also include discussing why the family has reached pre-proceedings, where appropriate. They seek

¹² [RCT of Family Group Conferencing at Pre-proceedings stage; Evaluation-of-SA-FGC-Final-Report-July-2024.pdf](#)

information about the child that will provide insight and understanding of their day-to-day life, relevant family information including previous and current contact with services and agencies and take into consideration known risks, previous or current concerns about harm and whether a child has been looked after by the local authority at any point.

b. Pre-meetings with the parents and child, and planning the meeting

Local authorities must actively seek the child's views at every stage of the process, except in exceptional circumstances where doing so would not be in the child's best interests. Special consideration should be given as to how best to access their views and experiences, and ensure appropriate participation of children with additional needs. The facilitator should work closely with the child's FHLP and other professionals to understand how their views can be best sought and expressed.

The facilitator should meet with the parents/those with parental responsibility and the child to introduce themselves, confirm there is informed consent, explain the FGDM process, understand more about the family's circumstances and work with them to identify people in the family network who could be invited to the FGDM meeting.

It will be important to consider the child and parents' views in determining who should be involved in FGDM. Factors to consider will include the best interest of the child, assessment of need and risk, creating a productive and effective environment and achieving best outcomes. Facilitators should consider whether safe and productive participation could be best achieved in different ways, such as through separate meeting, use of video conferencing, use of moderators or advocates, or if written views can be shared in the meeting. Individuals may be excluded from FGDM, including in relation to safeguarding concerns. Decision making should be explained in an appropriate way to the child.

The facilitator should explore with the child and their parents how they wish to be involved and how this could be facilitated appropriately, explaining any additional support that can be provided. The facilitator, alongside the FHLP where appropriate, should consider the child's age, understanding and viewpoint and take into consideration their wishes for participation. If the age and understanding of the child is appropriate the child should attend appropriate elements of the FGDM meeting. Consideration should be given to the child having an advocate or other forms of support to enable their participation.

Special consideration should be given as to how children with additional needs can participate in the meeting or have their views expressed.

c. Co-designing and setting up the meeting

The facilitator should meet with all family network members ahead of the meeting to discuss the purpose of the meeting, how it will run and ground rules. They will discuss if there are any additional needs or considerations that need to be put in place to ensure the meeting is accessible. This may include providing interpreters for any participants who require them, ensuring the venue is wheelchair accessible, offering information in

different formats or languages, or ensuring video conferencing facilities are available to enable remote participation.

Following risk assessments and consideration of the child and family network member's needs, how the meeting will take place and how certain members will contribute will be discussed and decided. For example, it may be decided that two meetings take place or that advocates are in place to support some attendees.

The facilitator will support the family to decide on a date and location of the FGDM meeting. This should be at a time, place and a venue to suit all of the family and, where possible, it should take place on 'neutral' ground (i.e. not at local authority or other agency offices).

d. Facilitator's preparation meeting

Shortly before the meeting takes place, the facilitator should meet with the FHLP, and the MACPT where appropriate, to discuss the FGDM meeting, ensure they have all the relevant information about the family, and to understand what help, support or protection the child needs and how the family network support can be integrated effectively into the Family Help and child protection plan to improve outcomes. They need to decide what key concerns the family's plan must address in order to ensure the child's wellbeing, including any considerations for keeping the child safe, so that these 'bottom lines' can be communicated clearly to the family network at the beginning of the meeting.

3. The FGDM meeting

The purpose of the meeting is to create a plan for the child that addresses the local authority and family's concerns. This purpose should be clearly explained at the start of the meeting alongside the concerns for the child and the key requirements or 'bottom lines' that the plan needs to address to keep the child safe. Ground rules for the meeting must be established.

The meeting should give the family network adequate time to come up with their own plan to address the concerns for the child. During the meeting, the family and wider family network should be offered the opportunity to spend some time discussing the issues together without the presence of the facilitator or other practitioners, unless there are safeguarding concerns which would mean this might be considered inappropriate or unsafe.

After the plan has been created and agreed by the family network, the family network should share their plan with the facilitator, the FHLP and MACPT where appropriate. At the meeting, the FHLP will consider the plan against the key concerns and requirements as explained to the family network at the beginning of the meeting. If there are child protection concerns, the FHLP will also engage the MACPT. They should agree to the plan as long as it is legal, safe and addresses the key concerns.

The FHLP will seek the input of the Multi-disciplinary Family Help team, and the MACPT where this is needed, before it is agreed and signed off. If this is the case, a timeline will

be agreed for feeding back to the family. Once the plan is agreed, safeguarding partnerships should commit to providing the support contained in the plan to the family network.

The facilitator should make sure that everyone who attended the FGDM meeting has a copy of the plan and that the plan is recorded in the child's Family Help plan. A record of key decisions should be recorded during the meeting by the facilitator, and this may accompany the family plan in the local authority records for the family.

4. Reviewing the plan

The facilitator should make arrangements for the family network to review their plan within a reasonable and agreed time frame. At the review, the family network and practitioners meet to consider how the plan is working and if any circumstances have changed. FHLPs should also consider if the support that was offered as part of the plan has been delivered.

The child's safety, welfare and best interests is of paramount importance throughout this process. If the FHLP or MACPT believes that the child's circumstances or welfare needs have changed at any point during the pre-proceedings stage, such that court proceedings should be initiated immediately, then the local authority should proceed with making an application to the court to initiate care proceedings.

Family Group Decision Making and Safeguarding

FGDM will be delivered with support from the FHLPs and the MACPT. Practitioners will have a detailed knowledge of the child and family, including safeguarding concerns, risks and harm. Pre-proceedings will only be initiated following a child protection process, where the FHLP and MACPT determine that there is not sufficient protection of the child by the parents. Understanding the child and family's history and drawing on the knowledge from both Family Help and the MACPT about the day-to-day life and experiences will be central to safe and effective FGDM. Children and their families experience a range of harms, and sometimes more than one at any given time. Harms might include domestic abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, teenage relationship abuse, child sexual abuse, exploitation or other harms from outside the home. Planning for FGDM should take this into account to ensure safety and protection from harm.

FHLPs and the MACPT should consider whether it would be appropriate to exclude certain individuals from FGDM. This could include family network members and those with parental responsibility. It will be important to explore the significance of the adults in contact with the child and their family. Close attention should be paid to any serious criminal convictions, previous allegations of child abuse, domestic abuse or impulsive violent behaviour, restrictions on contact with children or involvement with children subject to child protection plans or care proceedings. It will also be important to recognise that previous contact with services or agencies may influence the way family network members engage with FGDM.

It will be important to consider what happens if threatening or disruptive behaviour arises during FGDM and what mitigations will be in place to manage this. FHLPs and MACPTs will bring expertise and oversight in assessing who should and should not engage with FGDM and how to create a safe environment. Where it is decided that individuals should not be at FGDM meetings, FHLPs and MACPTs should consider whether the views of the individual should be invited and taken into account as part of FGDM (for example, through a written statement). This decision should always promote the safety and welfare of the child and be in their best interests. Parents and carers should always be given the information, support and advice they need to understand what is happening, give informed consent and to fully participate in decision making where this is possible. Working Together sets out clear principles for working with parents, carers and families to build trust, confidence and respect. These principles should be embedded in FGDM. In some circumstances, family members may need support or advocacy to fully participate in FGDM. Safeguarding partnerships should consider their local support offer to parents, carers and family networks.

If the FGDM process uncovers new information that the family or child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the facilitator must raise this with the child's FHLP immediately and follow the local authority's safeguarding policies.

To support local authorities and all practitioners involved in FGDM, we are seeking to procure a package of best practice guidance and resources, drawing on research and case studies, to support safe and effective delivery of the process.

Offering Family Group Decision Making at pre-proceedings

The pre-proceedings process acts as the final opportunity for parents to avoid care proceedings. It will be important for local safeguarding partnerships to consider the following practice principles when embedding Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) at pre-proceedings:

Parents and those with parental responsibility should be offered FGDM before an application is made to court for a care or supervision order, unless it is not in the child's best interests. FHLPs and MACPTs should work together to consider how the wider family is engaged as part of the integrated Family Help and Child Protection Plan. The FGDM offer should be made in the 'letter before proceedings.' Where the offer is accepted, FGDM should be arranged to help, support and protect children and their families, as needed. Working Together sets out guidance on pre-proceedings and safeguarding partnerships should consider this when setting up FGDM locally. This offer should be discussed with parents in the first pre-proceedings meeting, where written information should be provided on FGDM so that parents, or those with parental responsibility, can give informed consent. If parents' consent to FGDM, then steps to facilitate this should start immediately.

In offering FGDM at pre-proceedings, FHLPs and MACPTs should consider if this has been offered before, how successful it was in improving outcomes, the time that has elapsed since FGDM, and how the family's circumstances may have changed in light of moving into pre-proceedings. FHLPs, through their consistent relationship and knowledge of the child and their family, including the help and support in place, will be well placed to inform decisions about offering FGDM at this point. MACPTs will bring a sharp focus on protection and provide support including through the Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP). MACPTs will be well placed to ensure that FGDM aligns with current child protection interventions. Whether to offer FGDM should be discussed at the first legal planning meeting, with input from the FHLP and the MACPT. The decision and the rationale should be recorded and signed off by a senior manager and included in the court application for consideration by the judge. If the case does result in the initiation of court proceedings, FHLP and MACPTs should also consider how they can evidence the mandated offer of FGDM and any resulting actions to the court, for example, through the Social Work Evidence Template (SWET).

Where an offer is made, local authorities should provide sufficient time for parents or those with parental responsibility to consider their options, including the opportunity to seek legal advice or discuss the offer with family and friends. Local authorities should also ensure that the offer is presented in an accessible way, taking into account the individual needs of those receiving the offer. This could include considering any additional learning needs, disabilities, or communication requirements (for example, preparing information in alternative languages or formats). The local authority should provide appropriate support to ensure all recipients are able to fully understand the process and can come to an informed decision.

The FHLP should follow up within a reasonable time period to confirm a decision and engage with families to address any concerns or barriers that are preventing them from reaching a decision. Where delays persist, FHLPs with support from the MACPT should assess whether extending the timeframe remains in the child's best interests. The local authority should facilitate FGDM if it has been accepted by at least one individual to whom the offer was made.

When Family Group Decision Making might not be offered at pre-proceedings

Many children have benefitted from FGDM at pre-proceedings, however, there will be situations where it may not be in the child's best interest. This could be because the child and those with parental responsibility have no significant relationship, or because all family network members have been assessed, and it would not be safe. The decision not to offer FGDM should be made taking into account the circumstances and needs of the child. Local areas should not adopt an approach that assumes blanket exemptions based on certain harm types or the family's history. Families are complex and whilst it may not be safe for a child to live with their family, for example due to domestic abuse or other

types of harm, for many children it will be important for them to remain in contact as part of understanding their history and identity. Where FGDM can support planning that promotes a child's wellbeing and safety, it should always be considered. Where the FHLP and MACPT determine that it is not appropriate to offer FGDM, the reason for this should always be shared with parents or those with parental responsibility.

Withdrawing the offer of Family Group Decision Making at pre-proceedings

The offer of FGDM can be withdrawn at any time if it is no longer in the child's best interests. The decision to withdraw, and the rationale, should be recorded in the child's Family Help and child protection plan and signed off by a senior manager. If the FHLP and MACPT believe that the child's circumstances or needs have changed at any point during the pre-proceedings stage, such that court proceedings should be initiated immediately, then the application to the court should be made. Family work, including FGDM, should continue including when care proceedings have been initiated.

Chapter 3: Families First Partnership Programme: key principles and system enablers

The National Framework and Working Together to Safeguard Children

As local partnerships embark on this new phase of transformation, they should do so in line with the [Children's Social Care National Framework](#) and [Working Together: statutory guidance](#). The key principles of the National Framework should be used to support effective practice across the end-to-end system of help, support and protection. The National Framework provides detailed information which will help children, young people, and families to understand what to expect from children's social care when a local authority offers help, protection or care. The National Framework contains three chapters on enablers of good practice, which local partnerships should have in place to facilitate the great work that everyone wants to see with families. The guidance also includes a strong expectation that improving outcomes relies on responding to the voices of children, young people and families. The National Framework is supported by the [Children's Social Care Dashboard](#), which captures data on key indicators and allows local partnerships to see the progress they are making towards the outcomes expected.

Working Together sets out expectations for every individual, agency and organisation that works with children and their families. It applies at every level. The guidance clarifies the role of safeguarding partners and relevant agencies such as education and childcare settings, and the importance of multi-agency, whole family working in system transformation, including through the principles for working with parents and carers, new multi-agency expectations and the national multi-agency child protection standards. Working Together outlines that safeguarding partners are required to publish a yearly report to ensure local scrutiny and accountability which includes an assessment of the effectiveness of local arrangements, learning, and spend.

Information Sharing

Data

Local agencies should share data relating to children and families across their local safeguarding partnership. This is to enable local agencies to identify families requiring support, track needs and outcomes over time and provide practitioners with the latest information to inform their work.

A senior strategic group with representation across the partnership should drive the use of data for the whole system. Data should be shared across education and childcare settings, police, health, Department for Work and Pensions, housing, Youth Offending Teams, prisons, and probation. This requires agreement of robust information governance arrangements including Data Sharing Agreements, Data Protection Impact Assessments, protocols and training staff in the use of data. Local partnerships should share information for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Information sharing and consistent identifiers – Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill

Measures to improve data sharing between agencies to better safeguard and support children and families are included in the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill. An information sharing duty that provides a clear legal basis to share information for the purposes of safeguarding and promotion of welfare, and provision to enable the specification of a consistent identifier (also known as ‘Single Unique Identifier’).

Areas should develop appropriate infrastructure for sharing, storing and analysing information. This could be bringing together and matching data in a data warehouse or data lake. Areas should consider using common data standards to enable sharing. Local partnerships should make use of tools to analyse needs and risks across the system and report these insights across the partnership. Single digital view systems provide a way to share data with practitioners to inform their work. Local partnerships are encouraged to explore AI tools to support the workforce and highlight risk while being aware of possible biases and limitations of this technology.

Case management system changes

The introduction of Family Help may require changes to your case management systems (CMS). These include:

- bringing together targeted early help cases and child in need cases in the same system;
- introducing a single assessment and workflow for these two groups;
- extending proportionate access to all partners working with families, particularly those who take a lead practitioner role.

The department will set out further expectations and good practice on CMS requirements and system changes – including planned data collections. Local partnerships are encouraged to work in partnership with other areas to make best use of technical support.

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

Delivering an effective system of help, support and protection for children and their families is a shared responsibility. There should be greater consistency and accountability across all multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA), so that leaders at the right level are making the right decisions for local children and their families.

Effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are foundational to successful reform and improving outcomes for children and families. It is critical that the statutory safeguarding partners, and relevant agencies like education and childcare settings, work together to deliver and embed change.

All safeguarding partners have been implementing changes set out in Working Together including to:

- set out **lead (strategic oversight and accountability) and delegated (operational delivery) safeguarding partner** roles, responsibilities and joint functions across local authorities, health and the police;
- introduce a **Partnership Chair** to facilitate discussions, encourage consistency and provide a clear mechanism for escalation;
- ensure a clear system of **independent scrutiny** to provide rigour and challenge.

Safeguarding partners should establish clear, equitable and effective safeguarding arrangements and embed a clear line of sight between strategy and practice. Given the key role they play in children's lives, all education and childcare settings should be engaged and consulted as strategic partners in local safeguarding arrangements.

All safeguarding partners have been implementing Working Together to strengthen the role of education at the operational and strategic levels of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Lead and delegated safeguarding partners should work together with all education and childcare settings to create an environment where they are engaged, included and involved in safeguarding arrangements by:

- establishing or adapting education forums with representatives from across the education sector, from early years and childcare settings through to further education and colleges, including academies, alternative provision, and independent schools. The full list of relevant agencies are set out in [The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency \(England\) Regulations 2018](#);
- identifying representatives who can provide a voice for education settings locally to enable effective inclusion and representation for education at operational and strategic decision-making levels of the MASA.

Safeguarding partners are encouraged to automatically include all education and safeguarding settings in their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and that they work together with these settings to identify and respond to the needs of children in their area.

Strengthening the role of education and MASA – Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill

A measure to place duties on safeguarding partners (local authorities, police and health) to secure the participation of education and childcare settings as relevant agencies as well as ensure that their views are sufficiently included and represented at strategic and operational levels in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The aim of this measure is to strengthen the role of education in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to better protect children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Families First for Children Pathfinder local partnerships have been testing a strengthened role for education as a strategic partner in their local arrangements. Learning and best practice will be shared from the pathfinder areas, along with learning from implementation of statutory guidance nationally to support local partnerships.

Delivering evidence based interventions

The Children’s Social Care National Framework highlights the importance of promoting evidence-based approaches to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Local leaders should use evidence to inform and improve how services are commissioned and delivered in their local area.

In order to enable local partnerships to access information on the best available evidence, the department have commissioned a series of [Practice Guides](#), from Foundations - the What Works Centre for Children & Families. Practice Guides set out high quality evidence about how best to achieve the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework and translates this into key principles and recommendations to support local leaders in strengthening family services. Local partnerships should look to Practice Guides as a key source for guidance on the latest evidence from Foundations - the What Works Centre for Children & Families. Practice Guides set out high quality evidence about how best to achieve the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework and translates this into key principles and recommendations to support local leaders in strengthening family services. Local partnerships should look to Practice Guides as a key source for guidance on the latest evidence.

[Foundations](#) will be publishing more Practice Guides to support local leaders to deliver the responsibilities outlined in the National Framework.

What are evidence based interventions?

There are a range of evidence-based interventions (EBIs) that have been proven to be effective through rigorous impact evaluation. These EBIs provide the most reliable way to improve child and family outcomes and strengthen the consistency and quality of Family Help services. EBIs focus on increasing practitioners' knowledge of scientifically proven theories of change and provide effective methods for engaging families experiencing vulnerabilities.

Leaders should consider embedding EBIs in their approach, commissioning and delivery of system transformation.

Supporting local evidence use

Local partnerships should aim to provide a range of evidence-based interventions suitable for children of different ages and different levels of family need. In order to inform decisions about which interventions would best suit local need and the wider local context, local leaders review and update their population needs assessment and joint strategic needs assessment as part of co-designing and implementing Family Help.

Chapter 4: Families First Partnership Programme – national delivery support offer

The Families First Partnership Programme will provide all local safeguarding partners with support and direction to implement reforms. The department will work closely with local partnerships to support delivery of the programme in the following ways:

1. work in partnership with local areas based on strong relationships, and clear and honest communication, taking a collaborative approach to overcome challenges;
2. resource and recognise the value of local co-design and implementation where partners, children, young people and families work together to build joined up services that meet the needs of local communities;
3. share learning nationally and facilitate sector-led support;
4. keep oversight and monitoring arrangements proportionate, to enable central government to understand delivery progress and impact, whilst not impeding on local delivery.

Further detail on delivery expectations and support for the programme can be found in the [Grant Determination Letter](#) for the Children’s Social Care Prevention Grant and in the document ‘Planning for Implementation’.

Working in partnership with local areas

The FFP Area Engagement Team will provide a single point of contact and support for each local area. They will engage directly with local authorities and their partners as well as on a regional footprint. To help support these relationships all local authorities should have a named senior lead to manage the running of the programme and a Senior Practice Lead responsible for the design and delivery of implementation.

Local co-design and implementation

Local partners best understand the needs and challenges of their areas, and designing and implementing reforms to meet these needs takes time and resource. As such the grant determination letter sets an expectation that local authorities reserve some funding for transformation. Based on learning from the Families First for Children Pathfinder this may be around 30%. Examples of how funding was used by the Pathfinders include, to meaningfully engage children and families in co-designing the end to end system, and agreeing secondment arrangements with partners to support multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working. Both of these helped with the design of integrated and effective services that felt more welcoming to families. Local partners may also want to consider how resources could be pooled to support regional or sub regional approaches to transformation. All areas will have time to carry out this design process and will complete a delivery plan for their reformed services.

During the design and implementation phase, areas should build on their strengths, and support transformation across the core areas set out in the National Framework enablers of good practice and in line with the requirements of Working Together. Alongside this, areas will be supported to improve and update case management systems and data sharing to enable reforms.

Learning and sector-led support

The FFP programme will share learning from the pathfinder areas, along with best practice and best evidence from across children's social care including Foundations and other specialist organisations. These will include 'How to' guides providing examples and support on how to design and implement reforms, along with webinars and other publications. There will be a national digital platform hosted by the Local Government Association's [Knowledge Hub](#) to enable local partners to access learning and resources. More details will be shared shortly.

The programme will also place sector-led support at the core of its offer, using existing regional and direct support offers for areas to discuss and work through opportunities and challenges posed by the reforms.

We are also seeking to procure a package of best practice guidance and resources, drawing on research and case studies, for local authorities and practitioners, to support the safe and effective delivery of the FGDM process.

Proportionate Oversight and monitoring

The department will aim to balance the need to understand delivery progress and impact of reforms, and to see if the programme is meeting its aims. Further detail of monitoring expectations can be found in the Grant Determination Letter, this includes sharing updates on progress and data. Where possible the department will use available data, and any new collection will be conducted quarterly starting in June 2025. The department will also ask local authorities to submit additional data on the children, young people and families receiving Family Help to measure outcomes as part of evaluating the impact of the reforms. This will be proportionate, and the department will only collect data that is not included in existing data returns. The long-term aim is to integrate and simplify data collections.



Department
for Education

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection Report
Meeting date	10 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The local area partnership SEND inspection took place in November 2025 and the final report was published by Ofsted on the 6th February 2026. The report concludes that the local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and that partners must work jointly to secure the necessary improvements.</p> <p>Inspectors recognised clear progress and strengthened foundations since the previous inspection. The report highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased stability in leadership and a strong shared vision across education, health and care. • Improving lived experiences for many children and young people with SEND, with tangible examples of better multi-agency working and strengthened workforce capacity. • More responsive health support, better partnership functioning, and growing opportunities for children and young people to have their voices heard. <p>Inspection findings also reaffirm that improvement work since 2021, such as the strengthened SEND partnership structures, the development of the Belonging Strategy and improvements in communication and co-production, has set a strong platform for continued change.</p> <p>Overall, the inspection confirms that the partnership is moving firmly in the right direction and must now embed improvements so that positive experiences become the norm across the BCP area.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the improved outcome of the November 2025 Ofsted and CQC Area SEND Inspection and ensure, via the committee's forward plan of activity, that the actions now required of the partnership are delivered and impact positively on children and families.</p>

Reason for recommendations	<p>The recommendations enable the Committee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide formal democratic oversight of the inspection outcome. • Ensure transparency and accountability regarding the actions the partnership is taking, including publication of the report and the required update to the strategic plan within the statutory timeframe. • Support the continued pace and focus of the SEND Improvement Programme, ensuring that the progress recognised by inspectors is consolidated and that better experiences become consistent for all children, young people and families. • Strengthen scrutiny of the partnership’s response, ensuring that Members are fully sighted on the improvement journey and able to challenge and support progress as required.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley
Report Authors	Lisa Linscott, Director of Education and Skills
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For recommendation

Background

1. Since the SEND inspection of 202 which resulted in an inadequate judgement, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and its partners have been on an improvement journey to strengthen SEND services across the local area. This work was initially driven by the Written Statement of Action and reinforced by the Statutory Direction issued in February 2024, following which the partnership established strengthened governance through the SEND Improvement Board to provide system leadership, challenge, and accountability for delivering lasting change.
2. Over this period, the partnership has focused on building the stable foundations required for improvement, including strengthened leadership, clearer governance arrangements, improved multi-agency working, and a greater emphasis on children’s lived experiences.
3. These actions have enabled the partnership to make demonstrable progress, as recognised through the recent Ofsted/CQC inspection, which highlighted improved workforce stability, stronger partnership functioning, and increasing opportunities for children and young people to share their views. While further work is required to secure consistency across all services, the inspection confirmed that the partnership is moving firmly in the right direction and that foundations for long-term improvement are now in place.

Summary of financial implications

4. The financial context for SEND remains significantly challenging. The High Needs Block continues to experience substantial pressure, with the most recent forecast showing a further significant overspend. To mitigate the continued growth of the deficit, the local area partnership is implementing a range of measures, with oversight from a new Partnership High Needs Block Management Board. Overall, the inspection outcome reinforces the need for continued financial discipline, stronger systems, and targeted investment to secure both improved outcomes for children and sustainable management of the High Needs Block and use of central council funds.

Summary of legal implications

5. There are no direct legal implications arising from the submission of the inspection report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee. There are no additional legislative duties created by the Ofsted/CQC inspection outcome itself; however, the findings reinforce the necessity of continued compliance with statutory responsibilities under the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2015, and associated regulatory frameworks. Ongoing monitoring and timely implementation of improvements will be essential to demonstrate the Council's adherence to these duties.

Summary of human resources implications

6. No HR implications arise directly from the presentation of the inspection report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. However, as improvement work continues, particularly in areas such as sufficiency, data and IT transformation, Educational Psychology resource, and commissioning, ongoing workforce development and capacity monitoring will remain essential to ensure the partnership can deliver required improvements effectively.

Summary of sustainability impact

7. There are no direct sustainability impacts arising from the presentation of the SEND Inspection report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. As this report provides an update on the inspection findings and the partnership's improvement activity, it does not in itself introduce new policies, programmes, or operational changes that would affect environmental sustainability.

Summary of public health implications

8. There are **no direct public health implications** arising from presenting the SEND Inspection report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. However, public health considerations remain closely connected to SEND outcomes across the local area. Public Health colleagues are actively involved in the SEND Improvement Plan, ensuring that health inequalities, access to services, and population-level health needs are appropriately considered in the partnership's improvement activity.

Summary of equality implications

9. An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report. This paper presents the findings of the Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Inspection and does not propose any new policy, service change or decision that would have a direct impact on individuals or groups with protected characteristics. Therefore, no EIA is necessary at this stage.

Summary of risk assessment

10. There are no direct risks arising from the presentation of the Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This report is for information only and does not introduce new decisions, operational changes, or resource commitments that would alter the Council's risk profile. The broader risks associated with the SEND system—such as financial pressures, workforce capacity, and variability in service quality—are already recognised within the Council's existing governance and performance frameworks and are being managed through the SEND Improvement Plan and associated oversight

Background papers

BCP Area Partnership SEND inspection report on Ofsted website: [10364968_24-Nov-2025_08-16-21 - 083526 Final clean-182018.docx](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Letter accompanying Local Area Partnership SEND Inspection report

Appendix 2 - Local Area Partnership SEND inspection report

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30 January 2026

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Partnership

Cathi Hadley
Corporate Director for Children's Services
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council

Jonathan Higman
Chief Executive of NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board

Dear Cathi Hadley and Jonathan Higman

Final inspection report

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Partnership

Following your recent inspection, please find attached the final version of your inspection report. We will usually publish the report five working days from the date of this letter on the [Ofsted reports website](#).

If you experience any difficulties accessing the report on the Ofsted website, please contact us using the email address LASEND.support@ofsted.gov.uk.

You should aim to update your strategic plans within 50 working days from the date of this letter.

Thank you for the comments submitted following your review of the draft inspection report. I can confirm that your comments have been thoroughly considered. I have made amendments to the report which I hope reflect your comments while maintaining the clarity of Ofsted's expectations for reporting. These changes are reflected in the final version attached.

Post-inspection survey

We invite you to complete our short post-inspection survey with your views on the inspection process. By responding to this survey, you will help Ofsted and CQC improve the inspection process. You can access the survey here:

<https://ofsted.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ASPIS/10364968>

Yours sincerely

Leanne Thirlby
His Majesty's Inspector

Area SEND inspection of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Partnership

Inspection dates: 17 to 21 November 2025

Dates of previous inspection: 28 June 2021 to 2 July 2021

Inspection outcome

The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.

The next full area SEND inspection will be within approximately 3 years.

Ofsted and CQC ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

Information about the local area partnership

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board (NHS Dorset ICB) are jointly responsible for planning and commissioning services for children and young people with SEND in BCP.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to senior leadership in the local area partnership. These changes include a change in the corporate director for children's services and the director of education services. The chief executive officer of BCP Council has been recently appointed, and the chief executive of the NHS Dorset ICB is new in post. There is currently an interim chief nursing officer of the NHS Dorset ICB.

The commissioning of health services changed across England in 2022. On 1 July 2022, NHS Dorset ICB became responsible for commissioning health services in BCP.

BCP Council commissions a range of alternative provision (AP), which includes a maintained pupil referral unit and a registered AP academy run by a multi-academy trust. AP delivers education for children or young people who cannot attend school due to their needs or for those who have been or are at risk of being permanently excluded from school. The local authority maintains a directory of registered and unregistered AP to help check their quality. Schools use this directory to commission their own AP.

What is it like to be a child or young person with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in this area?

Children and young people with SEND in BCP have inconsistent experiences across education, health and social care provision. However, as a result of increased stability in leadership, a shared commitment to partnership working and a clear, ambitious and shared vision, partnership leaders are increasingly securing better lived experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Partnership leaders hold an accurate understanding of the needs of children and young people in BCP. Effective multi-agency working increasingly secures the most appropriate support, guidance and provision for children and young people with SEND and their families. In recent times, children have benefited from timely access to healthcare interventions that support their individual needs. However, leaders acknowledge that more needs to be done to address issues that remain. For example, although the partnership is aware of the need to extend the provision available to meet rising social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, leaders know that the offer is not securing consistent experiences for some children and young people.

Typically, the local area ensures the timely issue of education, health and care (EHC) plans and completion of the assessments that inform them. Generally, newer EHC plans more accurately reflect a child or young person's health, social care and educational needs. Improvements in partnership working mean that children and young people affected by weak identification are starting to receive more responsive interventions to support their needs. Nevertheless, some issues with low attendance, poor mental health and a lack of access to services and support remain.

Children and young people with SEND are prioritised in the partnership's decision-making. Leaders are strengthening approaches to gather the views of children and young people in different ways. For example, the development of visible youth forums and the involvement of children and young people in strategic planning such as the co-production (a way of working where children, families and those that provide the services work together to create a decision or a service that works for them all) of the Children and Young People's Partnership Plan has given children and young people with SEND a greater voice. Nevertheless, there is more to do to ensure that this is the typical experience in the local area and that parents, carers, children and young people trust and have confidence that their views will make a difference.

Increasing numbers of children and young people with EHC plans or those receiving SEN support experience effective educational provision that understands and meets their needs well.

Children and young people with SEND now benefit from more positive outcomes, from the early years through into post-19 education. Both leaders and practitioners continue to identify and work on closing gaps that remain from weaknesses over time or where settings have been aligned to the improved systems set up by the partnership.

Local area leaders are focused on ensuring sufficiency of places and support for the growing numbers of children and young people with SEND and the rising SEMH needs in BCP. The new tiered approach to AP is designed to focus on prevention and early identification of need to avoid escalation and increased demand at a later point. The approach is starting to have a positive impact on children and young people. For example, when children present as being at risk of permanent exclusion, services work together, with increasing effectiveness, to find potential successful solutions to prevent this. However, currently this is not embedded consistently, and some children and young people's needs escalate as a result.

The 'belonging strategy' is prioritised by the partnership across all levels. For example, there are low numbers of children and young people with SEND educated out of area. However, the local offer to support children and young people being visible, valued and included in their local communities is not perceived wholly positively by those who it is intended for. Leaders have worked to increase the accessibility and efficacy of the local offer such as using hub-based models and link case workers. Leaders are now addressing the importance of working with children, young people and their families to begin the preparation for adulthood early. Practitioners are increasingly alert to this and make referrals to adult services in a timely manner. However, for some, this process starts later, which can create some anxiety for those involved. Nevertheless, the amount and appropriateness of provision available are not sufficient to meet the growing and increasing needs. This was expressed by the children and young people themselves, as well as their families and practitioners.

What is the area partnership doing that is effective?

- Local area leaders are ambitious and dedicated in their approach to improving the outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND in BCP. This results in collaboration, commitment and participation from leaders and practitioners across the local area for the rapid improvement of the provision for SEND. It is supported well by changes in governance to help ensure effective oversight and accountability of improvements.
- Co-production is a priority in improving SEND provision. Children and young people's views and ideas are increasingly central to education, health and social care planning, including in their preparation for adulthood. There are creative, appropriate and increasingly determined ways to elicit children and young people's views. Area leaders are building confidence and trust in the relationships with parents, carers and children and young people with SEND. Growing links with the parent carer forum, Parents Carers Together, and inclusion of other significant parent and carer groups, along with the special educational needs and/or disabilities information, advice and support service (SENDIASS), SENDiass4BCP, help embed a collective, representative voice in strategic planning and operational delivery.
- The approach to applying for and managing EHC plans is improving, supported by a developing quality assurance process. Timeliness and quality of assessments have strengthened. This again reflects the impact of the strengthening quality assurance in the partnership and roles that support this such as the education, health and care

coordinators, area special educational needs and disabilities coordinators (SENDCo), the transition planning group and the designated clinical officer (DCO). Assessment information is used to tailor provision more effectively. Children without diagnoses can benefit from an EHC plan where appropriate. EHC plans increasingly include relevant multi-agency contributions across health and social care.

- Education settings are demonstrating a growing commitment to inclusion. This underpins local area leaders' vision and strategies. The focus on developing the use of 'ordinarily available provision' and the 'graduated response' is a key element to this moving forward. Impact is evident in the recent improvements in academic and personal outcomes. These improvements include improved attainment, as well as reductions in suspensions and permanent exclusions and increasing rates of attendance for some groups of children and young people with SEND. Impact is increasingly recognised by practitioners and children and young people themselves, who report better experiences.
- The local area provides effective support for increasing numbers of children and young people at transition points. For example, many young children and families experience positive early years support through the commissioned specialist education home-visiting team service, family hubs and area SENDCos. These facilitate access to health and social care services, which improve how well needs are identified and met.
- Opportunities to prepare well for adulthood are expanding with the cohorts coming through. While provision is more reactive currently, it is becoming more proactive as the impact of the partnership's actions evolves. Practitioners work closely with many families who access early help support. Some of the recognised success of this work is the support it provides children and young people as they move into adult services. The area is using creative solutions such as working with the voluntary sector to support meeting the evolving needs of young people moving into adulthood. Supported internships within the council are growing. While numbers are small, those who benefit from them often secure long-term employment.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of AP provision, including where there are gaps and inequities in location and types of AP across BCP. Joint strategy and commissioning have resulted in a partnership-wide understanding of the strengthening AP offer. This is intended to support the increasingly high levels of need, particularly around the SEMH of children and young people in the area. However, gaps in the overall provision remain.
- Children and families accessing the child health and disabilities team often benefit from long-standing relationships with skilled and knowledgeable social workers and other practitioners such as occupational therapists. Children's needs are well understood.
- Vulnerable children and young people such as those known to the youth justice service, children in care with SEND or those living in residential special schools are supported well. Children in care with SEND and children and young people living in residential special schools, including those living far away from home, are visited regularly. Their holistic needs are considered well within a multi-agency framework.

- Although there are significant waits for neurodevelopmental assessment and diagnosis, children benefit from needs-led support and can access relevant services while waiting. The most vulnerable children and young people, including those at transition points, are prioritised for assessments. Children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) typically demonstrate effective practice through proactive mental health interventions, wellbeing calls and collaborative planning with schools. As a result, increasing numbers of children and young people report feeling safe and engaged while waiting for targeted interventions.
- Effective delivery of the healthy child programme by skilled practitioners ensures that early identification of needs remains a priority. Multi-agency working with services such as the continuing care team means escalation of care requirements is timely and responsive to children's needs.
- Flexible referral pathways, including self-referral and professional routes, allow families to access help quickly. Services work together to prioritise urgent cases, reducing waiting times for therapies. For example, speech and language therapy has introduced a model which significantly cuts delays for initial assessments. Occupational therapy and physiotherapy meet referral-to-treatment targets and can provide urgent appointments. The DCO for SEND is able to commission bespoke health provision when needed, and this is a strength, ensuring that unnecessary delays are avoided. Partnership leaders maintain oversight of these arrangements and are actively working to strengthen consistency. For example, leaders recognise that those not benefiting from needs-led and targeted approaches could face inequities.
- Partnership leaders have developed greater permanency in the workforce. As a result, children and young people receive support and treatment from a growing number of highly skilled and passionate practitioners, including SEND champions, social workers, experienced therapists and knowledgeable nursery nurses. Dedicated community nursing teams provide specialist support and training to schools, and children and young people in mainstream settings with SEND benefit from a better universal provision and an increasingly inclusive culture.
- The dynamic support register enables proactive planning and rapid response for children and young people with complex needs, reducing the risk of unnecessary inpatient admissions. Flexible referral routes, risk scoring tools and multi-agency collaboration ensure timely, personalised interventions such as sensory strategies, therapy and mentoring. This helps children and young people remain safely at home with the right care in place.

What does the area partnership need to do better?

- For some children and young people with SEND in BCP, the extent of their needs has grown due to poor provision over time. This has resulted in increased support and expertise required, in addition to the escalating children and young people with SEND numbers more generally. This in turn has added pressure to the SEND system, for example on workload, workforce development and the cost of provision. There is increasingly successful work ongoing to address this. However, it is too new to ensure children and young people consistently benefit from receiving the right support at the

right time.

- The local area's improved quality assurance process is addressing gaps and weaknesses in EHC plans. The impact of this is growing. However, some plans continue to be affected by delays, omissions and a lack of up-to-date information. Education outcomes can be too generic as a result. Similarly, multi-agency provision lacks specificity. Furthermore, some settings for young people highlight that outcomes and provision are not informed well enough by a secure understanding of different phases and contexts. There is inconsistency in how well EHC plans address the challenges of transitions. This hampers the drive for more positive outcomes and disrupts the support that some children and young people receive.
- Health and social care professionals contribute to EHC plans with high-quality needs assessment reports. This comes through clear systems, processes and recent training, ensuring advice is comprehensive and person-centred. However, further work is needed to embed the process of receiving draft and final plans to ensure accuracy of interpretation of advice, clinical and otherwise. While improvements are underway, not enough children from 14 years of age with a learning disability are receiving annual health checks within primary care. This results in them missing out on a holistic assessment of their health needs as they transition to adulthood.
- Leaders have prioritised the development of skills and expertise in practitioners to keep up with the rapid improvement in SEND services across BCP. The consistency of experience and knowledge across BCP has been hindered by the previous use of temporary staffing arrangements to fill gaps and increase output. This leads to children, young people and their families experiencing a varied offer as the local area secures greater consistency.
- Some children and young people with SEND continue to have a variable experience of education. Where this is the case, weaknesses in the SEND offer over time and ineffective planning in the past to meet needs have led to some not securing the right qualifications because of low attendance or not being in the right setting. This hinders preparing young people well enough for their next steps.
- The careers advice offered to children and young people remains variable. Some young people report that provision is not shaped to support their aspirations and future plans well enough. Other groups are not yet well enough catered for such as the increasing SEMH cohort in the area. Currently, there is a more reactive response for some, and their preparation for adulthood is not as effective as it could be.
- Partnership leaders face increasing challenges in commissioning effective AP placements. There are insufficient options for some cohorts of children and young people. For example, children in the earlier stages of their education in early years and key stage 1 are not well enough catered for. Consequently, the current AP offer is inconsistent and not tailored precisely enough for some. Too many children and young people with SEND are placed in AP long term. Others are not in the most appropriate AP due to inaccuracies in and a lack of up-to-date knowledge about them, as a result of spending considerable time out of education.
- Opportunities for children and young people with SEND to engage fully in their communities remain limited. This is compounded by the growing need for access to

opportunities and support, particularly for children with higher levels of SEMH needs. The current resource is not sufficient to meet the need. Children, young people and their families report feeling the detrimental impact of this. Some leaders and practitioners note the limitations they experience in signposting to the current local offer. Local area leaders recognise the need to increase the provision and availability, across all areas of BCP, of short breaks, including overnight care, and ensure that this offer is as user-friendly as possible.

- Some parents and carers rightly say communication from the partnership is often unclear, delayed or inconsistent. This limits their ability to self-advocate and access support for themselves. Partnership leaders have not fully secured the confidence of children and young people with SEND and their families.
- Variability and inequity in the SEND system for children, young people and their families remain. Most children and young people open to neurodevelopmental pathways are waiting too long for neurodevelopmental assessment and diagnosis. Younger children or those open to CAMHS benefit from significantly reduced waits than others; this results in unequal access to appropriate assessment of need.

Areas for improvement

The local area partnership should continue to improve the provision and impact on outcomes for children and young people with SEND, particularly those with SEMH needs. The partnership should ensure that the workforce has sufficient expertise and resources, and that parents, carers and children and young people are involved in these plans.

Local area leaders should ensure that children, young people and parents and carers are well informed about the partnership's provision through an effective local offer to support children and young people with SEND.

Partnership leaders should continue to accelerate recovery plans for children and young people with SEND awaiting assessment for neurodevelopmental needs. Leaders should further expand support for those children and young people on the waiting list and continue to embed a needs-led approach for BCP.

Local area partnership details

Local authority	Integrated care board
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	NHS Dorset – Integrated care board
Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director of Children’s Services	Jonathan Higman, Chief Executive, NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, NHS Dorset and NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board Cluster
www.bpcouncil.gov.uk	https://nhsdorset.nhs.uk
Bournemouth Town Hall Bourne Avenue Bournemouth BH2 6DY	County Hall Colliton Park Dorchester Dorset DT1 1XJ

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004.

The inspection was led by one of His Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors including: three HMI from education and social care; a lead Children’s Services Inspector from the Care Quality Commission (CQC); and another Children’s Services Inspector from the CQC.

Inspection team

Ofsted

Leanne Thirlby, Ofsted lead inspector
Sarah Canto, Ofsted HMI
Lydia Pride, Ofsted HMI

Care Quality Commission

Thomas Davis, CQC Lead inspector
Jessica Taylor-Beirne, CQC inspector

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Cabinet



Report subject	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025-26
Meeting date	1 April 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Council has a statutory duty to provide working families of children aged 0-14 (18 with SEND) enough childcare places in its area, where reasonably practicable. Each year Research and Children’s Services colleagues assess the position of the market, providing parents, councillors, schools and private businesses ward level information as a planning tool to support access or expansion of places, while highlighting areas of focus or concern.</p> <p>With significant government expansion of early years childcare now fully embedded this information and data is vital for private businesses seeking to enter the market and help the Council fulfil its ongoing statutory duties and the content of the assessment concludes that the Council is meeting its statutory duties.</p> <p>In addition to a briefing report (appendix 1) the data that helped form the assessment is accessible here.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Cabinet approve the content of the annual review and the priorities (areas of focus) as set out in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025-26 Briefing Report.</p>
Reason for recommendations	To fulfil the Council’s statutory duty to annually assess and publish the position of its childcare market.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Children and Young People
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director for Childrens Services
Report Authors	Tanya Smith, Head of Places, Admissions and Capital Darren Buckley, Senior Childcare Sufficiency and Funding Officer
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. Local Authorities are required to report to elected council members on how they are meeting their statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare before making the annual assessment available to parents, schools and businesses. This ensures full transparency and accountability, enabling councillors to understand how childcare needs are being met across the area and to support informed decision-making. Publishing the assessment widely also provides families and childcare providers with clear, accessible information about local provision, helping them plan effectively for childcare arrangements or future service development.
2. The annual review has become an increasingly valuable planning tool for Children's Services, and potential new providers, with reports that the assessment's data has supported confident, well-informed decisions that lead to sustainable new childcare businesses.
3. Local Authorities are required by legislation to: Secure sufficient childcare in its area, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). There is also a duty to ensure enough government funded early education places are available for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 9 month to 2 year olds.

The annual sufficiency assessment

4. Guidance allows local authorities to determine an appropriate level of detail for their assessment; this report is structured at ward level. It is designed to be updated regularly and supports planning and development within early years services, including potential expansion by existing or new providers.
5. Several factors have been considered within this review including:
 - The state of the local childcare market/supply and demand
 - The state of the labour market
 - The quality and capacity of childcare providers
 - The number of funded early education places required
 - The number of school aged children
 - The needs of disabled children
 - The demand for school holiday care for children
 - The demand for 30 hours extended entitlement for eligible children
6. Overall, BCP Council is meeting its statutory duty to ensure there are enough suitable early education and childcare places available. There is a good choice of childcare facilities available to families delivered through the private, voluntary, independent and schools' sector across the conurbation. We have also improved, year on year, our Early Years Pupil Premium take-up for 3 and 4 year olds to 17% (up from 6% in 2020), reaching our most disadvantaged children (there are no published statistics to measure EYPP performance, however).
7. Developments since 2024-25:
 - a. At the time of writing the assessment, there were a total of 281 childcare providers in the BCP Council area, offering a maximum of 7,771 places. This is a fall of 11 providers (8 of which were childminders) however a gain of 74 places overall, since summer 2024 (place expansion with current providers mitigated the loss of places from those that closed).

- b. While some group providers closed, other providers were supported by Children's Services, where possible, in acquiring those sites to protect availability of those places for their community.
- c. Brand new group provision has opened in Hamworthy, Westbourne & Westcliff, Boscombe East & Pokesdown and Broadstone, supplying a combined 220 new early years places.
- d. In summer 2025 the number of children with SEND support had decreased by 5% to 374. The fall is linked, however, to the introduction of new SEND support eligibility criteria in 2024. A total of 7,311 primary and secondary school children received SEN support, 14 children less than recorded in January 2024 (-0.2%).
- e. The latest occupancy figures, at the busiest point of the year, show occupancy rates at childminders was 90%, PVI settings was 84% and school nursery settings was 82%. Each sector having a decrease in occupancy year on year.
- f. Overall, the number of registered out-of-school provision has increased by 4, to 165 sites, in the last 12 months.

8. Areas of focus for 2026:

- a. **Bearwood and Merley:** Housing development in this ward has continued to grow, with nearly further 1,000 new properties due in the area by 2032, which is concerning in terms of the availability of childcare for existing parents and those that will be new to the area. A preschool and school nursery merged this year and new all year round early years provision and new wraparound provision for primary school aged children has previously been introduced to the area. It is felt that, as developments progress, additional provision will still be required to sustain need as families move to the area. BCP Council does have a significant number of existing businesses, or those new to the sector, enquiring about areas of need or potential property, which is very welcome and Bearwood and Merley is an area that any provider should consider. Seeking developer contributions to create new provision is also recommended, such as via the Community Infrastructure Levy funding made available by the Council.
- b. **Mudford, Stanpit and West Highcliffe:** This ward saw a change in provision in 2025 whereby the lease of a significant preschool supplier ended. That provider did secure alternative premises within the neighbouring ward, Highcliffe, and many parents have travelled with the preschool to continue using the quality, reliable service provided. As a result of this change this particular ward, in terms of data in this sufficiency assessment, shows as the ward having the least number of places per 100 0-4 year old children. All year round provision in this area will benefit working families that are unable or unwilling to travel beyond their home ward for childcare, but incoming providers should be mindful of provision that is supplied under neighbouring wards when researching potential sites (at the time of writing a new day nursery registration in this ward is proposed, but not yet confirmed).
- c. **Boscombe West, East Cliff & Springbourne, Bournemouth Central:** Our summary of early education funding across 0-4 year olds highlights these wards in particular. For baby places, we demonstrate a large difference in take-up

between areas of affluence and some wards with disadvantaged families, that includes parts of Bournemouth Central and Boscombe West, and similar for working family 2 year olds to also include East Cliff & Springbourne. It is concerning to note that, under the 15hrs per week 2 year old disadvantaged funding, residents of these three wards do not seem to be engaging with the offer as much as with other wards. Part of this may be due to available places which will be investigated further, or inability to travel, but part may also be due to a lack of understanding of their child's entitlement. Accessing a government funded place as a disadvantaged 2 year old prior to a universal entitlement as a 3 year old is a valuable benefit to this cohort of children and provides them with a better start in life. This year we'll enhance our marketing and communications to parents broadly across BCP, but with a particular focus on these three wards, monitoring any impact and reporting progress hereon (at the time of writing a new day nursery registration in Boscombe West is proposed, but not yet confirmed).

- d. **Childminders:** The Council's supply of childminders has been an area of focus for several years, and especially since the 2020 pandemic where numbers began to change more significantly. Overall, considering the number of active childminders in 2020 versus those active this year the Council has 35% fewer childminders. Nationally the figure is 32% fewer childminders. With an aim to support this part of the sector the government had increased the number of people that can work together under a single registration from three to four, and childminders are given more flexibility to operate outside their home for more of the time. A recruitment campaign has also been underway 'Be part of something big...' with emphasis on several sectors including [childminders](#). Locally the Council has commissioned the creation of its own webpage to encourage recruitment and retention into the childcare sector which should be live and publicised soon.
- e. **Day Nurseries and Preschools:** Year on year the conurbation has encouragingly seen very little change in terms of the overall number of registered providers. Several providers have left the sector while brand new provision has joined with many more seeking opportunities. During our summer 2025 provider survey we found that some providers said that they had less children in attendance year on year. As the government funded childcare entitlements have grown to now include some working family children of 9 month to 2 year olds (approximately 3,400 children per this assessment) it's important for current providers to consider their own age range of childcare and early education. All providers that currently serve only 3 and 4 year olds, or 2 to 4 year olds should consider that in most circumstances parents, with an eligible child from 9 months old, are unlikely to move their child to another provider when the child turns 2 or 3 years old if they're happy with the quality of their provider and their child is settled. The DfE commissioned [Childcare Works 'HUB'](#) was specifically created to support all types of provider with guides on expansion, business support strategies, research models and much more.
- f. **Expanded Entitlements:** Government funded childcare has expanded to include some working parents of 9 month olds to 2 year olds. The phased

expansion concluded in September 2025 with an increase to 30 hours entitlement per week, term time. The DfE supplied each Council with capital funding to increase the number of available places for 0-2 year olds, and to date we're pleased to report that this funding has supported the addition of 366 brand new places, including those at least five brand new providers across the conurbation. This met a target raised by the DfE at the beginning of the expansion. The first term of fully expanded entitlement, autumn 2026, has been successful with no known parents informing us that they couldn't find a place for their eligible child, which tells us that BCP Council have sufficient childcare places for those that want one. We are conscious however that demand for places builds over the year, with summer term being the busiest. Take-up and vacancies across the conurbation will be closely monitored each term, seeking trends in wards that might benefit from new business or expansion of existing provision.

9. The childcare sector has continued to face significant pressures since the pandemic, particularly around funding levels and the ongoing challenges of recruiting and retaining staff on salaries that reflect the responsibilities of educating young children. Although the number of available places has gradually declined over several years (with 2025-26 being an exception), this has so far been offset by a falling birthrate. There are encouraging signs within the government's recent funding reforms: the rate for children aged 9 months to 2 years is competitive with, and in many cases higher than, the private fees previously charged by providers. However, the funding rate for universally entitled 3 and 4 year-olds continues to be a concern with many providers reliant on additional voluntary contributions from parents to supply a high quality sustainable offer. It should be noted that the DfE have increased its funding levels paid to LAs, particularly for this age group for 2026-27 and, if approved by School's Forum and Council, our providers should see a 9% year on year increase for 3 and 4 year old childcare and early education.
10. Whilst the Council is currently meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare, it is anticipated that 2026 and the years beyond may present new challenges as demand evolves. Although the government previously suggested that childcare places in BCP could be insufficient from September 2025, this did not materialise. As that term passed, the Council received no reports from parents who were unable to secure a place independently or with support from our Family Information Service, and there remained adequate capacity across the local childcare market. In response to projected pressures the Council continues to expand provision for babies and 2-year-olds through the targeted distribution of capital funding, an approach that is ongoing at the time of writing, albeit with a small remaining budget.
11. Councillors should be aware that the childcare sector may increasingly seek political support to facilitate its ongoing development, including assistance with planning applications and the potential leasing of Council-owned property. In addition, some providers are expected to continue lobbying for business rates relief, reflecting the wider financial pressures facing the sector and their efforts to secure long-term sustainability.

Options Appraisal

12. None.

Summary of financial implications

13. Local authorities are required, by statutory guidance, to maximise families' take up of government funded early education. The government introduced, from April 2024, a new 15 hours per week entitlement for some working families of 2 year olds. Expanding that to 9 month old children from September 2024 and doubling the entitlement to 30 hours per week from September 2025. This may have a financial impact on existing provision as many eligible parents will move from paying privately at a provider set rate to receiving funded entitlement at a local authority rate. It should be noted however that the local authority funding rate for 9 month to 2 year olds is often higher than that charged privately by providers.

Summary of legal implications

14. The Local Authority has a duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children)(Childcare Act 2006). An annual review and reporting on the local picture enable us to fulfil this requirement.

Summary of human resources implications

15. None.

Summary of sustainability impact

16. None.

Summary of public health implications

17. None

Summary of equality implications

18. Through this assessment, the Council is equipping private businesses with the insight and publicly available datasets they need to make informed decisions about where to expand or establish new childcare provision. By presenting clear, ward-level intelligence on supply, demand, and local needs, the assessment serves as a strategic planning resource for providers considering investment in the sector. As Children's Services is not directly involved in private business decision-making, and because childcare funding entitlement for families is governed entirely by Department for Education criteria with no local discretion, a separate Equality Impact Assessment has not been produced

Summary of risk assessment

19. The Council will need to continue working proactively to ensure that parental demand for both early years childcare and school-aged wraparound provision is fully met through a combination of private sector and school-based services. If sufficient provision is not available, some parents may be unable to take up employment or increase their working hours, which could have wider social and economic implications for local families. While it is essential to support availability across all age groups, Children's Services will place particular emphasis on addressing the needs of disadvantaged 2-year-olds and children with SEND when engaging with providers on opportunities for expansion. This targeted focus reflects the Council's

commitment to ensuring equitable access to high-quality childcare for the children who stand to benefit most.

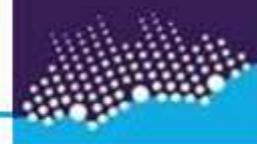
Background papers

20. This report is produced using the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025-26 Briefing Report, which is provided as Appendix 1. The source data (an interactive PowerBI) cannot be formed as an appendix, but is available online [here](#) and will be published on the Council's Childcare Sufficiency webpage, along with the briefing report, upon conclusion of this democratic process.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025-26 Briefing Report

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Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025/26

January 2026

Summary Headline Data

- Latest figures (ONS 2024 Mid-Year Estimates) shows there are **17,858 children aged 0-4** in the BCP area, a decrease of 317 (1.7%) compared to 2023.
- BCP currently has **43,600 children aged 5-14**, comprising 20,974 aged 5-9 and 22,656 aged 10-14. The number of 5–9 year-olds fell by 63, while the overall 10–14 age group increased by 178 in the last 12 months.
- The total population is projected to grow by approximately **17,000 people (+4%)** over the ten-year period from 2022 to 2032. The most significant increase is expected among residents aged 65 and over, with an estimated rise of 15,000 people (17%).
- In contrast, the number of children aged **0 to 15 is forecast to decline by 8,600 (14%)**, reflecting a broader trend of falling birth rates in the area.
- Between 2024/25 and 2029/30, **the total number of Primary pupils is projected to fall** by approximately 3,000 (an 11% decrease), from 26,298 to 23,337. **The number of Secondary pupils (excluding sixth form) is expected to remain high** peaking at 20,931 in 2026/27.
- There is a total of **281 childcare providers in the BCP Council area, offering a maximum of 7,771** places at any one time. This is a fall of 11 providers overall since summer 2024, 8 of which were childminders.
- Overall, **the number of early years places has increased by 74 in the last 12 months**. The most significant increase was in day nursery and school nursery places. Childminder places continues to fall with 53 fewer childminders overall compared to 2021.
- The latest summer term occupancy figures show occupancy rates at childminders was 90%, PVI settings was 84% and school nursery settings was 82%.
- In Summer 2025 1,518 children aged under 2 accessed FEE in BCP, compared to 1,621 entitlement codes validated. This increased to 1,686 codes validated in Autumn 2025.
- **Disadvantaged take up of 2-year-old Funded Early Education (FEE) shows a sharp decline**. This is due, however, to fewer parents meeting the qualifying criteria but also parents migrating to the new working family entitlement for 2 year olds. Summer 2025 shows 2,158 2-year-olds were accessing FEE in BCP. 445 of these were disadvantaged 2-year-olds.
- BCP funded 5,422 3 and 4-year-olds in the summer term 2025. **There is a gradual decline in the take up of universal 3&4-year old FEE due to falling birth rates**, however the number of children accessing working family extended entitlement is increasing.
- In Summer 2025, 374 early years children were recorded as receiving additional SEND Support. This trend contrasts with the continued increase in children receiving SEND support and with an EHCP in the primary and secondary phases.
- **Childcare costs have risen year-on-year across all settings**, with sharper increases in the past two years. From summer 2024 to 2025, the average hourly rate rose from £6.01 to £6.20 - a 3% increase, following a 8% rise the previous year.
- There has been a small change in the overall number of registered out-of-school provisions in the BCP area between 2024-25. Overall, the total number has decreased by four provisions.

Focus Areas

The 2025/26 childcare sufficiency analysis and the broader understanding of the sector has highlighted several areas of focus. These are highlighted below.

Bearwood and Merley

Housing development in this ward continues to grow, with nearly 1,000 additional properties expected by 2032. This raises concerns about the availability of childcare for both existing families and those moving into the area. Earlier this year a preschool and school nursery merged, and brand new wraparound childcare for primary-aged children was introduced. This compliments an earlier establishment of a new day nursery. However, as housing developments progress, further provision will likely be needed to meet demand. BCP Council has seen significant interest from existing businesses and new entrants to the childcare sector seeking information on areas of need and potential properties, which is very encouraging. Bearwood and Merley should be considered by any provider looking to expand. It is also recommended to seek developer contributions, such as through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding made available by the Council

Mudford, Stanpit and West Highcliffe

In 2025, this ward experienced a significant change in childcare provision when the lease of a major preschool provider ended. The provider relocated to neighbouring Highcliffe, and many families chose to travel there to maintain access to the high-quality, reliable service. As a result, this ward now has the lowest number of places per 100 children aged 0–4, according to this sufficiency assessment. Introducing all-year-round provision within the ward would greatly benefit working families who are unable or unwilling to travel outside their local area. However, prospective providers should consider the existing provision in neighbouring wards when assessing potential sites (at the time of writing a new day nursery registration in this ward is being proposed but not yet confirmed).

Boscombe West, East Cliff & Springbourne, Bournemouth Central

Our summary of early education funding for children aged 0-4 draws attention to several wards. For baby places, there is a marked difference in take-up between more affluent areas and wards with higher levels of disadvantage, including parts of Bournemouth Central and Boscombe West. A similar pattern is seen for working family two-year-olds, with low engagement also evident in East Cliff & Springbourne. It is particularly concerning that, under the 15 hours per week entitlement for disadvantaged two-year-olds, families in these three wards are not accessing the offer as much as those in other areas. Possible reasons include limited availability of places (to be investigated further); barriers to travel; and lack of awareness about eligibility. Accessing a funded place as a disadvantaged two-year-old, before the universal entitlement at age three, offers significant benefits and helps give children a stronger start in life. This year, we will strengthen marketing and communications to parents across BCP, but with a targeted focus on these three wards. We will monitor the impact of these efforts and report progress accordingly (at the time of writing a new day nursery registration in Boscombe West is being proposed but not yet confirmed).

Day Nurseries and Preschools

The conurbation has seen little change in the overall number of registered providers, which is encouraging. While some providers have exited the sector, new provision has emerged, and many more are exploring opportunities. Our summer 2025 provider survey revealed that some providers reported fewer children attending compared to the previous year. With government-funded childcare entitlements now extended to include working families with children aged 9 months to 2 years (approximately 3,200 children in this assessment), it is important for current providers to review their age range for childcare and early education. Providers offering care only for 3–4 year olds, or 2–4 year olds, should consider that parents with an eligible child from 9 months old are unlikely to move their child to another provider at age 2 or 3 if they are satisfied with the quality and their child is settled. To support providers, the DfE-commissioned Childcare Works 'HUB' offers guidance on expansion, business strategies, research models, and more.

Childminders

The Council's supply of childminders has been a key focus for several years, particularly since the 2020 pandemic, when numbers began to decline significantly. Comparing the number of active childminders in 2020 with those active today, the Council has 35% fewer childminders, compared to a 32% reduction nationally. To support this part of the sector, the government has introduced measures including increasing the number of people who can work together under a single registration from three to four; and allowing childminders greater flexibility to operate outside their home for longer periods. A recruitment campaign, 'Be part of something big...', has also been launched, targeting several sectors including childminders. Locally, the Council has commissioned the development of a dedicated webpage to encourage recruitment and retention in the childcare sector, which will be live and publicised soon.

Expanded Entitlements

Government-funded childcare has now expanded to include some children of working parents aged 9 months to 2 years. This phased rollout concluded in September 2025, increasing entitlement to 30 hours per week, term time. To support this expansion, the DfE provided each council with capital funding to create additional places for 0–2 year olds. We are pleased to report that this funding has enabled the addition of 366 new places, including provision from at least five brand-new providers across the conurbation. This achievement meets the target set by the DfE at the start of the programme when the grant was issued to the Council. The first term of full entitlement (autumn 2025) has been successful, with no known parents informing us that they cannot secure a place for their eligible child. This suggests BCP Council currently has sufficient childcare places for those who want one. However, we recognise that demand typically increases throughout the year, with the summer term being the busiest. We will continue to monitor take-up and vacancies each term, identifying trends and wards that may benefit from new businesses or expansion of existing provision.

Demographic Summary

KEY FINDINGS – Declining and shifting 0-4 population and high demand for school age childcare which will gradually ease.

Two main (but contrasting) factors are currently shaping demand for early years childcare:

- 1 Declining and shifting 0–4 population:** The number of children aged 0–4 has been steadily falling since 2017 due to lower birth rates in recent years. This is altering the age profile of young children, with fewer infants and toddlers entering the early years system.
- 2 Expansion of funded childcare entitlements:** At the same time, government policy is significantly increasing access to funded childcare. This expansion is expected to increase demand for places, particularly for under-3s.

0-4 Population

- Latest figures (ONS 2024 Mid Year Estimates): There are 17,858 children aged 0-4 in the BCP area, a decrease of 317 (1.7%) compared to 2023.
- Age breakdown (2024 vs 2023): Under 2s fell by 195 to 6,544; 2 year olds fell by 258 to 3,515, and 3&4 year olds rose by 136 to 7,799 largely due to higher levels of migration.
- Long-Term Trend (ONS 2016-2024 Mid Year Estimates): From 2016-2020, the number of children aged 0–4 in BCP fell by about 2,300, a decline of roughly 600 per year. From 2020-2024, this downward trend continued at a slower pace with a further drop of 1,200, about 300 less children per year.
- Live births: Births in BCP have declined steadily since 2011/12, apart from a small post-Covid increase in 2020/21, falling to just 2,905 2024/25. This compares to 3,213 in 2023/24 and 3,387 in 2022/23, Population projections suggest births are likely to continue to fall over the next decade.
- Forecast (ONS 2022 based sub-national population projections): Over the next 5 years to 2030 the number of 0-4 year olds is projected to fall by around 1,000 children (6%). 3&4 year olds will see the largest decrease by around 600, 2 year olds by 150, and under 2s by around 300.
- Geographical distribution (NHS Digital GP registrations Oct 2025): The number of 0-4 year olds vary significantly by ward. Wards with the highest 0–4 population are Newtown & Heatherlands (917), Kinson (849), Alderney & Bourne Valley (816). Wards with the lowest 0–4 population are East Southbourne & Tuckton (273), Highcliffe & Walkford (220), and Canford Cliffs (189).

5-14 Population

- Current demand for school age childcare is high, with over 43,000 school-age children potentially needing some form of childcare or supervised provision.
- Geographic variation matters as wards with the largest child populations may face persistent or increased pressure on places, even as total numbers decline.
- Demand will gradually ease after 2025, especially for 5-11 year olds, but providers may still see short-term pressure due to high numbers in 2025 and localised population concentrations.
- Childcare demand for 10-14 year olds is likely to remain relatively stable in the next couple of years before falling later in the decade.

Total Population (Mid-year estimates):

- The 2024 Mid-year estimates show the total population for BCP Council is 408,967¹. This represents an increase of 0.6% (2,341 more residents) since mid-2023.

¹ Mid-Year Estimates 2024

- The most populated wards are: Bournemouth Central, Newtown & Heatherland, and Kinson. The least populated wards include: Canford Cliffs, Highcliffe & Walkford, and Burton & Grange.

Census Population (2021)

- The 2021 Census results for BCP give a resident population of 400,300 in March 2021. This is an increase of 5.7% compared with the 2011 Census. The age groups showing the biggest increase in BCP include 70–79-year-olds, 50–59-year-olds and 5–14-year-olds. Age groups experiencing the biggest fall in numbers since 2011 include 0–4-year-olds (-9.4%), 25–29-year-olds and 45–49-year-olds.

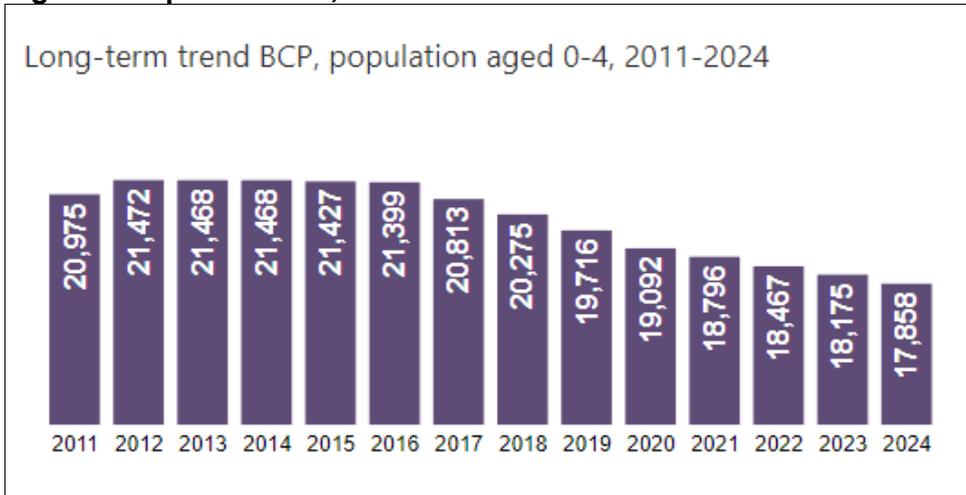
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025

- BCP Council ranks 169th out of 296 English local authorities in the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2025), where 1 represents the most deprived.
- According to the English Indices of Deprivation 2025, around 2,200 children aged 0–4, and 5,300 children aged 5-14 live in the 24 LSOAs that are among the 20% most deprived areas in England.

Population 0-4

The latest 2024 mid-year estimate population figure show there are **17,858 0–4-year-olds** in the BCP area.

Figure 1 Population 0-4, 2011-2024



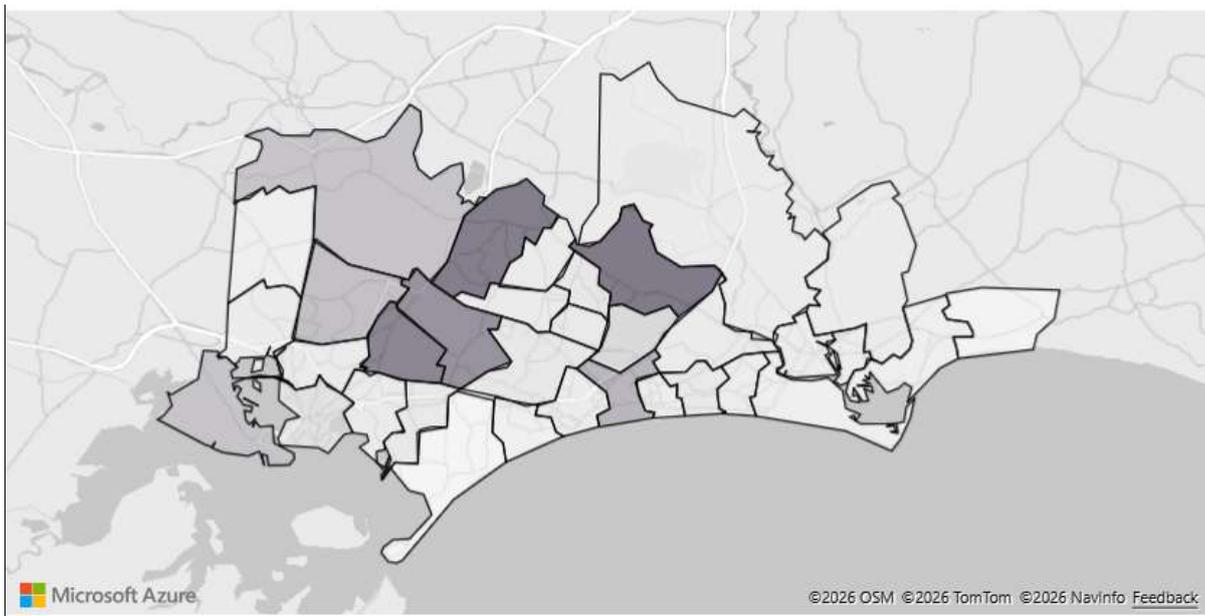
The pre-school age population in BCP is declining, primarily due to a falling birth rate. The number of children **aged 0–4 dropped from 18,467 in 2022 to 18,175 in 2023, and further to 17,858 in 2024** (Mid-year estimates). This represents a decrease of 317 children (1.7%) between 2023 to 2024. While there is some variation across wards, the overall trend is one of consistent population. In the last 10 years (Census 2011-2021) this age group has seen a **fall by 10.5%** 2011-2021.

Table 1: 0-4 population by age (2022-2024 Mid-Year Estimates)

Age Group	2022	2023	2024	Change 2023-2024
0	3,433	3,266	3,217	-49
1	3,726	3,473	3,327	-146
2	3,688	3,773	3,515	-258
3	3,773	3,801	3,876	75
4	3,837	3,862	3,923	61
Total	18,467	18,175	17,858	-317

October 2025 GP registrations show the number of 0-4 year olds in the BCP area is 16,800. The map below shows the distribution of this age group in the BCP area. The darker colour the ward, the greater number of 0-4 year olds.

MAP 1: 0-4 year-olds by Ward, GP registrations October 2025



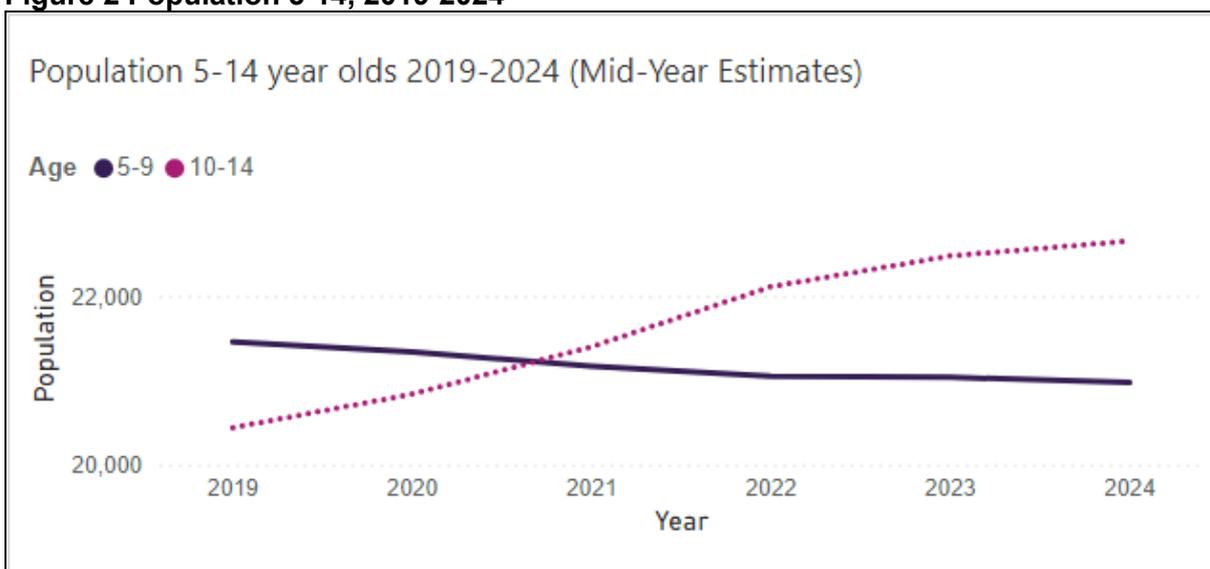
Wards with the highest population of 0-4 year-olds are Newtown & Heatherlands, Kinson and Alderney & Bourne Valley. Wards with the fewest number of 0-4 year-olds are Canford Cliffs, Highcliffe & Walkford, and East Southbourne & Tuckton.

Population 5-14

BCP currently has **43,600 children aged 5-14**, comprising **20,974 aged 5-9** and **22,656 aged 10-14** (2024 Mid-Year Estimates). These children may require wraparound childcare (before/after school), holiday provision, or activity-based care.

Compared to 2023, the **number of 5–9 year-olds fell by 63**, while the overall **10–14 age group increased by 178**.

Figure 2 Population 5-14, 2019-2024

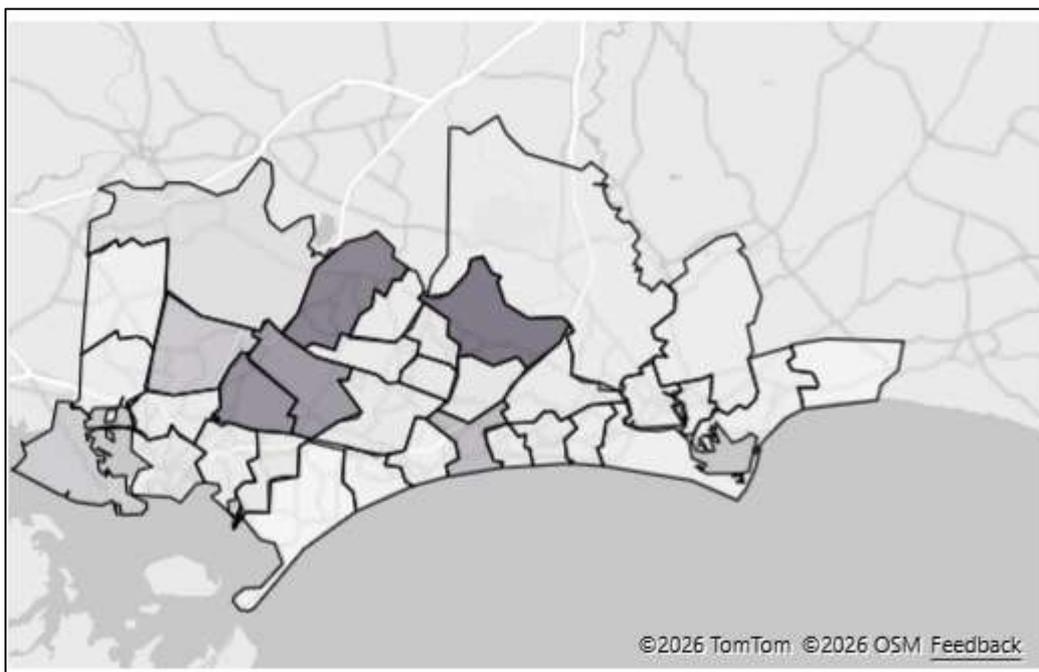


Ward-level data from the October 2025 GP Register show the highest concentrations of 5–14 year-olds in:

- Muscliff & Strouden Park 2,467
- Kinson 2,384
- Newtown & Heatherlands 2,248

The map below shows the distribution of this age group in the BCP area. The darker colour the ward, the greater number of 5-14 year olds.

MAP 2: 5-14 year-olds by Ward, GP registrations October 2025



Medium-term outlook (2025-2030)

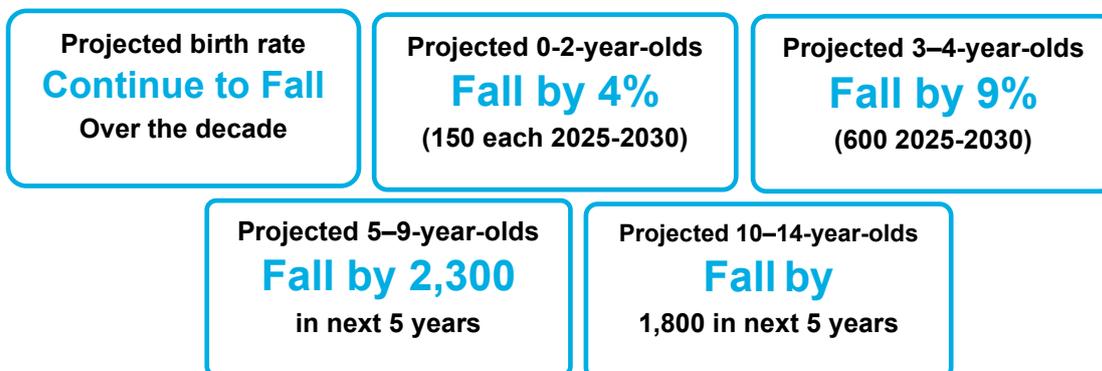
Overall school-age numbers are projected to decline by around 4,000 children (-10%).

The 5–9 population is expected to fall by 2,266, reducing demand for after-school clubs and holiday schemes targeted at younger children.

The 10–14 population is projected to fall by 1,787, gradually easing demand for older-age provision such as enrichment activities, and holiday programmes for early teens.

Population Projections

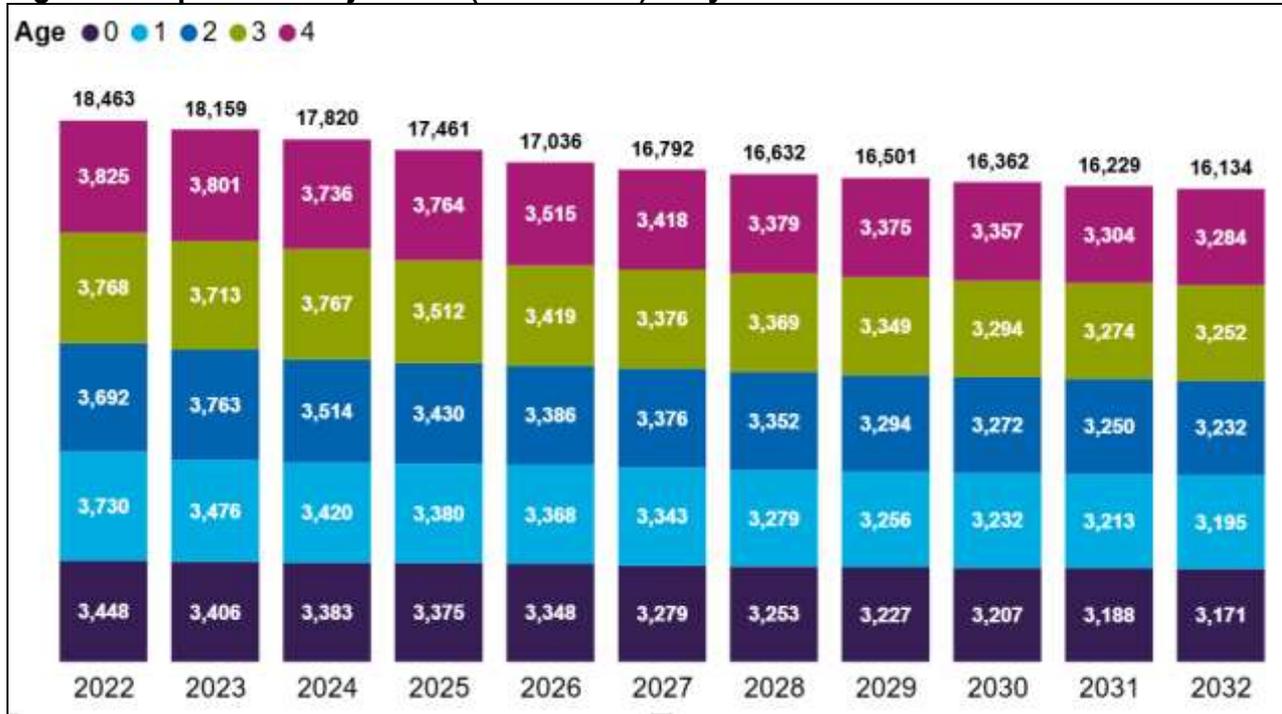
The 2022-based population projections were published in June 2025.



- The total population is projected to grow by approximately **17,000 people (+4%)** over the ten-year period from 2022 to 2032.
- The most significant increase is expected among residents aged 65 and over, with an estimated rise of 15,000 people (17%).
- In contrast, the number of children aged **0 to 15 is forecast to decline by 8,600 (14%)**, reflecting a broader trend of falling birth rates in the area.
- The latest projections suggest that **births will continue to decrease** throughout the decade.

- The number of **0, 1 and 2 year olds** are forecast to **decline by approximately 150 (4%), each**.
- The number of **3-4 year olds**—all of whom are eligible for at least 15 hours per week of council-funded early years childcare—is expected to **fall by around 600 (-9%) 2025-2030**.
- The number of children **aged 5 to 14 is expected to fall by approximately 4,000 (10% decrease)** between 2025 and 2030.
- The number of **5-9-year-olds is set to fall by 2,300** over the next five years 2025-2030.
- The population of **10-14 year-olds is projected to decline** by approximately **1,800** 2025-2030.

Figure 3: Population Projections (2022-based) 0-4 year-olds



Since the 2020/21 academic year, there has been a noticeable decline in the demand for Primary school places across the BCP area. This trend is expected to continue at least until 2029/30. The primary driver is a 30% drop in birth rates since 2012/13, which has led to reduced demand for Reception places starting from 2017/18.

- Between 2024/25 and 2029/30, the total number of Primary pupils is projected to fall by approximately 3,000 (an 11% decrease), from 26,298 to 23,337.
- As a result, surplus Reception places are expected to rise from 13% in 2024/25 to about 20% by 2029/30, with a slight temporary increase in demand in 2025/26.

The number of Secondary school pupils in BCP began to rise from 2017/18, reflecting the earlier increase in Primary pupils, but with a six-year delay. This upward trend is expected to continue until 2027/28, after which pupil numbers are projected to decline.

- According to the 2025 BCP pupil forecasts, the number of Secondary pupils (excluding sixth form) is expected to remain high—around 20,800 and 20,900—until 2027/28, peaking at 20,931 in 2026/27.

Figure 4: Reception year forecasts

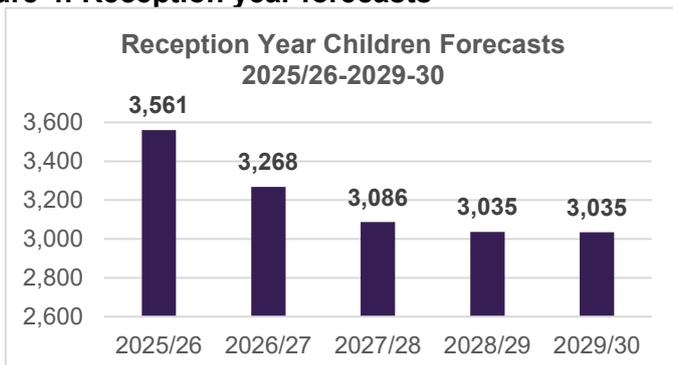


Table 2: Reception-year 6 forecasts

Forecast Year	Reception-Year 6
2025/26	26,049
2026/27	25,469
2027/28	24,661
2028/29	23,906
2029/30	23,337

Childcare Provision

KEY FINDINGS - Childcare capacity and gaps in provision in BCP

1. The BCP area has 47 registered childcare places per 100 children aged 0–4 roughly one per every two children. For under-5s eligible for Funded Early Education (FEE), there are 77 places per 100 children. No universal benchmark exists for ‘sufficient’ childcare supply, but some suggest areas with fewer than 60 places per 100 children may face unmet demand or waiting lists.
 2. Provision is unequal across the area: eight wards offer fewer than 30 places per 100 children, and at least half of these include neighbourhoods with high levels of deprivation.
 3. Most recent occupancy rates at 84% suggest there is spare capacity in BCP. but, places for under 2s are in demand with 40 providers stating they had waiting lists for this age for Autumn 2025.
 4. There remains limited provision outside of standard hours, and wrap-around care is not consistently available or affordable for all families.
- At September 2025 there are 281 registered childcare providers in the BCP Council area. These offer a maximum of 7,771 places at any one time.
 - Although there are 11 fewer providers than in 2024, the number of childcare places has increased by 74, however this increase is localised and driven by a large, newly registered day nursery in Broadstone.
 - Day nurseries: 4,173 places (+49 places 2024-25, and +92 2023-24)
 - Pre-schools: 1,876 places (-63 places 2024-25, and -58 2023-24)
 - Childminders: 917 places (-7 2024-25, and -81 2023-24). Total reduction of 23 childminders since 2022.

281 registered childcare providers offering maximum **7,771** places at any one time

Active registered **childminders** have **fallen by 8** in the last 12 months

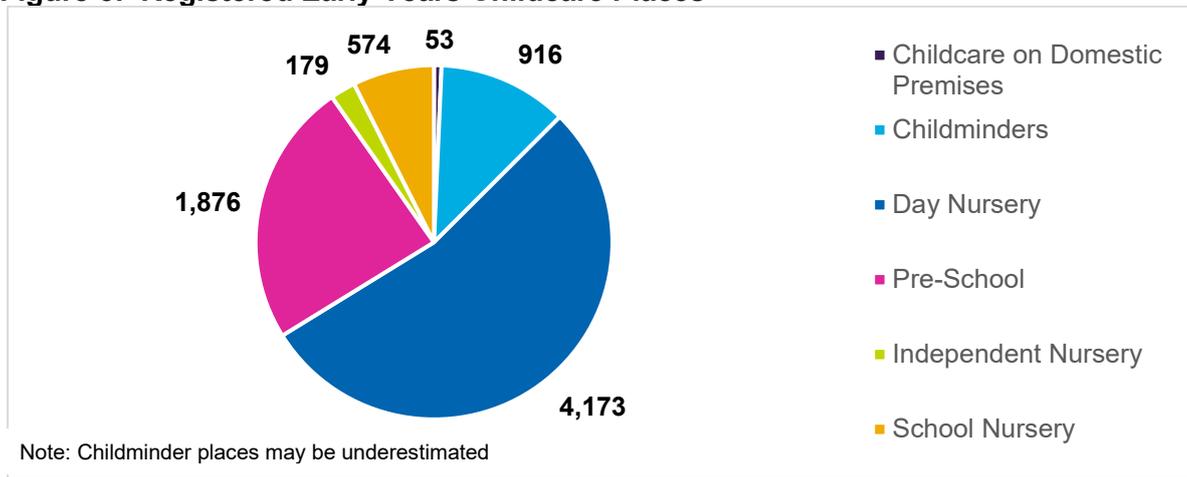
Day Nursery places have **risen** and **Pre School** places have **fallen** since the 2024 analysis

There is a total of **281** childcare providers in the BCP Council area, offering a maximum of **7,771** places at any one time². As of September 2025, the total number of registered childcare places has increased by 74, rising from 7,697 in September 2024 to 7,771 now. But this masks significant differences both at ward level and by provision type. Overall, the number of childminders has fallen by 53 since the 2021 analysis, losing a further 8 childminders in the last 12 months.

- Day nursery places rose by 92 in 2024–2025, building on a previous increase of 49 in 2023–2024. There was notable variation across wards.
- School nursery places increased by 66 overall during 2024–2025, with no change in 2023-24.
- The number of registered childminders continues to decline, with 7 fewer places in 2025 compared to 2024. This reduction is less severe than the 81 drop recorded in 2023–2024.
- Pre-school places declined by 58 between 2024 and 2025, following a similar drop of 63 the previous year (2023–2024).

² Note that data is at 1 September 2025, this can fluctuate throughout the year with provision closing and new providers opening. Some settings may also change their status type thus affecting the individual provider type figures. Comparisons are made with September 2024 figures to show consistency.

Figure 5: Registered Early Years Childcare Places



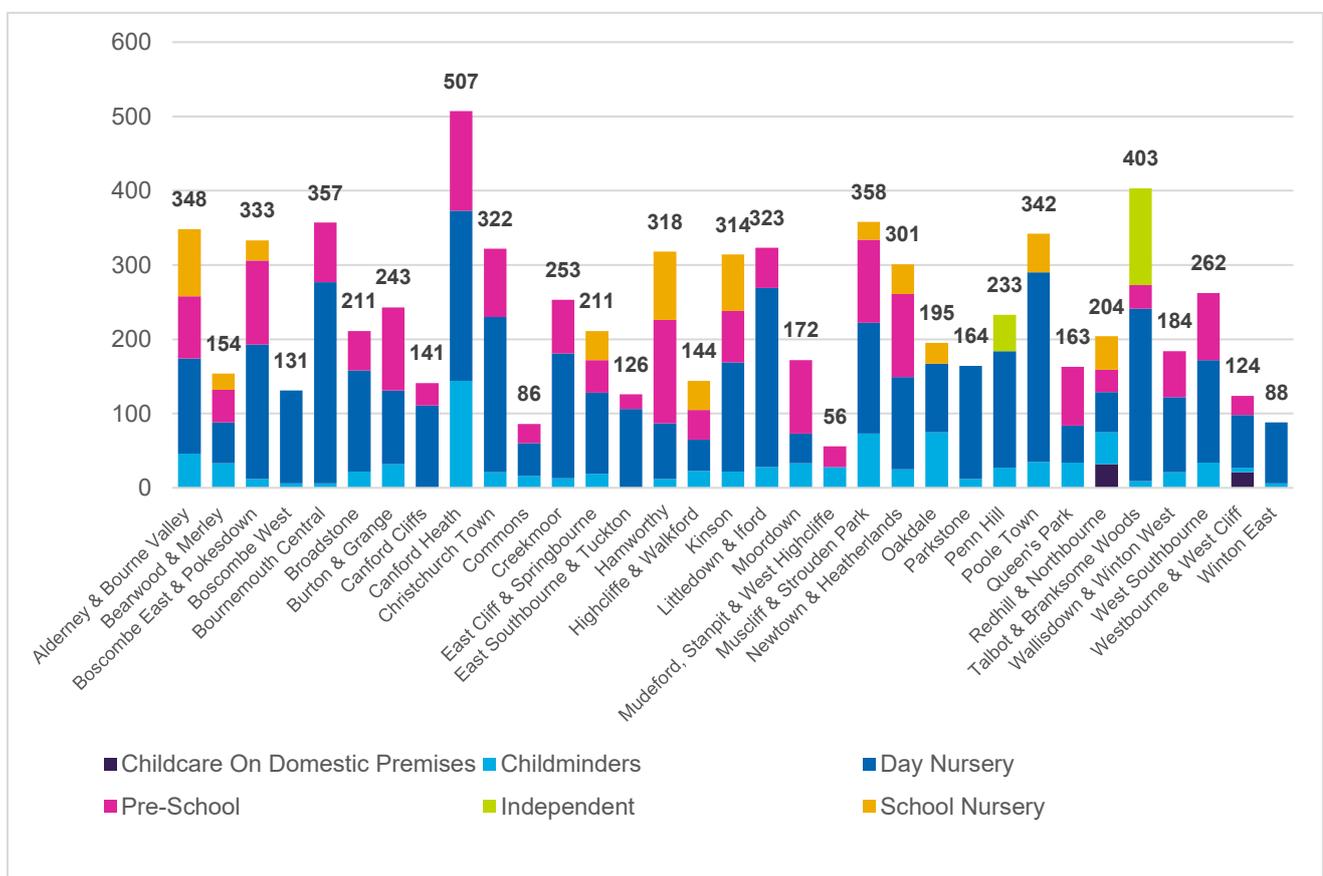
54% (4,173) of places are in Day Nursery settings, 24% (1,876) of places are in Pre School settings and 12% (916) of places are at Childminders. There are 179 Independent Nursery setting places and 574 places at School Nurseries.

- The highest number of childcare places are in Canford Heath 507 places, Talbot & Branksome Woods 403 places and Muscliff & Strouden Park 358 places
- The lowest number of childcare places are in Winton 88 places, Commons 86 places and Mudeford, Sandpitt & West Highcliffe 56 places.

In Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP), childcare is most commonly provided during standard working hours. Typical opening times range from 7:30am to 8:30am, with closing times between 5:00pm and 7:00pm.

- 4% of early years settings and childminders open before 7am. A further 35% open before 8.00am.

Figure 6: Early years places by type and ward (September 2025)



Summary of Childcare Provision - Changes 2024-2025

- The total number of registered childcare places has increased by 74, rising from 7,697 in September 2024 to 7,771 now.
- Day nursery places rose by 92 in 2024–2025, building on a previous increase of 49 in 2023–2024.
- Pre-school places declined by 58 between 2024 and 2025, following a similar drop of 63 the previous year (2023–2024).
- Overall, the number of childminders has fallen by 53 since the 2021 analysis, losing a further 8 childminders in the last 12 months.
- School nursery places increased by 66 overall during 2024–2025, with no change in 2023-24.
- **Broadstone** ward has seen the greatest increase in places.
- **Poole Town** ward has seen the greatest decrease in places.

99% of childminders, preschools and day nursery settings have signed up for

Tax-Free Childcare.

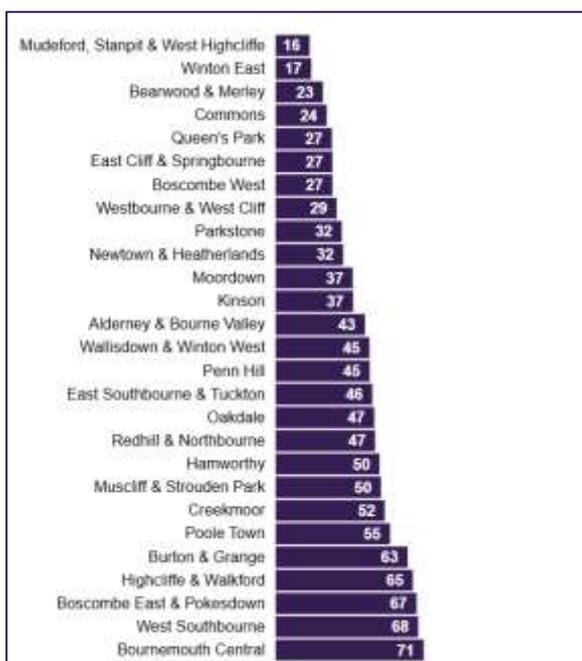
Day nursery and preschool sign up is **100%** (where known) and childminders has increased to 98.5%

The number of families who have used tax free accounts continues to **increase** year on year. The number of families who have used tax free accounts between 2024-25 has increased by **10% in England, 9% in the South West** and **7% in BCP**.

Supply of early years places per 100 population aged 0-4

There are large disparities in rates of early year places per 100 children aged 0-4 across wards. Early years paces per 100 children aged 0-4 year in BCP is 47.

Figure 7: Rate of early years places per 100 children aged 0-4 by ward



Mudeford, Sandpit & West Highcliffe and Winton East have the lowest rates of provision at 16 and 17 places per 100 children, compared to Christchurch Town with the highest rates of provision at 103 places per 100 children.

It should be noted that new day nursery provision is, at the time of writing, proposed for Mudeford and Boscombe West and not reflected in these figures.

The latest **occupancy figures** available are for Summer 2025 (64% response rate to survey).

Occupancy rates at **childminders** is 90%

Occupancy rates at **PVI settings** is 84%

Occupancy rates at **school nursery settings** is 82%

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

KEY FINDINGS- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have been increasing steadily both nationally and in BCP.

1. The number of early years children with SEND support in BCP peaked in Summer 2023 at 442, but have fallen slightly over the last two years to 374 since the introduction of new SEND support eligibility criteria in 2024.
2. This trend generally contrasts with the continued increase in children receiving SEND support and with an EHCP in the primary and secondary phases.

Early Years

All registered childcare providers are required to submit their individual SEND offer for inclusion. This supports parents and carers in identifying suitable providers. Childcare settings must also have an inclusion policy and a named SENCO.

4 1-year-old & **48** 2-year-old children received additional SEND funding support in a BCP provider (Summer 2025)

322 3 & 4-year-old children received additional SEND funding support in a BCP provider (Summer 2025)

In Summer 2025, **374** children were recorded as **receiving additional SEND Support**.

28 (7.5%) of children receiving additional SEND support are in Tier 1, 131 (35%) are in Tier 2 and 215 (57.5%) are in Tier 3.

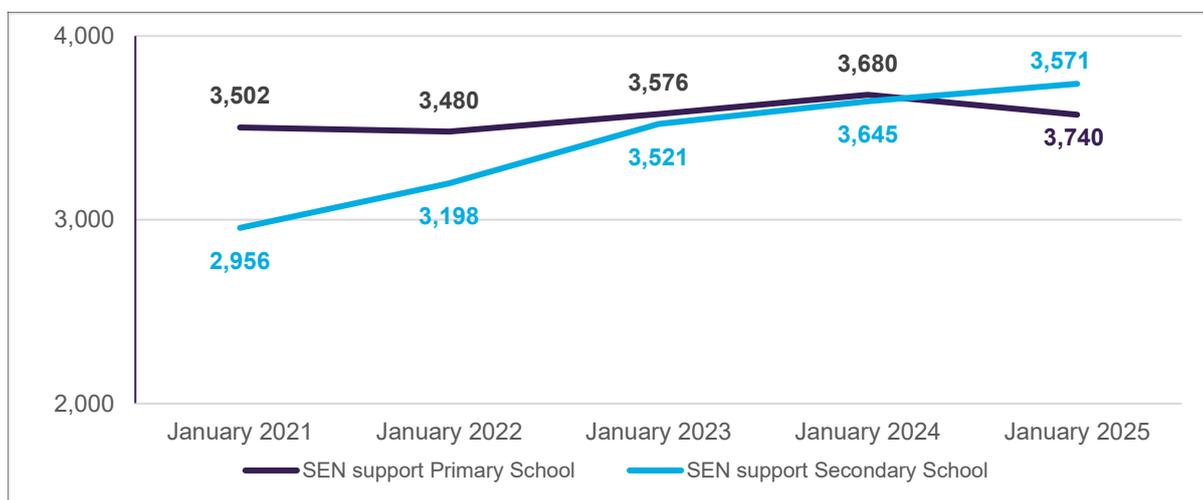
Of the 374 children receiving additional SEND funding in Summer 2025:

- 124 (33%) received the Early Years Pupil Premium, compared to 14% of all children.
- 192 (51%) received the Deprivation Supplement, compared to 21% of all children.
- 135 (42%) of 3-and-4 year olds received Extended Entitlement, compared to 57% of all children.
- Additionally, 95% of children receiving SEND funding who attended an inspected provider were placed in a setting rated good or outstanding.

School Age Children

In January 2025 the schools census recorded **1,345 EHCPs for primary schools** and **1,328 for secondary schools**. A total of **7,311** primary and secondary school children received SEN support, a similar number to that reported in January 2024.

Figure 8: School age children that receive additional SEN support



Quality Of Provision And Hourly Rates Of Provision

KEY FINDINGS- High quality provision and equal to or better than national rates.

1. The quality of early years provision in BCP is high, with 98% of inspected settings rated 'Good or Outstanding' at 1 Sept 2025.
2. Performance is stable over time and better than or equal to national benchmarks.

KEY FINDINGS - Affordability Challenges with high childcare costs remaining a barrier

1. **Financial pressures on providers:** national evidence shows childcare providers are under growing financial strain due to falling private income, rising operational costs, and insufficient government funding. This has led to widespread fee increases and the introduction of voluntary additional charges against government funded hours at some settings.
2. **Rising costs in BCP:** childcare costs have increased across all settings in BCP, with sharper rises in the past two years. Coram's childcare survey indicates BCP's costs align with national averages
3. **Affordability challenges:** high childcare costs remain a barrier, especially for families not eligible for funded entitlements. While expanded government support has reduced costs for parents of children under 3, families with 3&4 year olds are absorbing full cost increases as entitlements for them remain unchanged. Many families still face additional charges for items like meals, nappies, and activities. These fees help providers stay afloat but must be optional, clearly itemised, and not tied to access to funded hours.
4. **Cost disparities:** families not eligible for new entitlements—such as those not in work or earning below the threshold—face significantly higher costs. A part-time place for a child under two can cost around £100 more per week for these families
5. **Emerging two-tier system:** the expansion of funded childcare is primarily benefiting working families, raising concerns that disadvantaged children and those with SEND are being left behind due to lower eligibility for support

The percentage of P&V* settings who have a quality rating of "good" or "outstanding" has **remained the same**

ALL childminders have a quality rating of "good" or "outstanding"

The % of P&V* settings and childminders with a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' in BCP is **slightly lower** than the National average

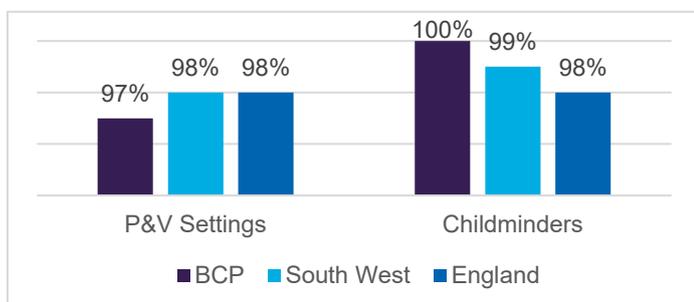


Figure 9: Ofsted rating 'good or outstanding' (March 2025)

97% of private and voluntary settings have a quality rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' (those with an Ofsted rating), the same as reported in 2024.

ALL childminders in the Local Authority who have a quality rating are rated as 'good' or 'outstanding'.

The quality of out-of-school provision in BCP has improved since 2024. In 2025, two settings were rated as 'requires improvement', compared to four rated 'requires improvement' and one rated 'inadequate' in 2024.

From 10 November 2025, Ofsted inspections of early years settings will change. The single overall grade will be replaced by five rating levels across six assessment areas, designed to highlight strengths and areas for improvement rather than relying on one overall judgement

Hourly Cost Of Early Years Childcare

The average price per hour is

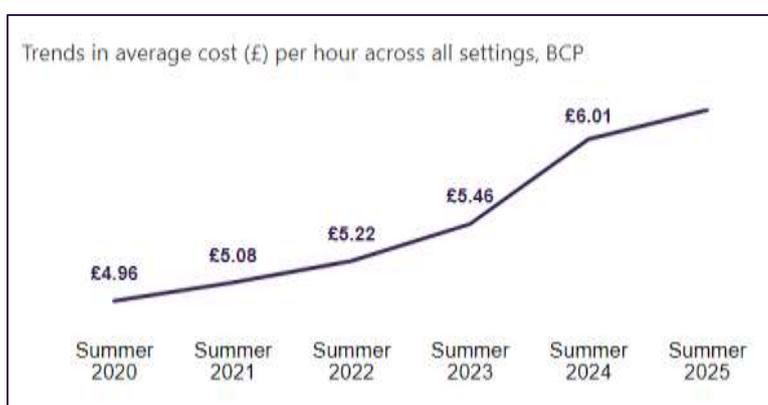
£7.36 at a day nursery

£6.10 at a pre-school

£5.94 at a childminder

- Childcare costs have risen year-on-year across all settings, with sharper increases in the past two years. From summer 2024 to 2025, the average hourly rate rose from £6.01 to £6.20 - a 3% increase, following a 8% rise the previous year.
- 2020-2025 have seen significant cost increases, the highest being at day nursery settings showing 27% rise (+£1.58 per hour).
- Parents with children under 3 have seen reduced costs due to expanded government-funded entitlements. For 3&4 year-olds, families are absorbing the full cost increases as entitlements remain unchanged.

Figure 10: Average Cost Per Hour (All Settings)



- The average price per hour at a day nursery is £7.36. The most expensive settings are in **Westbourne & West Cliff ward and Queens Park ward**.

- Charges at pre-schools average £6.10 per hour. The most expensive pre-schools are in **Moordown ward & Muscliff & Strouden Park ward**. The cheapest pre school is **Moordown ward**.

- The average price per hour at a childminder is £5.94, a 25% increase since 2020.

Cost of 25 hours per week childcare in nurseries for 3 & 4 year-olds (without working family entitlements) (Coram 2025 Childcare Survey)

£64.09 ENGLAND

£60.92 SOUTH WEST

£66.93 BCP

Funded Early Education (FEE) For Children 9 Months - 4 Years

From 1 April 2024, 15 hours government funding is available for 2- year-old children of working families, in addition to the existing funding for disadvantaged 2-year-olds.

From 1 September 2024, the 15 hours FEE entitlement is extended for eligible working parents of children aged 9 months - 2 years of age

From 1 September 2025, eligible working parents of children aged 9 months and above will be able to access 30 hours (over 38 weeks a year)

KEY FINDINGS- Under 2-Year-Olds

1. **Demand for FEE for under 2's has increased** after expanded eligibility. 40 providers reported waiting lists for children under two for Autumn 2025 (2025 Providers Survey)
2. **Ward variation:** 61% take-up in Broadstone vs. 21% in disadvantaged wards (Boscombe West, Bournemouth Central)
3. **Implication:** Equity concerns as expansion favours working families. Monitoring needed with demand for under-2 provision rising - capacity and workforce implications.

KEY FINDINGS- 2-Year-Olds

1. **In Summer 2025 BCP funded early education for 2,158 two-year-olds** (65% of the population).
2. **Disadvantaged take-up shows a sharp decline** from 770 (93%) 2023 to 445 (68%) 2025. Key drivers are frozen income thresholds, rising living costs, and overlap with working parent entitlement.
3. **Ward variation:** Working FEE take up ranges from 81% in West Southbourne to under a third in Bournemouth Central, East Cliff & Springbourne, and Boscombe West. Disadvantaged take-up is also low in these latter three wards.

KEY FINDINGS- 3&4-Year-Olds

1. **Universal entitlement take-up remains strong** at 97%, but overall numbers are falling due to declining births and resulting drop in population. Extended entitlement continues to grow.
2. **Ward variation:** Wards with the lowest overall take-up and low extended entitlement suggest persistent gaps for disadvantaged families. Bournemouth Central: 80% overall take-up; 35% accessing extended FEE. Boscombe West: 83% overall take-up; 40% extended FEE.

Under 2-Year-Olds

Under 2's accessing working FEE BCP (Summer 2025)

1,518

- **Demand for FEE for under 2s in BCP has increased**, following the expansion of eligibility from 15 hours childcare starting Sept 2024 to 30 hours from Sept 2025.

- In Summer 2025 1,518 children aged under 2 accessed FEE in BCP, compared with 1,703 codes issued and 1,621 codes validated. This suggests 100+ children living in BCP validated codes at providers in neighbouring LAs, mainly in Dorset and the New Forest.

The number of eligibility codes issued to parents in BCP has risen from 1,703 in Summer 2025 to 1,797 in Autumn 2025. While codes issued to parents applying for FEE, are not a perfect measure, they serve as a useful proxy for gauging demand.

Overall, 38% of under 2s resident in BCP accessed government-funded childcare, with significant variation at ward level: 21% in Boscombe West and Bournemouth Central compared to 61% in Broadstone.

This points to a potential two-tier system emerging, where the expansion of funded childcare mainly benefits working families. This raises concerns that disadvantaged children—those who stand to gain the most from early years provision—are being left behind due to limited eligibility.

% under 2-year-olds accessing FEE in the same ward as their home address

31%

- In BCP under a third (31%) of under 2 year olds access childcare in the same ward as their home address. But this varies considerably between areas, from 63% of under 2 year olds in Burton & Grange to just 3% in Commons ward.

2-Year-Olds

Figure 11: Number and (%) take up of 2-year-old disadvantaged and working family FEE in BCP



- Summer 2025 shows 2,158 2-year-olds were accessing FEE in BCP. 445 of these were disadvantaged 2-year-olds.
- 1,713 2-year-olds accessed the working family FEE in Summer 2025.

% 2 year-olds accessing any FEE in BCP Summer 2025

64%

- **Disadvantaged families** - Take-up remains much lower and has declined from 770 children (93%) in Summer 2023 to 445 (68%) in Summer 2025. National rates have also fallen, from 75% in 2024 to 65% in 2025.
- **Key drivers of the decline in disadvantaged take-up:**
 - The total disadvantaged cohort has shrunk. Eligibility is based on income thresholds that have been frozen since 2014, and inflation and rising living costs mean fewer families qualify. The 2 year old population has also declined due to declining births.
 - Misclassification of children eligible for both entitlements under the working-family category, may have also artificially lowered disadvantaged take-up rates.

% 2-year-olds accessing FEE in the same ward as their home address

37%

- In BCP 37% of 2 year olds access childcare in the same ward as their home address. But this varies considerably between areas, from 69% of 2 year olds in Highcliffe & Wakeford to 15% in East Cliff & Springbourne ward.

3 and 4-Year-Olds

3&4 year-olds accessing Universal FEE in BCP (Summer 2025)

2,324

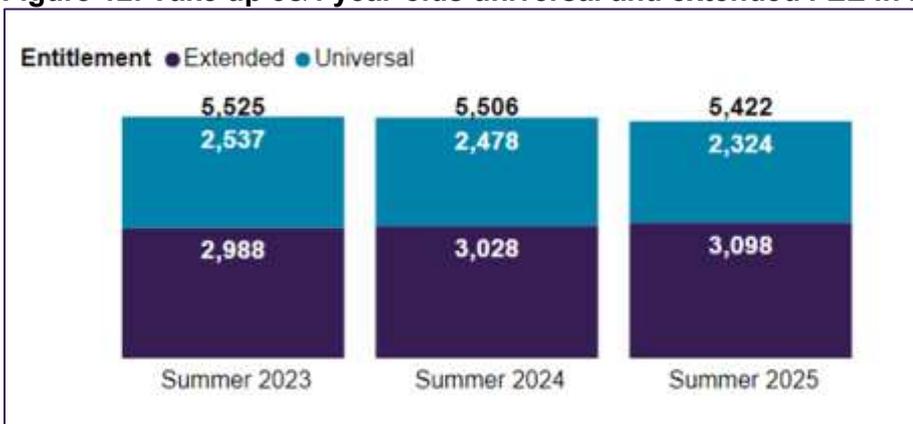
3&4 year-olds accessing Extended FEE in BCP (Summer 2025)

3,098

% Accessing Extended FEE in BCP (Summer 2025)

57%

Figure 12: Take up 3&4 year-olds universal and extended FEE in BCP



- **Universal Entitlement:** The falling population of 3 & 4 year olds has reduced the absolute number accessing FEE. But overall participation remains strong, 97% accessed the universal 15-hour entitlement in 2025, up from 92% (2023) and 94% (2024). This contrasts with the national decline to 93% in 2025.

- **Extended Entitlement (Working Parents):** 57% of children accessing FEE also received the extended entitlement in 2025, up from 54% in 2023. This growth may indicate increased parental employment, particularly among mothers, and greater awareness of the entitlement.
- **Implications:** The number of 3 & 4 year olds is falling, but there is strong overall participation. Significant local disparities remain, possibly requiring targeted outreach and support in disadvantaged wards.

% 3&4-year-olds accessing FEE in the same ward as their home address

41%

- In BCP 41% of 3&4 year olds access childcare in the same ward as their home address. But this varies considerably between areas, from 70% in Hamworthy to 21% in Boscombe West and Winton East wards.

- The location where children access funded early education is an important consideration for policy, equity, and planning. Limited capacity can restrict access, but other factors such as parental preferences, work patterns, and awareness can also influence uptake.

Out Of School Provision

KEY FINDINGS- localised pressure on school age childcare supply

- 1 **Current supply broadly matches overall need at the BCP wide level, but localised shortages are evident. Short-term access issues are likely in hotspot wards** for both breakfast/after-school clubs and holiday schemes, particularly following the reductions in breakfast clubs in 2024–25.
- 2 Wards with high demand but minimal or no supply: **Newtown & Heatherlands, Alderney & Bourne Valley, East Cliff & Springbourne, and Moordown.**

In the PVI Sector there are

19 Breakfast Clubs &
39 After School Clubs

There are additional school-run clubs

36 Breakfast Clubs &
30 After School Clubs

There are **41** Registered
Holiday Schemes

Throughout the Local Authority several providers, including schools, offer a variety of childcare services and activities outside of normal school hours which support working families. Increasing the 8am to 6pm wraparound places offered to working families is a key local and national priority. With the use of the DfE's Wraparound Care Programme Delivery Fund, BCP Council is working with schools and private providers to ensure that a term-time 8am to 6pm offer is in place at every primary school, where there is a need.

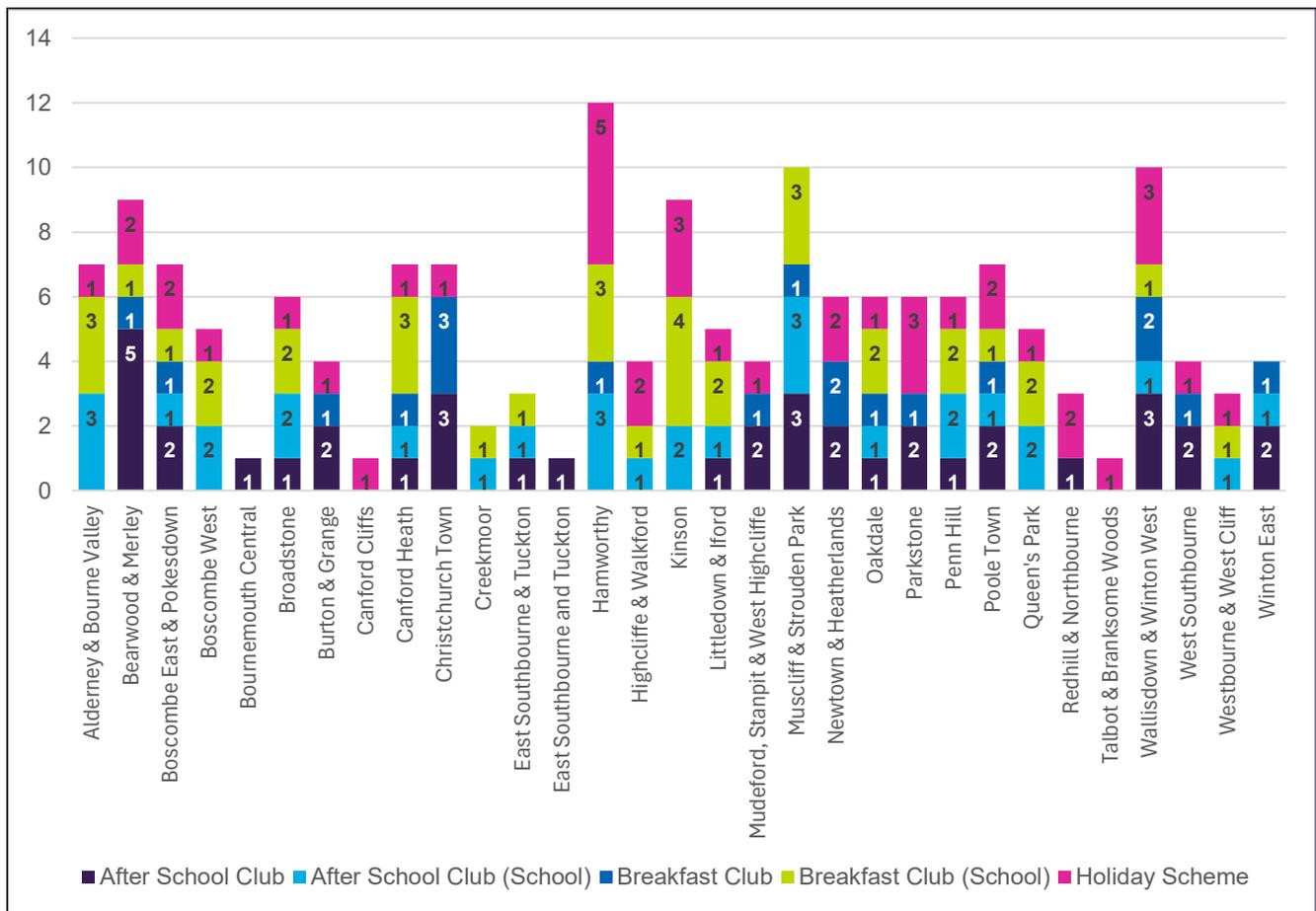
- Overall, there are 55 breakfast clubs and 69 after school clubs. There are also 41 registered holiday schemes.
- **Changes since 2024-2025**
 - There has been a small change in the overall number of registered out-of-school provisions in the BCP area between 2024-25. Overall, the total number has decreased by four provisions.
 - There is a small increase in some areas and reductions in others. Breakfast clubs have experienced the largest decline with 3 fewer PVI settings in 2025 compared to 2024.
 - **Newtown & Heatherlands** and **Alderney & Bourne Valley** have each lost one breakfast and after-school club. In addition, **Newtown & Heatherlands** has seen the closure of one holiday scheme. These reductions are significant given that both areas are adjoining and have one of the highest populations of school-age children in BCP, making the loss of provision especially impactful.

- **Geographical variation**

- There is notable variation in the availability of out-of-school provision across the area. Some wards with a high population of children aged 5–14 - such as **Newtown & Heatherlands** have **relatively low levels of provision** leading to likely unmet demand for both wraparound and holiday provision.
- **Alderney & Bourne Valley** has a sizeable child population and local capacity is likely to be pressured, especially during term time.
- **Eastcliff & Springbourne and Moordown**, currently have no registered provision at all leading to a potential gap for both wraparound and holiday scheme

- Childminders will continue to play an important role for older children in the area.

Figure 13: Out of school provision by ward



Glossary of Terms

- BCP Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (Council)
- DfE Department for Education
- EHCP Education Health Care Plan
- EY Early Years
- FEE Funded Early Education
- HAF Holiday Activities and Food Programme
- IMD Index of Multiple Deprivation
- LSOA Lower Super Output Area
- OfSTED Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
- PVI Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years Settings
- P&V Private and Voluntary Early Years Settings

Further information

For further information regarding this report please contact the [Research & Consultation Team, BCP Council](#)

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Work Plan
Meeting date	27 February 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review, update and confirm the Work Plan.
Reason for recommendations	The Council's Constitution requires all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda.
Portfolio Holder(s):	N/A – Overview and Scrutiny is a non-executive function
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Work Plan updates

1. This report provides the latest version of the Committee's Work Plan at Appendix A and guidance on how to populate and review the Work Plan in line with the Council's Constitution. For the purposes of this report, all references to Overview and Scrutiny Committees shall also apply to the Overview and Scrutiny Board unless otherwise stated.
2. Items added to the Work Plan since the last publication are highlighted as **NEW**. Councillors are asked to consider and confirm the latest Work Plan.
3. The most recent [Cabinet Forward Plan](#) can be viewed on the council's website. This link is included in each O&S Work Plan report for councillors to view and refer to when considering whether any items of pre-decision scrutiny will join the O&S Committee Work Plan.

Resources to support O&S Work

4. The Constitution requires that O&S committees take account of the resources available to support proposals for O&S work. Advice on maximising the resource available to O&S Committees is set out in the O&S Work Planning Guidance document referenced below.

Work programming guidance and tools

5. The [Overview and Scrutiny Committees Terms of Reference](#) document provides detail on the principles of scrutiny at BCP Council, the membership, functions and remit of each O&S committee and the variety of working methods available.
6. [The O&S Work Planning Guidance](#) document provides detail on all aspects of work planning including how to determine requests for scrutiny in line with the Council's constitution.
7. The [O&S Framework for scrutiny topic selection](#) was drawn up by O&S councillors in conjunction with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. The framework provides detail on the criteria for proactive, reactive and pre-decision scrutiny topics, and guidance on how these can be selected to contribute to value-added scrutiny outcomes.
8. The '[Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny](#)' form is an example form to be used by councillors and residents when making a new suggestion for a scrutiny topic. Word copies of the form are available from Democratic Services upon request by using the contact details on this agenda.
9. Performance information: progress against the council's Corporate Strategy can be viewed on the council's [Performance Dashboard](#). The dashboard includes ratings to show where the council is on target, areas for monitoring or where action is required, and explanations. The dashboard includes measures relevant to all O&S committees and is provided to assist committees in their horizon scanning and work selection process.
10. Data Toolkit: The Children's Services O&S Committee has developed a Data Toolkit to assist with the inclusion of data into its work. Resources included in the Data Toolkit can also be used as horizon scanning tools to help the committee to understand where it can impactfully target its work. [Data Toolkit](#)

Options Appraisal

11. The O&S Committee is asked to review, update and confirm its Work Plan, taking account of the supporting documents provided and including the determination of any new requests for scrutiny. This will ensure member ownership of the Work Plan and that reports can be prepared in a timely way.
12. If updates to the Work Plan are not confirmed there may be an impact on timeliness of reports and other scrutiny activity.

Summary of financial implications

13. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Summary of legal implications

14. There are no legal implications arising from this report. The Council's Constitution requires that all O&S bodies set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda. The recommendation proposed in this report will fulfil this requirement.

Summary of human resources implications

15. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

16. There are no sustainability resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

17. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

18. There are no equality implications arising from this report. Any councillor and any member of the public may make suggestions for overview and scrutiny work. Further detail on this process is included within O&S Procedure Rules at Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

Summary of risk assessment

19. There is a risk of challenge to the Council if the Constitutional requirement to establish and publish a Work Plan is not met.

Background papers

- [Overview and Scrutiny Committees Terms of Reference](#)
- [O&S Work Planning Guidance document](#)
- [O&S Framework for scrutiny topic selection](#)
- ['Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny'](#)

Further detail on these background papers is contained within the body of this report.

Appendices

Appendix A - Current O&S Work Plan

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BCP Council Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Plan. Updated 25.2.26

Guidance notes:

- 2/3 items per committee meeting is the recommended maximum for effective scrutiny.
- The Children’s Services O&S Committee will approach work through a lens of **TBC**
- Items requiring further scoping are identified and should be scoped using the Key Lines of Enquiry tool.

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report information/ updates
10 March 2026				
1.	Families First Programme	Presentation		
2.	KLOE Children in Care – Budget Report	Committee Report		
3.	Verbal update from John Coughlan on SEND improvement Journey	Verbal Report		
	Local Area Partnership SEND inspection report	Information-only report		
	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025/26	Information-only report		
16 June 2026				
1.	Youth Justice Plan 2026/27	Committee Report		
2.	Youth Service Motion Report	Committee Report		

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

3.	Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Management - HOLD	Committee Report		
14 September 2026				
1.	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny consult Cabinet Forward Plan			
2.	Invest to Save Budgets in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant Update	Committee Report		Was agreed to come as Committee report in January 2026 meeting
3.	Best Start – Early Years Update Hold	Committee Report		Was agreed to come as Committee report in January 2026 meeting for either June or September meeting
24 November 2026				
1.	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny consult Cabinet Forward Plan			
2.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
3.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
1.				
1.	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or			

Key:  Pre-Decision Scrutiny  Pro-active Scrutiny

	reactive scrutiny consult Cabinet Forward Plan			
2.	Housing for Care Experienced Young People Update	Committee Report	Committee Report	Was agreed to come as Committee report in January 2026 meeting
3.	Item to be selected from Pro-Active Scrutiny topic list			
	Annual report from Corporate Parenting Board to include information on Children in Care To include details of any protected characteristics detailed within the Equalities Act	Committee Report	Committee Report	Enable the Committee to maintain oversight of this issue and target scrutiny as required.
	Strengthening Families, Supporting Communities Update (New Service Delivery Model)	TBC	TBC	Was suggested by Officers but was not chosen as a priority by the Committee
	Post 16 Provision	TBC	TBC	Was suggested by Officers but was not chosen as a priority by the Committee
	Transition of mental health services from children to adults			CS O&S CAMHS.docx Was chosen by the Committee as their top priority after conclusion of Family Hubs working group

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	The increased use of and funding for TAs in schools to support SEND and increase inclusion			Scrutiny request form TAs.docx Was chosen as second priority
	Child Exploitation inc knife crime – To consider and track Cabinet's response to the recommendations and how they could potentially be furthered by the Committee and whether this topic should be revisited by a working group			Discussed at the meeting of 24 July 2024. Was chosen as third priority
	Parent / Carer Forums and wider family engagement channels used by BCP Children's Services and health colleagues			Scrutiny request form Was chosen as fourth priority
	Review of the quality of food served to children at our schools			Scrutiny request form School meals.docx Was chosen as fifth priority
	POTENTIAL BRIEFING SESSIONS	TBC	TBC	

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) To receive KPIs to include updates on CMOEs and NEETs			Consideration being given to include in data tool kit
•	School Admissions Arrangements for community and maintained schools			
•	Youth Offending Service Annual Youth Justice Plan			
•	Annual Report from CPB to include info on CIC			
•	Annual Report – Complaints and Compliments			

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